

Optimizing the Use of Social Media in MSME Marketing in Ciayumajakuning

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Abstract. *Competition between MSMEs encourages MSMEs to continue to innovate. One such innovation is using advances in information technology. One such technology that can be utilized is the use of social media to strengthen MSME marketing. The gap phenomenon in this context is the inability of most MSMEs to optimize the use of social media as a primary marketing tool. This research is a descriptive qualitative study. The focus of this research is optimizing the use of social media in marketing. The research location is MSMEs in Ciayumajakuning. Data analysis includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study: 1) Steps to optimize the use of social media in MSME marketing in Ciayumajakuning including identifying customers well; choosing suitable social media to use; marketing products on digital platforms; easy online buying and selling transactions; establishing good relationships with customers. 2) Supporting factors for optimizing the use of social media in marketing MSMEs in Ciayumajakuning are raw material stock; strategic location; consumer satisfaction with product quality and service; and technology, related to promotions carried out on social media in addition to government support. 3) Inhibiting factors for optimizing the use of social media in marketing MSMEs in Ciayumajakuning are the number of competitors; increasingly strict social media policies; changes in consumer tastes; marketing abilities or skills; digital facilities and digital marketing flows. 4) The implications of using social media for marketing MSMEs in Ciayumajakuning include Wide Market Reach; Improving Brand Performance; Increasing Sales; and Cost Effectiveness.*

Keywords: Marketing; MSME; Optimizing; Social Media.

1. Introduction

In recent years, competition between MSMEs has pushed MSMEs to continue innovating. One such innovation is utilizing advances in information technology. One such technology that can be utilized is the use of social media to strengthen MSME marketing. Internet usage in Indonesia has increased annually. In 2016, of the total Indonesian population, 51.8% used the internet, or 132.7 million people (Source: Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association). This presents an opportunity for entrepreneurs, especially MSMEs in Cirebon City, to innovate by utilizing social media as a marketing tool.

Social media has become a highly potent marketing tool for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter offer significant opportunities to increase visibility and engage with customers directly. However, MSMEs face several challenges in optimally utilizing social media. This creates a significant research gap in the academic literature regarding the most effective strategies and techniques for optimizing social media marketing for MSMEs in Cirebon City.

Social media is a means of exchanging information, allowing individuals to interact and socialize online without the constraints of time and space. Through social media, users can share their activities with others. Interactions on social media can take the form of comments, likes, and messages, which can even build online communities. Some commonly used social media platforms include WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and many more (Karmila, 2023).

Social media is highly sought after by MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) for business development. Social media has a significant impact, enabling people to receive information more quickly via the internet. This easy and fast access allows small and medium-sized businesses to be more proactive in promoting their products, as the internet network is vast and has no time or geographical restrictions, making it an effective marketing medium. During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this number will continue to increase, as physical distancing policies force people to conduct their activities online. Therefore, social media can be used as a tool to develop and optimize businesses, especially micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), specifically to promote their businesses (Winarti; 2020).

2. Research Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the marketing strategies implemented by MSMEs in Ciayumajakuning to improve their marketing. This approach allowed researchers to explore the experiences, views, and perceptions of key informants regarding marketing strategies,

challenges faced, and opportunities for achieving higher profits (Creswell, 2019; Miles & Huberman, 2020).

The descriptive approach in qualitative research aims to identify and describe in detail and systematically the marketing strategies used by MSMEs using social media. This method allows researchers to present descriptive data to comprehensively depict phenomena occurring in the field (Neuman, 2014).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Factual Condition of MSMEs in the Ciayumajakuning Region

MSMEs in the Ciayumajakuning region (Cirebon, Indramayu, Majalengka, and Kuningan) are currently in a crucial digital transition phase. Despite rapid quantitative growth in the number of businesses, the use of social media and digital platforms for marketing still faces the challenge of a significant "literacy gap."

The following is a description of the factual conditions of MSMEs in the region regarding the optimization of social media marketing:

- Business Unit Potential and Growth

The Ciayumajakuning region has seen a surge in the number of MSMEs, especially post-pandemic. For example, in Majalengka Regency alone, there were approximately 34,000 MSMEs recorded in early 2025. This growth was driven by the culinary, craft, and fashion sectors, which are the backbone of the local economy.

- Challenge: Low Digital Marketing Penetration

Despite their large number, social media marketing utilization has not been maximized. The low digitalization index is reflected in data showing that in several areas in Ciayumajakuning, the number of MSMEs truly utilizing digital marketing is still very low (some even below 1%). The main obstacles are a lack of understanding of copywriting, attractive product photography techniques (visual branding), and the use of paid advertising features (Facebook/Instagram Ads or TikTok Ads). This occurs because the operational focus of most actors still uses social media only as a "static catalog" on WhatsApp or personal Facebook, rather than as a tool for engagement or national/global market expansion.

- Government and Institutional Support (Strategic Synergy)

Efforts to optimize social media marketing continue to be encouraged through various collaborations:

- 1) Bank Indonesia (BI Cirebon Representative Office): Through events such as the Ciayumajakuning Entrepreneur Festival (CEF), BI actively provides capacity building training covering product photography techniques and marketplace management.

- 2) Legality as a Gateway: Local governments (such as the Sakocepat program in Majalengka) are focusing on accelerating the acquisition of NIB (Business Identification Numbers). This legality is, in fact, a primary requirement for MSMEs to enter a more formal and trusted digital ecosystem.
- 3) Sectoral Focus: Currently (early 2026), there is a special focus on leading commodities such as coffee and handicrafts, which will be promoted through digitalization to reach export markets. Furthermore, the culinary and snack sectors are being encouraged to further improve product quality to remain competitive.

Table 3.1. Comparison of Marketing Conditions

Aspect	Conventional Condition (Old)	Social Media Optimization Targets
Range	Limited to local/surrounding environment.	National to Go Export.
Content	A random photo, without any narration.	Short video content (Reels/TikTok) & aesthetic visuals.
Interaction	Waiting for buyers to come.	Proactively build community & responsive customer service.
Data	There is no record of customer preferences.	Use the Insight feature to see market trends.

3.1.1. Steps to optimize the use of social media in marketing MSMEs in Ciayumajakuning.

Using social media to market products by businesses can have a positive impact. Furthermore, using social media can save costs by expanding marketing reach, resulting in increased sales compared to before using social media. Furthermore, sales can be conducted directly with the local community, especially in the region. Ciayumajakuning as conveyed by the owner of UMKM A1.

WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok, and other social media platforms are incredibly helpful in increasing sales in my store. Social media allows me to directly post information about promotions, discounts, and new products to my customers. For example, if there's a low-priced macaroni and cheese snack, I simply send it to my customer group. They usually send me a private chat message or even come directly to the store. Customers can also order items directly. They simply send me a list of the products they want to buy via WhatsApp, and I'll then prepare the items. They can choose to pick them up or have them delivered. Essentially, using social media allows me to maintain good communication with my customers. Sales also increase because customers feel comfortable and often receive interesting information from us quickly. (W. Ibu A/12/June/2025)

Mrs. SW, one of the owners of UMKM A2, expressed the same thing, explaining that: Overall, WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok, WhatsApp, and Marketplace have helped us increase sales effectively and efficiently. We've also been able to reach more customers quickly, providing information about our products and promotions. Because by utilizing these social

media platforms, we continue to optimize them as...part of the promotion and sales strategy in MSME A2 which operates in the fashion sector (W. Ibu SW/10/June/2025).

According to the owner of UMKM A1 explains that use of social media, especially WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok have significantly increased their sales. Especially since starting to use WhatsApp, many customers order products online without having to come in person. To support the statement from the owner of MSME A1 Therefore, the researcher also interviewed one of the employees of MSME A1 regarding the role of WhatsApp accounts as a promotional medium in increasing sales. The interview revealed:

The customer ordered products from UMKM A1 several times using WhatsApp because they saved UMKM A1's WA number. They also saw our WhatsApp stories, which featured product and discount promotions. What they liked about it was that they could chat directly with us privately if they wanted to order, and we responded quickly. (W. Ibu R/June 12, 2025)

Marketing is a process in which individuals will get what they need and want by creating, offering, and exchanging products that are valuable to others to satisfy their needs and desires, in return for gaining benefits by choosing the right strategy in marketing the product. The informants in this study were individuals who used social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp, or other marketing communications tools. Interviews were conducted directly in the field to determine why Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp are used as marketing communications tools for A3 MSMEs in the region. Ciayumajakuning. The following is the answer given by the informant:

Because nowadays, mothers and the general public always carry cell phones and use social media, posting our products on social media will reach both old and new customers. This makes it easy for people to order. Before we had cell phones, we would consign our products to souvenir shops. However, the sales didn't sell out immediately, and we had to wait 7-14 days. However, using social media makes our products sell faster. On a cell phone, everyone can see our products, whereas in a souvenir shop, only the people who shop there know about our products. However, we haven't significantly increased our revenue because we are constrained by the speed of our response to buyers due to a lack of dedicated social media staff. We also struggle with the ability to create engaging content so that our Facebook page can reach a wider audience. Most of the media used are WhatsApp and Facebook. The technique we've used so far in using social media is to post our products at night, hoping that someone will order them the next day. (W. Mrs. AN /20/June/2025)

Based on the interview results above, the informant explained that by using social media like Facebook and WhatsApp as marketing communication channels, their products can be easily seen by others, allowing them to order from anywhere. Furthermore, the products sold will

also sell faster. In promoting their products, they post product photos once a day. However, this has not significantly increased sales.

To strengthen the research findings, the researchers interviewed more than one informant. The following are answers from other informants regarding why the use of social media as a marketing communication tool for A4 MSME products has not been optimal in increasing sales.

Because we still use WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. The hope is to make it easier for people to know our products. And the implementation is product photos and affordable prices. Usually posting 1 to 2 times a day with different products. Even then, posts are more often in the form of photos, while videos are rare. Usually posting items for sale related to cakes such as pies, cookies, brownies, cream puffs, fruit tartlets, croissants. The obstacles experienced while promoting products are more related to advertising skills and interesting posts. In addition, we are hampered by the lack of employees responsible for social media, so sometimes our communication responses are slow. We hope that by utilizing this social media, we will further expand the market reach of our products. (W.Mrs. M/25/June/2025).

Based on the answers provided by the informants above, social media, used as a marketing communication medium, facilitates reaching a wider market. Furthermore, the use of social media as a marketing communication medium presents opportunities and opportunities to promote products. In practice, the practice involves posting one to two photos per day. However, the marketing efforts undertaken by these two MSMEs do not appear to have resulted in a significant increase in sales. The challenges faced are more related to advertising skills and creating engaging product posts, resulting in trending content that reaches a wide range of social media users and increases the likelihood of people wanting to purchase the product.

Researchers also interviewed informants from MSME A1 who reported using all social media platforms more effectively than other MSMEs for product marketing communications. It was found that WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook had a greater impact on MSME A1's product sales. Ciayumajakuning.

"Because the general public, especially customers, communicate more through social media platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook than other platforms, the implementation that I have implemented so far is how I promote products, by posting regularly and consistently and using attractive words on various products sold. Instagram and Facebook are often used as promotional media, and WhatsApp is used as a medium for further communication, especially in providing product details and service for the ordering or purchasing process. We always strive to respond quickly to communications because we have employees responsible for using social media, although not 100% because we are still focused

on helping with production. The marketing obstacles that we feel are more about content on social media, which is still in the form of photos and has not optimized videos, so it does not reach a wide audience or FYP. In addition, there is still a lack of knowledge in creating segmented paid ads on Instagram and Facebook (W. Ibu A/12/June/2025)

Based on the answers above, it can be seen that MSMEs A1 and A2 have actively communicated and utilized social media and understand the promotional flow until the sales transaction occurs. However, it is still not optimal due to the constraints of skills in creating attractive content for FYP and advertising on Instagram and Facebook. Even though MSMEs have promoted products, by posting photos several times a day and using attractive words. Meanwhile, MSMEs A3 and A4 have also used social media for promotion but do not understand the promotional flow until the transaction because each existing social media is considered to be standalone. Although, in terms of characteristics, it can be seen that Instagram and Facebook are promotional media to direct buyers to continue transactions through WhatsApp or marketplaces. Furthermore, what differentiates MSMEs A1 and A2 from MSMEs A3 and A4 is the speed of response to communication with potential buyers.

Furthermore, researchers conducted observations based on observations made with MSMEs A5 and A6, which also use social media for marketing. However, its utilization is still suboptimal because MSMEs do not consistently post products or promotions on their social media platforms. Furthermore, product content is somewhat monotonous due to a lack of ability to create content that targets the market according to segmentation based on social media user segments. This was revealed in an interview with the owner of MSME A5.

We cater for weddings, office meetings, birthdays, and other events. Because we don't have a dedicated social media staff, promotions aren't very frequent, and our response to customers via social media is slow. So far, we've relied on word-of-mouth promotion from our customers. This is due to limited staff and limited ability to effectively utilize social media. (W. Ibu L/14/June/2025).

Based on the interview results above, it is known that social media usage is still low, what is done is posting with product photos but not regularly, or rarely because they still rely on traditional marketing, namely word of mouth marketing by customers. Regarding the statement above, Mrs. T, the owner of MSME A6, gave a nearly similar answer, namely:

We sell snacks and light meals inconsistently on social media because our marketing relies on in-store sales or bazaars. This is because none of our employees are proficient in using social media effectively and understanding it. Therefore, social media doesn't significantly impact sales. Although we acknowledge that despite the intense competition, our product sales haven't been able to grow optimally. (Mrs. T /21/June/2025).

Based on the answers provided by the informants, it is clear that marketing opportunities for MSME products through social media do not guarantee significant results without the ability and consistency to utilize them. Furthermore, there are no employees or individuals specifically responsible for managing the use of social media in product marketing. Therefore, it can be confirmed that sales cannot grow exponentially.

Furthermore, a strategy is needed to attract potential consumers to make transactions based on MSME promotions. Based on interviews with informants, MSME A2 answered, "How can consumers be attracted to the products offered, especially through Facebook, because most consumers, namely mothers, frequently use this social media platform?"

I sell fashion products that are in high demand among mothers and many Facebook users. To attract customers, I offer competitive prices and high quality products. (W. Ibu SW/10/June/2025)

Based on the interview results above, it's clear that attracting consumers requires selling products that meet their needs, understanding market segmentation, and ensuring high-quality products to attract customers. Furthermore, prices must be competitive, even lower.

Furthermore, the researcher also conducted observations by interviewing one of the informants who was purchasing MSME A2 products, he provided answers that complemented the previous informant's answers.

It's true, the products Mrs. SW sells are more affordable. I initially learned about it on social media and saw good reviews, so I decided to visit her store in person, as it's conveniently located near where I live. Since then, I've frequently purchased hijab products from UMKM A2, and they even offer home delivery. (W. Mrs. S/10/June/2025)

Based on the interview results above, the informant explained that consumers obtain product information through social media and continue to become customers after experiencing the product's good quality. This indicates that effective social media maintenance by MSMEs has a positive impact on increasing product sales.

There are still many things that need to be improved in marketing strategies utilizing social media, therefore researchers are trying to map out the things that need to be implemented by these MSME actors. namely as follows:

1. Know your customers well (understand the needs of your target or market segment).
2. Selecting the appropriate social media platform for use depends on the majority of users in the MSME market segment (in this study, MSMEs predominantly used Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram), as free features are available. However, for optimal targeting, paid promotion with advertising features is required.

3. Carry out product marketing routinely and consistently by uploading every day and always paying attention to the latest trends and in a variety of forms, not only photos but also videos.
4. MSMEs must be responsive and informative to potential buyers so that the transaction process occurs as the main goal of MSME actors.
5. Building good relationships by providing the best service can help convert buyers into customers. MSMEs must position themselves optimally to provide excellent service to customers.

3.2. Steps to optimize the use of social media in marketing MSMEs in Ciayumajakuning.

The results of this study show that the steps to optimize the use of social media in marketing MSMEs in Ciayumajakuning include: 1) Knowing your customers well; 2) Choosing the right social media to use; 3) Marketing your products on digital platforms; 4) Easy online buying and selling transactions; 5) Building good relationships with customers. Steps to optimize the use of social media are certainly as per the results of research on MSMEs using various platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Tik Tok, Whatsapp, Lazada, and Shopee so that marketing becomes wider and more widely known, which ultimately can increase sales.

This aligns with the theory that social media is extremely useful as a tool for connecting producers and consumers from anywhere and at any time. Furthermore, social media is an excellent tool for finding customers and creating brand perceptions (Priambada, 2015). A strategy for developing the MSME sector is needed to keep pace with developments in information technology. However, many MSMEs in Indonesia have not yet adapted to digitalization. As a result, many sectors fail to develop or even go digital. Strategic steps such as strengthening databases, mapping product and market potential using a single MSME database, reducing tariffs in destination countries, developing distribution networks, targeting market preferences, and increasing international trade cooperation are some examples (dpr.go.id, 2021). Therefore, MSMEs need innovative tools to promote digital marketing so they can expand their market. Digital marketing can help MSMEs develop their businesses in Indonesia. This is due to the increasing modern shopping trend in the use of social media, which enables interactive communication and provides marketers with a tremendous opportunity to reach customers (Purwidianoro, 2016).

Social media also offers numerous benefits for MSMEs, such as identifying customers, engaging in reciprocal communication, sharing information, and understanding customer interactions, presence, and preferences based on their presence and engagement patterns. Furthermore, they can collaborate with older customers who are unfamiliar with online marketing. MSMEs can gain numerous other business benefits from using social media. They not only promote their brands but also connect with potential customers, suppliers, and competitors. Ultimately, MSMEs are willing to develop their marketing strategies, which will

give them a competitive advantage (Nel & Julita, 2016; Winarti, 2021; Azmi Fadhilah & Pratiwi, 2021).

The existence of social media makes it easier for businesses to monitor and meet all consumer needs. Furthermore, digital marketing can help consumers find the products they need simply by searching online. Digital marketing gives companies the ability to connect with customers anytime and anywhere. All types of business owners, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the city, can access this opportunity. Ciayumajakuning Digital marketing can be an excellent method for expanding market reach. This is due to key factors such as easy internet access, numerous benefits, and affordable prices. To accelerate business development, digitalization must play a crucial role in strengthening Indonesia's digital economy ecosystem.

MSME activists in the city Ciayumajakuning require effective digitalization partners and tools. Market. One of the partners that MSMEs must build is digital. This partner has the capacity to bridge MSMEs so that their business units are better known to the public. Because the role of the market is very helpful for MSME businesses, especially in reaching international markets, MSMEs must undertake various collaborative efforts with the market. Thus, MSMEs must be able to actively collaborate with business partners to assist with marketing.

Digital marketing is accelerated and public trust is increased through the use of social media as a basis for market interaction (Syuhada & Gambett, 2018). Through this digital platform, MSME entrepreneurs in the city... Ciayumajakuning This makes it a highly effective strategy because, at a relatively low cost, they can reach a wider audience than with traditional marketing methods. In the digital context, Serang City has shown increased internet and social media usage, making it a suitable environment for MSMEs to utilize these platforms.

4. Conclusion

Steps to optimize the use of social media in marketing MSMEs in Ciayumajakuning include: 1) 1) Knowing your customers well; 2) Choosing the right social media to use; 3) Marketing products on digital platforms; 4) Easy online buying and selling transactions; 5) Building good relationships with customers. Supporting factors for optimizing the use of social media in marketing MSMEs in Ciayumajakuning that is raw material stock; strategic location; consumer satisfaction with product quality and service; and technology, related to promotions conducted on social media, as well as support from local governments. Inhibiting factors for optimizing the use of social media in MSME marketing in Ciayumajakuning is numerous competitors; increasingly stringent social media policies; changing consumer preferences; marketing capabilities or skills; digital facilities and digital marketing flows. Implications utilization social media for marketing MSMEs in Ciayumajakuning include: Wide Market Reach; Improve Brand Performance; Increase Sales; and Cost Effective.

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