

Digital Marketing Communication Through TikTok and Instagram: Its Contribution to the Development of MSMEs in Padangsidempuan, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: The rapid development of digital technology has driven changes in marketing strategies for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), shifting from conventional approaches to social media-based marketing. This study aims to analyze digital marketing communication through TikTok and Instagram and its contribution to the development of MSMEs in Padangsidempuan, Indonesia. This research employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method by examining relevant studies related to digital marketing communication, social media, and MSME development. The findings indicate that TikTok and Instagram play a significant role in increasing brand visibility, brand image, market reach, and interaction between MSMEs and consumers. Digital marketing communication also contributes to enhancing competitiveness and business performance of MSMEs. However, its implementation still faces challenges such as limited digital literacy, human resource constraints, and inconsistency in content management. Therefore, optimization strategies and continuous support are required to ensure that digital marketing communication can be effectively utilized to promote the sustainable development of local MSMEs.

KEYWORDS: Digital Marketing Communication, Social Media, MSMEs

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought fundamental changes to various aspects of people's lives, including the economic and marketing sectors (Danuri, 2019). Digital transformation has shifted the pattern of interaction between producers and consumers from conventional approaches to those based on digital platforms. In the current era of globalization and information openness, social media has become a strategic medium for building effective, efficient, and sustainable marketing communication. Social media functions not only as a communication tool but also as a space for promotion, information distribution, and the formation of brand image and loyalty (Khairi et al., 2025). In this context, digital marketing communication has become an essential necessity for business actors, particularly Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), to survive and grow amid increasingly competitive market conditions.

MSMEs play a very significant role in Indonesia's economy, including in regions such as Padangsidempuan. As the backbone of the local economy, MSMEs contribute substantially to employment absorption, increased community income, and the strengthening of local economic resilience. However, MSMEs also face various challenges, including limited capital, market access, human resources, and the ability to adapt to technological developments. Amid these challenges, the utilization of digital marketing communication through social media presents a strategic opportunity that MSMEs can leverage to expand market reach, increase product visibility, and build closer relationships with consumers.

TikTok and Instagram are two social media platforms that have experienced very rapid user growth in Indonesia (Azizah et al., 2021). Both platforms possess strong visual and interactive characteristics, enabling them to capture users' attention quickly and emotionally. TikTok, with its short-form video format, offers high levels of creativity, entertainment, and virality, while Instagram provides various features such as feeds, stories, reels, and live sessions that can be utilized for consistent and aesthetic product promotion (Priyono & Sari, 2023). These characteristics make TikTok and Instagram highly potential marketing communication media for MSMEs, particularly in reaching younger generations and digitally savvy communities who are increasingly familiar with visual content.

In the context of MSMEs in Padangsidempuan, the use of TikTok and Instagram as digital marketing communication media is highly relevant. Padangsidempuan, as one of the economic activity centers in the South Tapanuli region, is home to a diverse range of MSMEs operating in the culinary, fashion, handicraft, and service sectors. The local products produced by MSMEs in this area have considerable potential; however, they are often constrained by limited promotional and marketing strategies. Conventional marketing communication, which still dominates—such as word-of-mouth promotion or direct selling—is considered insufficient

Digital Marketing Communication Through TikTok and Instagram: Its Contribution to the Development of MSMEs in Padangsidempuan, Indonesia

to reach broader markets. Therefore, the use of social media becomes a strategic alternative to enhance the competitiveness of local MSMEs.

Digital marketing communication through TikTok and Instagram functions not only as a product promotion medium but also as a means to build brand identity, consumer trust, and two-way interaction between MSME actors and their audiences (Pratama et al., 2025a). Creative, informative, and persuasive content can create a more personal and relevant communication experience for consumers (Yulita et al., 2025a). In addition, the analytical features provided by both platforms enable MSME actors to evaluate the effectiveness of their marketing strategies, allowing for continuous adjustments in line with market needs.

The utilization of TikTok and Instagram as digital marketing communication media is not without challenges (Chandra, 2023a). Not all MSME actors possess adequate digital literacy, creative content production skills, or an understanding of social media algorithms. Furthermore, increasingly dense content competition requires MSMEs to present differentiation and added value in every marketing message delivered. Without appropriate communication strategies, the use of social media may fail to generate a significant impact on business development (Sitanggang et al., 2024). Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of how digital marketing communication through TikTok and Instagram can contribute meaningfully to MSME development is required.

Studies on digital marketing communication through TikTok and Instagram and its contribution to the development of MSMEs in Padangsidempuan are therefore important to conduct. This research is expected to provide empirical insights into patterns of social media utilization by MSME actors, the forms of marketing communication strategies employed, and their impact on sales growth, market expansion, and brand strengthening. Moreover, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for MSME actors, local governments, and other stakeholders in formulating more effective and sustainable digital-based MSME development policies and programs. Thus, digital marketing communication through TikTok and Instagram should not merely be viewed as a trend, but as a strategic instrument in driving local economic growth in Padangsidempuan, Indonesia.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on digital marketing communication have developed rapidly alongside the increasing use of the internet and social media in business activities (Oktaviani et al., 2023). Digital marketing communication is understood as the process of delivering marketing messages by utilizing digital technology to reach consumers more broadly, quickly, and interactively. Unlike conventional marketing, digital marketing communication enables two-way interaction between business actors and consumers, thereby fostering more personal and sustainable relationships (Watajdid et al., 2021). In the context of MSMEs, digital marketing communication is viewed as an effective strategy to overcome limitations in promotional budgets and market access, as social media can be used at relatively low cost while offering wide reach.

A number of studies indicate that social media plays an important role in enhancing the visibility and competitiveness of MSMEs. Social media functions not only as a medium for product promotion, but also as a platform for building brand awareness, brand image, and customer loyalty (Nurhidayanti, 2025). Communication conducted through social media allows MSME actors to convey values, competitive advantages, and the stories behind the products offered, thereby creating emotional bonds with consumers. This approach is considered capable of increasing consumer trust in MSME products, particularly amid competition with products from large companies (Ratnasari & Fachrian, 2025).

TikTok and Instagram are two social media platforms that have been most frequently examined in the digital marketing communication literature in recent years. TikTok is recognized for its short-form video format that emphasizes creativity, entertainment, and the potential for content virality. Various studies show that marketing content on TikTok that is authentic, creative, and aligned with current trends has a high likelihood of reaching broad audiences without requiring large promotional budgets (Chandra, 2023b). This makes TikTok a promising medium for MSMEs to introduce products and rapidly build brand awareness, particularly among younger generations.

Instagram is understood as a more established visual platform in digital marketing communication practices (D. A. Ramadhan et al., 2024). Features such as feeds, stories, reels, and live sessions provide flexibility for MSME actors in designing consistent and sustainable communication strategies. The literature suggests that visual aesthetics, content consistency, and interaction with followers are key factors in the success of marketing through Instagram. In addition, Instagram enables MSMEs to present their brand identity in a more structured manner, thereby helping to build a professional image and enhance business credibility in the eyes of consumers.

Several previous studies emphasize that the simultaneous use of TikTok and Instagram can generate more significant impacts on MSME development. TikTok functions as a medium to attract attention and expand reach, while Instagram plays a role in strengthening relationships with consumers and encouraging purchase decisions. The combination of these two platforms allows MSMEs to manage marketing communication stages more comprehensively, from brand awareness to customer loyalty. With appropriate strategies, social media is able to increase sales, expand markets, and strengthen the position of MSMEs in the digital competitive landscape.

Digital Marketing Communication Through TikTok and Instagram: Its Contribution to the Development of MSMEs in Padangsidempuan, Indonesia

The literature also highlights various challenges in the implementation of digital marketing communication by MSMEs. Low digital literacy, limited content production skills, and a lack of understanding of social media algorithms constitute major barriers (Haeriani & Hermila, 2025). Several studies emphasize that the success of digital marketing communication is not determined solely by the presence of MSMEs on social media, but also by content quality, message consistency, and the ability to adapt to the dynamics of digital platforms. Without well-planned strategies, the use of TikTok and Instagram may fail to deliver optimal contributions to business development.

In the local context, studies on digital marketing communication among MSMEs in regions such as Padangsidempuan remain relatively limited. In fact, local social, cultural, and economic characteristics greatly influence the patterns of marketing communication adopted by MSME actors. Therefore, there is a need for studies that specifically examine how TikTok and Instagram are utilized by MSMEs in Padangsidempuan and their contribution to business development. The existing literature provides a strong theoretical foundation indicating that digital marketing communication holds significant potential for MSMEs; however, empirical studies at the local level are essential to enrich understanding and generate contextual and applicable recommendations.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review (library research) method to examine in depth the concepts, theories, and empirical findings related to digital marketing communication through TikTok and Instagram and its contribution to MSME development. The literature review method was selected because this research focuses on collecting and analyzing relevant secondary data, allowing the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study without conducting direct field data collection (Adlini et al., 2022).

The data sources in this study consist of academic books, national and international journal articles, conference proceedings, research reports, and official documents related to digital marketing communication, social media, MSMEs, and local economic development (Mahanum, 2021). The literature used was prioritized from recent publications, particularly those published within the last ten years, to ensure data relevance and currency. In addition, sources discussing the Indonesian and regional contexts were given special attention to ensure that the resulting analysis is contextual in nature.

Data collection was conducted through systematic literature searches using academic databases such as Google Scholar, Garuda, and other scientific journal portals. Keywords used included “digital marketing communication,” “social media,” “TikTok,” “Instagram,” “MSMEs,” and “business development.” The collected literature was then screened based on topic relevance, source credibility, and its contribution to the research discussion. This selection process aimed to ensure that the analyzed data met adequate academic quality standards.

Data analysis was carried out using content analysis techniques, involving a critical examination of the literature to identify key concepts, patterns of social media utilization, and significant findings related to the impact of digital marketing communication on MSMEs (Fadli, 2021). The researcher categorized the data according to main themes, such as digital marketing communication strategies, the characteristics of TikTok and Instagram, and their implications for MSME development. Subsequently, the data were interpreted argumentatively by linking relevant theories with findings from previous studies.

The results of the analysis were then synthesized to construct a comprehensive framework of understanding regarding the contribution of digital marketing communication through TikTok and Instagram to MSME development, particularly within local contexts such as Padangsidempuan. By employing a literature review method, this study is expected to provide a strong theoretical foundation, enrich scholarly discourse in the field of digital marketing communication, and serve as a reference for future research as well as for social media-based MSME development practices.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Digital Marketing Communication Strategies of MSMEs through TikTok and Instagram

The findings of this review indicate that the digital marketing communication strategies implemented by MSMEs through TikTok and Instagram in Padangsidempuan have evolved in line with the increasing awareness of business actors regarding the importance of digital presence. Social media is no longer perceived merely as a medium for sharing information, but rather as a strategic instrument for brand building, consumer outreach, and enhancing business competitiveness (Sanny et al., 2025). In practice, MSME actors utilize the unique characteristics of each platform to deliver marketing messages in creative and persuasive ways, although their levels of understanding and capability vary.

In terms of communication planning, most MSMEs have begun to recognize the importance of setting clear marketing objectives before producing content (Wijoyo et al., 2021). These objectives include increasing brand awareness, introducing new products, and driving sales. However, the analysis shows that communication planning remains relatively simple and is not yet fully based on in-depth audience analysis. Many MSMEs produce content by following viral trends without sufficiently considering alignment with brand identity and the needs of target consumers. Nevertheless, this approach still yields positive impacts in

Digital Marketing Communication Through TikTok and Instagram: Its Contribution to the Development of MSMEs in Padangsidempuan, Indonesia

expanding reach and engagement, particularly on TikTok, a platform that is strongly influenced by trend dynamics and algorithmic mechanisms.

Content strategy emerges as a central element in MSMEs' digital marketing communication. On TikTok, the most dominant content consists of short videos showcasing production processes, customer reviews, price promotions, and entertainment-oriented content presented in a light and authentic manner. Such content is considered effective in building emotional closeness with audiences and creating impressions of honesty and product authenticity (Rozaq & Nugrahani, 2023). Meanwhile, Instagram is more frequently used to display aesthetically appealing product visuals, pricing information, and consumer testimonials through feeds and stories. The differences in content characteristics across the two platforms indicate that MSMEs have intuitively adapted their communication strategies to suit audience characteristics and the features of each social media platform.

The discussion also reveals that message consistency remains a challenge for MSMEs. Not all business actors are able to upload content regularly and in a planned manner, resulting in sporadic marketing communication efforts (Pratama et al., 2025b). This inconsistency affects audience engagement levels and the growth of social media accounts. However, MSMEs that are able to maintain consistency in posting frequency and communication style tend to achieve higher interaction levels, such as increased comments, likes, and direct messages from consumers. This suggests that consistency is a key factor in building longterm relationships with audiences on social media.

Audience interaction represents one of the main advantages of digital marketing communication through TikTok and Instagram (Ramadhani et al., 2023). MSMEs in Padangsidempuan make use of features such as comments, direct messages, and live streaming to communicate directly with consumers. These interactions are not only used to respond to product-related inquiries but also to build trust and customer loyalty. Prompt and communicative responses are perceived to enhance customer satisfaction and encourage repeat purchases. In this context, two-way communication becomes a value-added aspect that is not typically found in conventional marketing strategies.

The use of specific features such as hashtags, popular music, and collaborations with local creators also forms part of MSMEs' marketing communication strategies (M. K. Ramadhan & Daniel, 2025). On TikTok, the use of relevant hashtags and trending music has been shown to help increase content visibility. On Instagram, meanwhile, the use of reels and collaborations with other accounts can expand audience reach. These strategies indicate that MSMEs are beginning to understand the importance of optimally leveraging the social media ecosystem, although not all business actors are able to implement these strategies consistently and in a measurable manner.

From the perspective of marketing messages, the findings show that MSMEs tend to emphasize simple informative and persuasive approaches (Puspita Sari et al., 2025). The messages delivered generally focus on product advantages, affordable pricing, and local uniqueness. This approach aligns with the characteristics of local consumers in Padangsidempuan, who tend to value closeness, trust, and cultural values. However, there remains an opportunity to develop more strategic messaging, such as brand storytelling and narratives of social value, which could strengthen MSME differentiation amid digital competition.

The discussion further highlights that limited digital literacy and human resources serve as inhibiting factors in the optimal implementation of digital marketing communication strategies (Aifalesasunanda et al., 2024). Many MSME actors are still self-taught in managing social media, resulting in strategies that are not yet fully structured. Nevertheless, these limitations do not prevent MSMEs from continuing to adapt and experiment with various forms of marketing communication. This reflects a substantial potential for improving the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies through mentoring, training, and sustained policy support.

Overall, the results and discussion affirm that digital marketing communication strategies through TikTok and Instagram make a tangible contribution to MSMEs in Padangsidempuan by enhancing visibility, interaction, and business competitiveness. Although the strategies employed remain adaptive and are not yet fully professionally planned, the utilization of social media has opened new opportunities for MSMEs to grow in the digital era. With strengthened capacity building for business actors and optimization of marketing communication strategies, TikTok and Instagram have the potential to become more effective strategic instruments in supporting the sustainable development of local MSMEs.

The Role of TikTok and Instagram in Enhancing the Visibility and Image of Local MSMEs

The findings indicate that TikTok and Instagram play a highly significant role in increasing the visibility of local MSMEs in Padangsidempuan. The presence of these two social media platforms enables MSME actors to showcase their products and services to a much broader audience compared to conventional marketing methods. Social media opens new opportunities for local MSMEs to be recognized not only by consumers within their immediate business areas but also by audiences outside the region. This increased visibility represents an important initial step in strengthening the existence of MSMEs amid increasingly open and digital market competition.

TikTok, with its dynamic short-video format and interest-based algorithm, plays a major role in expanding the reach of MSME content. The discussion shows that content packaged creatively, authentically, and in line with current trends has a high likelihood of appearing on users' recommendation pages. This condition allows MSMEs with limited resources to gain substantial

Digital Marketing Communication Through TikTok and Instagram: Its Contribution to the Development of MSMEs in Padangsidempuan, Indonesia

exposure without incurring high promotional costs (Achmad & Putri, 2025). In Padangsidempuan, many MSMEs utilize TikTok to showcase production processes, the uniqueness of local products, and daily business activities, thereby attracting audience attention and increasing user engagement levels.

Meanwhile, Instagram plays an important role in building and maintaining MSME brand image on a sustainable basis (Oktafianto et al., 2024). This platform allows business actors to present brand identity through consistent and aesthetic visuals. The findings show that MSMEs capable of managing a well-organized feed, providing clear product information, and actively interacting with followers tend to be perceived as more professional and credible. Instagram thus serves as a space for brand identity representation that helps build consumer trust in the quality of products and services offered by local MSMEs.

The role of TikTok and Instagram in enhancing MSME visibility is also reflected in the increased interaction between business actors and consumers (Wintasari, 2026). Features such as comments, direct messages, and live streaming enable more intensive two-way communication. This interaction not only increases audience engagement but also strengthens the image of MSMEs as responsive businesses that care about their consumers. Consumers who feel acknowledged and valued tend to develop more positive brand perceptions and demonstrate greater long-term loyalty. In this context, digital communication contributes directly to the formation of a positive image of local MSMEs.

The discussion further indicates that the use of TikTok and Instagram helps MSMEs build more human-centered and consumer-oriented brand narratives. Through visual content and simple storytelling, MSME actors can convey business values, the background of business establishment, and commitments to quality and service. Such narratives strengthen the image of MSMEs as integral parts of the local community rather than merely business entities. In Padangsidempuan, this approach aligns well with community characteristics that value social closeness and togetherness, thereby reinforcing the image of local MSMEs in consumers' minds.

In addition to enhancing visibility and image, TikTok and Instagram also play a role in creating differentiation for local MSMEs amid digital competition (Talib & Sari, 2024). The findings show that MSMEs that highlight the uniqueness of local products—such as distinctive flavors, traditional motifs, or regional cultural values—receive more positive responses from audiences. Social media serves as a medium to elevate local identity into the digital space, enabling MSMEs to compete not only on price but also on the values and stories embedded in their products. This differentiation strengthens the position of local MSMEs in an increasingly competitive market.

The results and discussion also reveal challenges in optimizing the use of TikTok and Instagram. Not all MSMEs possess the capability to produce high-quality and consistent visual content. Limited digital literacy and human resources mean that some business actors have not yet been able to fully maximize the potential of these platforms. This condition can negatively affect MSME image, as poorly managed content may reduce perceptions of professionalism in the eyes of consumers. Therefore, digital assistance and training play a crucial role in supporting improvements in MSME visibility and image.

The discussion also shows that consumer perceptions of local MSMEs are strongly influenced by activity levels and consistency of communication on social media (Yulita et al., 2025b). MSMEs that are active and consistent in delivering marketing messages tend to develop stronger and more memorable brand images. Conversely, MSMEs that rarely update content or are less responsive to audiences risk losing consumer attention. This underscores that visibility and image are not achieved instantly but are built through continuous and well-planned communication processes.

Overall, the results and discussion confirm that TikTok and Instagram play strategic roles in enhancing the visibility and image of local MSMEs in Padangsidempuan. These platforms not only help MSMEs reach wider audiences but also enable business actors to build strong, credible brand identities that are aligned with local values. Although various challenges remain in their implementation, the optimal use of TikTok and Instagram has the potential to become a key factor in strengthening the position of local MSMEs in the digital economy era. With improved digital literacy and appropriate communication strategies, social media can serve as an effective tool in promoting the sustainability and growth of MSMEs in Padangsidempuan, Indonesia.

The Contribution of Digital Marketing Communication to MSME Development

The findings indicate that digital marketing communication makes a significant contribution to the development of MSMEs in Padangsidempuan, particularly in responding to changes in consumer behavior and market dynamics in the digital era. The shift in consumption patterns toward greater reliance on digital media requires MSMEs to adapt by adopting more modern and flexible marketing strategies. Digital marketing communication through social media has become a viable solution that enables MSMEs to remain relevant, competitive, and sustainable despite their limited resources. One of the primary contributions of digital marketing communication is the expansion of MSMEs' market reach. Through the use of social media platforms, MSME actors are no longer confined to geographically local markets but can reach consumers across different regions. The discussion shows that social media eliminates spatial and temporal barriers in marketing activities, thereby providing MSMEs with greater opportunities to expand their market segments (Winarko et al., 2020). This increased reach serves as an important foundation for business development, as it opens access to potential consumers who were previously difficult to reach through conventional marketing methods.

Digital Marketing Communication Through TikTok and Instagram: Its Contribution to the Development of MSMEs in Padangsidempuan, Indonesia

Digital marketing communication also contributes to increased brand awareness and recognition of MSMEs (Christiana et al., 2022). Through consistent messaging and engaging visuals, MSMEs are able to build stronger brand identities in consumers' minds. The findings suggest that consumers tend to be more familiar with and better remember MSME products that actively engage in marketing communication on social media. Brand awareness thus becomes an essential asset in building trust and encouraging purchase decisions, particularly amid the abundance of product choices available in digital markets.

In addition to enhancing brand awareness, digital marketing communication strengthens interaction and relationships between MSMEs and consumers. Social media enables more intensive and personalized two-way communication, allowing MSME actors to directly understand consumer needs, preferences, and feedback (Habib & Sutopo, 2024). The discussion shows that active and responsive interaction increases customer satisfaction and reinforces customer loyalty. Strong relationships with consumers are a key factor in MSME sustainability, as loyal customers are more likely to make repeat purchases and recommend products to others.

From a business performance perspective, digital marketing communication also contributes to increased sales and revenue for MSMEs (Rachmawati et al., 2021). Fast and easily accessible product information allows consumers to make purchasing decisions more efficiently. In addition, digital promotions such as discounts, bundled offers, and special campaigns can be implemented at relatively low cost while achieving broad impact. The findings indicate that MSMEs that actively utilize digital marketing communication tend to experience higher transaction levels compared to those that still rely on conventional marketing approaches.

Another important contribution is the enhancement of MSME competitiveness. Within the digital ecosystem, MSMEs have more equal opportunities to compete with larger enterprises, particularly in terms of visibility and creative communication (Widjaja et al., 2023). Social media provides MSMEs with space to highlight product uniqueness, local values, and personalized approaches that are difficult for large companies to replicate. The discussion shows that digital marketing communication can function as an effective differentiation tool, enabling MSMEs to establish strong market positions despite limitations in capital and resources.

The contribution of digital marketing communication to MSME development is not without challenges. Limited digital literacy, insufficient strategic planning, and constraints in time and manpower are common obstacles faced by MSME actors (Hasvia et al., 2023). The findings reveal that not all MSMEs are able to manage digital marketing communication consistently and in a measurable manner, resulting in less-than-optimal outcomes. These challenges indicate that the success of digital marketing communication depends not only on the use of social media but also on the managerial capabilities and strategic understanding of business actors.

The discussion also emphasizes that the contribution of digital marketing communication to MSME development is long-term and sustainable in nature. Significant results are not always achieved instantly, but rather through continuous learning, adaptation, and evaluation processes. MSMEs that are able to integrate digital marketing communication into their overall business strategies tend to be better prepared to face market changes and shifts in consumer behavior. Thus, digital marketing communication functions not merely as a promotional tool but as an integral part of MSME business transformation.

Overall, the results and discussion demonstrate that digital marketing communication plays a real and strategic role in MSME development in Padangsidempuan. Through expanded market reach, increased brand awareness, enhanced consumer interaction, improved sales performance, and strengthened competitiveness, digital marketing communication becomes a key factor in driving MSME growth and sustainability. Although challenges in implementation remain, the potential of digital marketing communication is substantial and worthy of continued development. Therefore, support from various stakeholders—including government, academics, and business communities—is essential to strengthen MSME capacity in utilizing digital marketing communication optimally and sustainably.

Challenges and Optimization Efforts in MSME Digital Marketing Communication

The findings indicate that the implementation of digital marketing communication by MSMEs in Padangsidempuan faces various challenges of a structural, technical, and cultural nature. Although social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram offer significant opportunities to enhance business competitiveness, not all MSME actors are able to utilize them optimally. These challenges are critical factors that influence the effectiveness of digital marketing communication and determine the extent to which its contribution to MSME development can be realized sustainably.

One of the main challenges faced by MSMEs is limited digital literacy. Many business actors are still at an early stage in understanding how social media works, including the use of platform features, content management, and comprehension of social media algorithms. The discussion shows that some MSMEs use social media merely as a product showcase without a wellplanned communication strategy (Karya et al., 2023). This condition results in marketing messages that are poorly directed and unable to build maximum audience engagement. Low digital literacy also affects MSMEs' ability to evaluate the performance of their digital marketing communication efforts.

Digital Marketing Communication Through TikTok and Instagram: Its Contribution to the Development of MSMEs in Padangsidempuan, Indonesia

Another challenge relates to limited human resources and time constraints. Most MSMEs in Padangsidempuan are managed independently or by small teams, requiring business actors to divide their time between production, service, and marketing activities. As a result, social media management often becomes a lower priority and is carried out sporadically (Mavilinda et al., 2021). The findings indicate that inconsistency in content uploads and audience interaction negatively affects engagement levels and the growth of MSME social media accounts. This condition demonstrates that successful digital marketing communication requires a significant commitment of time and effort.

Challenges also arise in the production of creative and high-quality content. Social media platforms, particularly TikTok and Instagram, place strong emphasis on visual appeal and creativity in message delivery (Lestari, 2024). However, not all MSMEs possess the technical skills needed for visual content creation, such as video recording, editing, and crafting engaging narratives. Limitations in equipment and access to supporting technologies further intensify this challenge. Consequently, the content produced tends to be monotonous and less competitive compared to more professional content.

Another equally important challenge is the high level of competition in the digital space. The large number of business actors utilizing social media has resulted in increasingly intense content competition. The discussion indicates that MSMEs often struggle to stand out amid the overwhelming volume of information on social media. Without a clear differentiation strategy, MSME marketing messages risk being overlooked and failing to capture audience attention. This condition requires MSMEs to develop unique value propositions and communicate them effectively through social media.

Amid these various challenges, efforts to optimize digital marketing communication become crucial. One such effort is enhancing the digital literacy and capacity of MSME actors (Widjaja et al., 2023). Training and mentoring related to social media usage, content strategy development, and digital performance analysis can help MSMEs better understand and manage their marketing communication more effectively. The findings show that MSMEs receiving mentoring tend to be more confident and consistent in using social media as a marketing tool.

Optimization efforts can also be achieved through more structured marketing communication planning. MSMEs need to set clear communication objectives, identify target audiences, and develop content calendars aligned with platform characteristics. Proper planning enables MSMEs to deliver messages consistently and relevantly, thereby increasing the likelihood of audience engagement (Winarko et al., 2020). In this context, understanding the distinct characteristics of TikTok and Instagram is key to formulating effective communication strategies.

Collaboration represents another promising optimization strategy for MSMEs. Collaborating with local creators, communities, or fellow MSME actors can help expand audience reach and strengthen business image. The discussion shows that collaboration not only increases visibility but also creates social value and a sense of togetherness that resonates with the local community in Padangsidempuan (Hasvia et al., 2023). Such collaborations can also serve as solutions to MSMEs' limited resources.

The role of government and other stakeholders is also vital in optimizing MSME digital marketing communication. Support in the form of policies, training programs, and the provision of digital infrastructure can accelerate MSME digital transformation. The findings indicate that synergy among MSME actors, local governments, and educational institutions can foster a more conducive digital ecosystem for MSME development.

Overall, the results and discussion demonstrate that challenges in MSME digital marketing communication are complex and multidimensional, yet not insurmountable. Through improved digital literacy, careful strategic planning, collaboration, and support from various stakeholders, digital marketing communication can be optimized as a strategic tool for MSME development. Thus, existing challenges can be transformed into opportunities for MSMEs in Padangsidempuan to adapt and strengthen their position in the continuously evolving digital economy.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion presented, it can be concluded that digital marketing communication through TikTok and Instagram plays a strategic role in supporting the development of MSMEs in Padangsidempuan. The use of these two social media platforms makes a tangible contribution to increasing product visibility, building brand image, expanding market reach, and strengthening relationships between MSME actors and consumers. Social media functions not only as a promotional tool but also as a space for interaction and representation of MSME identity in the digital era.

The digital marketing communication strategies implemented by MSMEs reflect efforts to adapt to the characteristics and dynamics of each platform. TikTok is utilized to attract audience attention through creative and potentially viral content, while Instagram plays a role in building a more consistent and professional brand image. The combination of these two platforms enables MSMEs to manage marketing communication processes more comprehensively, ranging from increasing brand awareness to encouraging purchasing decisions. This confirms that digital marketing communication is an important factor in enhancing MSME competitiveness amid an increasingly digital market environment.

This study also indicates that the implementation of digital marketing communication by MSMEs still faces various challenges, including limited digital literacy, human resources, content management consistency, and intense competition on social

Digital Marketing Communication Through TikTok and Instagram: Its Contribution to the Development of MSMEs in Padangsidempuan, Indonesia

media. These challenges affect the suboptimal use of TikTok and Instagram as marketing tools. Therefore, optimization efforts are required through strengthening MSME capacity, more structured communication strategy planning, collaboration, and support from government and relevant stakeholders.

Digital marketing communication through TikTok and Instagram holds great potential to be further developed as a strategic instrument for promoting the growth and sustainability of MSMEs in Padangsidempuan. With enhanced digital literacy and synergy among stakeholders, social media can become an effective means of strengthening the local economy and improving the welfare of MSME actors in the era of digital transformation.

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