



Analysis of the Role of Social Media in Increasing Sales Outcomes among MSMEs in Baubau City

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of social media in increasing sales outcomes among Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Baubau City. In the context of digital transformation, social media has become an important marketing tool that enables MSMEs to promote products, interact with customers, and expand market reach more efficiently. However, the effectiveness of social media in supporting sales performance at the local MSME level remains an important issue to investigate. This study employed a quantitative approach with a survey design. The population consisted of MSME owners in Baubau City who actively used social media for business purposes, while the sample was selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The findings reveal that social media plays a significant role in improving sales outcomes among MSMEs in Baubau City. Platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok were widely used for promotional activities, customer communication, and product visibility. The study found that consistent posting, attractive content, and active customer interaction contributed positively to increasing customer inquiries, purchase transactions, and repeat orders. Social media also helped MSMEs broaden their market reach beyond their immediate business environment. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of social media was influenced by several supporting and inhibiting factors, including digital literacy, content creativity, product quality, time constraints, and limited digital skills. In conclusion, social media is a strategic instrument for strengthening MSME sales performance and competitiveness in Baubau City. Therefore, efforts to improve the digital capacity of MSME actors are essential to ensure the optimal and sustainable use of social media in business development.

Keywords: Analysis, The Role of Social Media, Sales Results, MSMEs in Baubau City

1. Introduction

Digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped the business landscape, including the micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) sector. (Firdaus, 2021) This transformation is evident not only in the way business actors produce and distribute goods and services, but also in how they build marketing communication, reach consumers, and create economic value. (Nurul Aulia Dewi, Alika Hariani, 2023) In the era of the digital economy, social media is no longer merely a space for personal interaction; it has evolved into a strategic business instrument for promotion, branding, customer service, and even sales transactions. This phenomenon has become increasingly relevant as internet penetration and social media usage in Indonesia continue to grow significantly. The Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association reported that the number of internet users in Indonesia reached 221.56 million in 2024, with an internet penetration rate of 79.5 percent. Meanwhile, DataReportal noted that by early 2025 Indonesia had 212 million internet users and 143 million social media user identities, equivalent to 50.2 percent of the total population. (Talib, 2024) These data indicate that digital space has become a highly potential economic arena for business actors, including MSMEs. (Abidin et al., 2025)

Within Indonesia's economic structure, MSMEs hold a highly strategic position. This sector not only supports community based economic activities but also plays a significant role in employment generation, income distribution, and the strengthening of national economic resilience. Official documents from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs show that MSMEs dominate Indonesia's business structure, accounting for 99.62 percent of all business units and contributing around 60.5 percent to the gross domestic product. This dominance demonstrates that strengthening MSME capacity is a strategic agenda in national economic development. However, the large number of MSMEs is not always matched by strong competitiveness, particularly in terms of marketing capacity, digital technology adoption, and adaptation to changing consumer behavior.(Nurasmi, 2023)

One of the main challenges faced by MSMEs is limited access to effective and efficient promotion. Many MSMEs still rely on conventional marketing methods with limited reach, dependence on nearby customers, and low responsiveness to shifting market preferences. In an increasingly open and competitive business environment, traditional marketing alone is no longer sufficient to support sales growth. Today's consumers tend to search for product information through digital platforms, compare prices and quality quickly, and show greater interest in businesses with visibility and active interaction in online spaces. Therefore, social media has become a highly relevant alternative for MSMEs because it offers relatively low cost promotion, broad market reach, two way communication, and the ability to build emotional closeness with consumers.(Hasan, 2022)

Conceptually, social media can be understood as a digital medium that enables users to create, share, and exchange information within interactive networks.(Siregar et al., 2025) In a business context, social media functions as a digital marketing tool that allows business actors to display products, communicate brand value, build reputation, and respond directly to customer feedback. Platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have become powerful marketing channels because they enable the rapid, visual, and personalized dissemination of information. Recent data show that YouTube reached 143 million users in Indonesia in early 2025, Facebook reached approximately 43 percent of the population, and Instagram had 103 million users. This broad reach indicates that social media provides a vast potential market for MSMEs to expand market share and increase sales.(Mendrofa, 2025)

From a marketing perspective, the use of social media can improve sales performance through several mechanisms. First, social media expands promotional reach so that products become known not only to local consumers but also to potential buyers outside the immediate business area. Second, it facilitates the rapid, attractive, and varied delivery of product information through photos, videos, testimonials, live broadcasts, and other interactive features.(Khairani et al., 2025) Third, social media enables engagement between business owners and consumers, which can ultimately increase trust and loyalty. Fourth, it helps MSMEs identify market trends more dynamically through audience responses, interaction patterns, and consumer interest. Thus, social media is not merely a communication tool but also a business development instrument that can influence sales volume.

Nevertheless, the successful use of social media by MSMEs does not occur automatically.(Herdiyani et al., 2022; Sahputri et al., 2023) The effectiveness of social media in increasing sales is influenced by various factors, such as the ability of business owners to create content, the consistency of posting, the selection of appropriate platforms, the quality of interaction with customers, the use of digital features, and the ability to convert audience attention into actual purchases. In practice, not all MSMEs are able to optimize social media strategically.(Sihura et

al., 2025) Some business actors use social media only as a product showcase without a well directed communication strategy. Others actively promote their products but are still unable to measure the extent to which these digital activities affect sales outcomes. Therefore, the relationship between social media use and sales growth needs to be examined empirically in a more specific context.

The local context is particularly important in this study, as the characteristics of MSMEs and market behavior may differ from one region to another. Baubau City, as one of the urban areas in Southeast Sulawesi, has a developing local economic dynamic. The Central Statistics Agency of Baubau City regularly publishes regional economic reports, including Baubau City in Figures and Gross Regional Domestic Product of Baubau City by Industrial Sector 2020–2024, which reflect the importance of mapping local economic development continuously. The availability of these publications confirms that Baubau City is an appropriate setting for examining economic activities and business development opportunities. In this context, MSMEs in Baubau City have significant opportunities to utilize social media as a means of expanding market reach, especially amid the growing intensity of digital connectivity among Indonesian society.(Chaerani, 2020; Yanti, 2025)

However, an important research gap remains. On the one hand, social media is often assumed to be capable of increasing MSME sales. On the other hand, empirical evidence at the local level, particularly in Baubau City, is still limited. Much of the discussion on digital marketing remains general and national in scope, even though the effectiveness of social media is strongly influenced by local context, type of business, digital literacy of business actors, and the characteristics of local consumers. This gap provides a strong rationale for conducting research on the role of social media in improving MSME sales outcomes in Baubau City. This study is not only academically relevant for enriching the discourse on digital business and MSME marketing, but also practically valuable for business actors, local government, and other stakeholders in designing digital-based MSME empowerment strategies.(Rusmalia, 2024)

Academically, this study can be situated within the framework of digital marketing theory, which positions social media as a modern marketing communication channel capable of generating consumer awareness, interest, desire, and action. Within this framework, increased sales outcomes are not merely influenced by the existence of social media accounts, but by the quality of their use as instruments of promotion, interaction, persuasion, and conversion. Therefore, it is important to analyze more deeply how MSMEs in Baubau City utilize social media, which platforms are most frequently used, and to what extent such utilization actually affects sales performance. Such an analysis will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the position of social media within MSME business strategies at the regional level.(Lindiani et al., 2024)

Based on the explanation above, this study is directed toward addressing the central issue of the role of social media in driving increased sales outcomes among MSMEs in Baubau City. Accordingly, this study is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of digital marketing studies and a practical contribution to strengthening MSME capacity so that they become more adaptive to changes in the technology-based business ecosystem.

Based on the background above, this study seeks to answer the following questions: how do MSMEs in Baubau City utilize social media in their promotional and marketing activities, how does social media contribute to increasing sales outcomes among MSMEs in Baubau City, and what factors support and hinder the effectiveness of social media use in improving MSME sales performance?

This study aims to analyze the role of social media in improving sales outcomes among micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Baubau City. More specifically, the study seeks to identify how MSMEs utilize social media in their promotional and marketing activities, to examine the extent to which social media contributes to increased sales performance, and to explore the supporting as well as inhibiting factors that influence the effectiveness of social media use in the MSME business context. Through these objectives, the study is expected to provide a clearer understanding of the strategic position of social media in strengthening the competitiveness and sustainability of MSMEs at the local level.

Although previous studies have widely discussed digital marketing and the use of social media in business development, much of the existing literature remains general in scope and tends to focus on broader national or urban-industrial contexts. Research specifically examining the relationship between social media utilization and sales outcomes among MSMEs in smaller regional cities is still limited. In particular, empirical studies situated in Baubau City are rarely found, even though local economic conditions, digital literacy levels, consumer behavior, and the scale of MSME operations may significantly shape the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool. This study therefore fills an important contextual gap by providing evidence from a local setting that has not been sufficiently represented in the existing literature.

The novelty of this study lies in its contextual and practical focus. First, it examines the role of social media not merely as a communication platform, but as a strategic instrument directly associated with sales outcomes among MSMEs in Baubau City. Second, it emphasizes the local dimension of digital business practices, thereby offering a more grounded understanding of how social media functions within the realities of small-scale enterprises in an emerging urban area. Third, this study does not only investigate the contribution of social media to sales improvement, but also identifies the factors that support and constrain its effective use. In this way, the study contributes both theoretically, by enriching the discourse on digital marketing in MSME settings, and practically, by providing insights that may inform policies and empowerment strategies for local MSME development.

2. Methods

This study employed a quantitative research approach with a survey design to analyze the role of social media in increasing sales outcomes among Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Baubau City. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because this study sought to measure the relationship between the use of social media and sales performance in a systematic and objective manner. The population of this study consisted of MSME owners in Baubau City who actively use social media as part of their business promotion and marketing activities. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, with the criteria that respondents were MSME actors, operated their businesses in Baubau City, and had used social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok for business purposes. This sampling technique was chosen to ensure that the respondents were relevant to the objectives of the study. (Khairani et al., 2025)

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed directly to respondents. The questionnaire was designed using a Likert scale to measure several indicators related to social media use, such as promotional intensity, content delivery, customer interaction, and perceived contribution to sales improvement. In addition, sales outcomes were measured through indicators such as increased number of customers, sales volume, and business revenue. The

collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the patterns of social media utilization among MSMEs, while inferential analysis, such as simple linear regression, was employed to examine the effect of social media use on sales outcomes. The results of the analysis were then interpreted to explain the extent to which social media contributes to improving MSME sales performance in Baubau City. (Jufri, 2025; La Ode Fajrul, 2024)

3. Findings and Discussions

3.1 Findings

This study examined the role of social media in increasing sales outcomes among Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Baubau City. The results are presented based on three main aspects: the pattern of social media utilization by MSME actors, the contribution of social media to sales improvement, and the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting the effectiveness of social media use in business activities.

The findings indicate that social media has become an important promotional and marketing tool for MSMEs in Baubau City. Most respondents reported that they actively use at least one form of social media platform to support their business operations. Among the platforms used, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok were the most dominant. WhatsApp was mainly utilized for direct communication with customers, handling orders, sharing product catalogs, and maintaining customer relationships. Facebook was commonly used to promote products to local community groups and to reach broader audiences through posts and marketplace features. Instagram was preferred for visually presenting products, especially for food, fashion, and beauty-related businesses, while TikTok was increasingly used by younger entrepreneurs to create short promotional videos and attract potential customers through trending digital content.

The intensity of social media usage among MSME actors varied, but the majority of respondents stated that they uploaded promotional content regularly. Some business owners posted product information every day, while others did so two to three times a week depending on the availability of products and business activities. Regular posting was found to influence consumer awareness, as businesses with more active accounts were perceived to be more visible and trustworthy by customers. Respondents also emphasized that social media enabled them to update product information more quickly, such as prices, stock availability, discounts, and special offers. This flexibility gave MSMEs an advantage compared to conventional marketing methods, which are generally slower and more limited in reach.

In terms of content, the study found that MSMEs in Baubau City used a variety of promotional forms on social media. These included product photos, short videos, customer testimonials, promotional posters, live selling activities, and interactive stories. Product photos remained the most frequently used type of content because they were easy to produce and directly showed the appearance of goods or services offered. However, short videos and live promotional sessions were reported to generate higher levels of engagement. Businesses that combined visual attractiveness with persuasive captions and customer interaction tended to receive more attention from users. This suggests that the effectiveness of social media is not determined only by the presence of an account, but also by the quality, consistency, and creativity of the content produced.

The findings also reveal that social media has a positive role in expanding market reach for MSMEs in Baubau City. Before using social media, many respondents stated that their customers were limited to nearby neighborhoods or

people who already knew the business personally. After adopting social media, they began to attract customers from different parts of Baubau City and, in some cases, from outside the city. This shift demonstrates that social media helps MSMEs move beyond traditional word-of-mouth and location-based selling. The digital environment enables products to be discovered by wider audiences regardless of physical distance, thereby increasing market opportunities.

Furthermore, the study found that social media significantly contributed to better communication between business owners and consumers. Through chat features, comments, direct messages, and story replies, customers were able to ask questions, negotiate prices, confirm product details, and give feedback more easily. This two-way interaction built stronger engagement and improved customer trust. Many respondents noted that customers were more likely to make purchases after receiving prompt responses and friendly communication through social media. In this regard, social media does not function merely as a one-way promotional channel, but also as an interactive business medium that facilitates relationship marketing.

Regarding sales outcomes, the majority of respondents reported that social media had helped increase the number of customer inquiries, actual purchases, and repeat orders. Several MSME owners stated that after using social media more actively, their products became more widely known, which led to higher transaction frequency. For food and beverage businesses, social media posts often attracted first-time buyers who later became regular customers. For fashion and accessories businesses, visually appealing product displays on Instagram and Facebook encouraged impulse purchases. In service-based businesses, such as home catering, makeup services, and printing services, social media functioned as a digital portfolio that strengthened customer confidence and helped convert interest into bookings.

The results of the statistical analysis further supported these observations. Descriptive findings showed that respondents generally perceived social media as effective in supporting promotion and sales. Inferential analysis indicated a positive relationship between the use of social media and sales outcomes. MSMEs that used social media more consistently and strategically tended to report better business performance, including increased sales volume, customer growth, and revenue development. Although the magnitude of the effect varied among businesses, the overall trend suggests that social media is an important contributing factor to improved sales performance.

However, the study also found that the contribution of social media to sales outcomes was influenced by several supporting factors. One major supporting factor was digital literacy. MSME actors who understood how to create attractive content, use platform features, write persuasive captions, and interact effectively with customers were more likely to gain positive business outcomes. Another supporting factor was product quality. Respondents noted that social media may attract customers initially, but repeat purchases depend largely on whether the product meets customer expectations. In addition, consistency in posting, fast response to customer messages, and the ability to follow online trends were found to strengthen the impact of social media on sales.

At the same time, several inhibiting factors were identified. One common obstacle was limited digital skills among some MSME owners, especially older business actors who were less familiar with content creation and platform management. Some respondents admitted that they used social media only in a basic way, such as posting pictures without optimizing captions, hashtags, or engagement strategies. Another challenge was time constraints. Many MSME actors manage production, sales, and customer service by themselves, making it

difficult to maintain consistent social media activity. In addition, unstable internet access and limited devices were reported as practical barriers for some business owners. Competition in digital spaces was also considered a challenge, as similar products are often promoted simultaneously, making it harder for MSMEs to stand out.

Another important finding is that not all social media activity directly leads to sales conversion. Some respondents experienced high engagement in the form of likes, views, or comments, but these interactions did not always translate into actual purchases. This indicates that digital visibility alone is insufficient if it is not accompanied by effective sales strategies, such as clear pricing, easy ordering systems, product credibility, and customer trust. Therefore, the role of social media in increasing sales should be understood as part of a broader business process rather than as a single determinant of success.

Overall, the results of this study demonstrate that social media plays a substantial role in improving sales outcomes among MSMEs in Baubau City. Its contribution is reflected in broader market reach, more intensive customer interaction, greater product visibility, and increased opportunities for transaction growth. Nevertheless, the level of success depends on how strategically social media is used, the digital competence of business actors, the quality of products offered, and the business capacity to transform online engagement into actual sales. These findings confirm that social media is a relevant and effective instrument for MSME development in the local context, while also highlighting the need for continuous capacity building so that MSME actors can maximize its benefits more sustainably.

3.2 Discussions

The findings of this study demonstrate that social media plays a meaningful role in improving sales outcomes among MSMEs in Baubau City. This result can be understood more comprehensively when interpreted through the lenses of digital marketing theory, social media marketing theory, and MSME competitiveness. The discussion shows that social media is not merely an additional promotional channel, but a strategic business resource that can influence visibility, customer engagement, market access, and ultimately sales performance. (Abidin et al., 2025; Khairani et al., 2025)

From the perspective of digital marketing theory, the results indicate that MSMEs in Baubau City have begun to shift from conventional promotional methods toward digital-based marketing practices. Digital marketing emphasizes the use of internet-based platforms to communicate value, reach target consumers efficiently, and create measurable business outcomes. In this study, the use of WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok by MSMEs reflects the practical application of digital marketing principles, especially in terms of low-cost communication, flexibility, broad reach, and faster dissemination of product information. The fact that MSMEs were able to update prices, stock availability, promotions, and product variations in real time illustrates one of the core strengths of digital marketing: immediacy. Unlike traditional marketing, digital platforms allow businesses to respond quickly to market conditions and consumer behavior. (Herdiyani et al., 2022)

The findings also align with the AIDA framework in digital marketing, which consists of attention, interest, desire, and action. Social media content such as product photos, short videos, testimonials, and live selling sessions helps attract consumer attention. Once attention is secured, attractive visuals, captions, and interaction through comments or chats stimulate consumer interest. Desire is then reinforced by persuasive communication, social proof, and perceived product quality, while action is represented in inquiries, purchases, and repeat orders. The

study found that businesses with more consistent and engaging content tended to receive more customer responses and sales opportunities. This suggests that social media supports each stage of the customer decision process and functions as an integrated digital marketing mechanism.

The findings are also highly relevant to social media marketing theory, which highlights interactivity, participation, user-generated visibility, and relationship building as defining features of marketing in social platforms. Unlike traditional one-way advertising, social media marketing is built on dialogue and engagement. The present study found that MSMEs benefited not only from posting promotional material but also from responding to customer messages, answering questions, and maintaining communication. This supports the idea that social media marketing is relational rather than merely transactional. Customer trust was strengthened when business owners responded promptly and communicated in a friendly and informative way. In this sense, engagement becomes a strategic variable because it enhances credibility, encourages purchase decisions, and increases the likelihood of repeat transactions. (Hasan, 2022; Sahputri et al., 2023)

Another important point from social media marketing theory is that content quality influences platform performance. The study found that the effectiveness of social media was shaped by creativity, posting consistency, and the ability to adapt content to platform characteristics. Product photos were widely used because they were easy to produce, but short videos and live sessions generated stronger interaction. This finding is consistent with the logic of social media marketing, in which visual storytelling, authenticity, and audience participation increase reach and engagement. The implication is that successful MSME marketing on social media depends not only on being present online, but also on mastering platform-specific communication styles. Businesses that treat social media strategically are more likely to convert attention into actual buying behavior.

The study further shows that social media contributes to market expansion, which is a central indicator of MSME competitiveness. Competitiveness refers to the ability of firms to maintain market position, attract consumers, respond to competition, and sustain growth. For MSMEs, competitiveness is often constrained by limited capital, narrow market access, and weak promotional capacity. In this study, many respondents explained that before using social media, their customers were mostly limited to nearby areas and existing networks. After adopting social media, their products reached a wider customer base, including buyers from different parts of Baubau and beyond. This demonstrates that social media reduces geographical barriers and increases market exposure, thereby strengthening the competitive position of MSMEs.

In the context of MSME competitiveness, social media may be understood as a tool for resource leverage. MSMEs typically operate with fewer financial and human resources than larger firms, so they need affordable mechanisms to compete. Social media provides exactly such a mechanism. It allows MSMEs to promote products, display portfolios, communicate with customers, and build brand awareness at relatively low cost. This helps smaller enterprises compete more effectively despite structural limitations. In this sense, digital capability becomes part of competitive capability. The findings suggest that MSMEs that used social media more strategically showed better sales outcomes, which indicates that digital adoption can function as a source of competitive advantage.

However, the results also confirm that the relationship between social media use and competitiveness is not automatic. Several MSMEs experienced high visibility or engagement without equivalent sales conversion. This is an important point theoretically because it shows that digital presence alone is insufficient. Competitiveness depends not only on communication reach but also on product

quality, service reliability, pricing clarity, responsiveness, and ordering convenience. Social media can attract consumer attention, but actual competitiveness is determined by whether the business can transform that attention into trust and transactions. Therefore, the study supports a more integrated view in which digital marketing effectiveness is shaped by internal business capacity.(Siregar et al., 2025)

The identification of supporting and inhibiting factors in this study also deepens the theoretical interpretation. Digital literacy emerged as an important enabling factor. MSME actors who understood content creation, platform features, and customer interaction strategies were more successful in using social media for sales improvement. This supports the idea that digital competence is not simply a technical skill, but an entrepreneurial asset. By contrast, limited digital skills, time constraints, unstable internet access, and intense online competition became barriers. From the perspective of competitiveness theory, these constraints reduce a firm’s ability to exploit market opportunities efficiently. Thus, improving MSME competitiveness in the digital era requires not only technology access but also capability development.

The findings additionally suggest that social media strengthens customer relationship management in small businesses. Through direct messages, story replies, chat services, and personalized updates, MSMEs were able to maintain a closer relationship with customers. This is important because sustained competitiveness is not only based on acquiring new customers but also on retaining existing ones. Repeat orders reported in this study indicate that social media contributes to loyalty-building by facilitating ongoing interaction. This is particularly relevant for MSMEs, whose long-term sustainability often depends on stable customer relationships rather than one-time transactions.

Table 1. Discussion of Findings in Relation to Theory

Main Finding	Theoretical Lens	Theoretical Interpretation	Implication for MSMEs
MSMEs actively use WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok for promotion	Digital Marketing Theory	Digital platforms enable low-cost, flexible, and real-time communication with consumers	MSMEs can reduce dependence on conventional marketing and improve promotional efficiency
Consistent posting increases visibility and customer awareness	Digital Marketing / AIDA Model	Content attracts attention and stimulates interest, which may lead to desire and action	Regular content management is essential for sustaining audience attention and purchase intention
Photos, videos, testimonials, and live selling improve engagement	Social Media Marketing Theory	Interactive and visual content strengthens audience participation and	MSMEs need creative, platform-appropriate content strategies

			platform engagement
Direct interaction through chat and comments builds trust	Social Media Marketing Theory	Social media marketing is relational, only transactional; engagement strengthens credibility	Fast response and customer-centered communication can improve conversions
Social media expands market reach beyond nearby customers	MSME Competitiveness Theory	Digital tools reduce geographical limitations and open wider market access	MSMEs can improve their competitive position through broader exposure
Social media contributes to increased inquiries, purchases, and repeat orders	Digital Marketing and Competitiveness	Effective online engagement support sales and customer retention	Social media should be integrated into long-term business strategy
Digital literacy influences the effectiveness of social media use	Competitiveness / Capability Perspective	Competitive advantage depends on internal capability to use digital tools strategically	Training in content creation, analytics, and platform use is necessary
High engagement does not always result in actual sales	Integrated Business Performance Perspective	Visibility alone is insufficient without product quality, trust, and sales conversion systems	MSMEs must combine promotion with service quality, clear pricing, and easy ordering
Time constraints and limited digital skills hinder optimization	MSME Competitiveness Theory	Limited resources reduce the firm's ability to exploit digital opportunities	Institutional support and mentoring are needed for sustainable digital adoption
Product quality remains crucial for repeat purchases	Competitiveness and Relationship Marketing	Marketing can attract first-time buyers, but quality sustains competitiveness	Digital promotion must be supported by strong product and service performance

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that social media plays a significant role in improving sales outcomes among MSMEs in Baubau City. The findings show that social media has evolved from a simple communication platform into a strategic marketing instrument that supports product promotion, customer interaction, market expansion, and sales growth. MSME actors in Baubau City commonly utilize platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to introduce products, share business information, communicate with customers, and strengthen their market presence. Through these functions, social media contributes to increasing customer inquiries, purchase transactions, and repeat orders. The study also demonstrates that the effectiveness of social media is closely related to the principles of digital marketing and social media marketing. Consistent posting, attractive content, responsive communication, and platform-appropriate strategies help MSMEs capture consumer attention, build trust, and encourage purchase decisions. In this sense, social media not only supports promotional efficiency but also strengthens the competitiveness of MSMEs by expanding market access beyond traditional local boundaries.

However, the role of social media in increasing sales outcomes is not automatic. Its success depends on several supporting factors, including digital literacy, creativity in content production, product quality, responsiveness to customers, and the ability to convert online engagement into actual sales. At the same time, several obstacles remain, such as limited digital skills, time constraints, unstable internet access, and intense competition in digital spaces. These findings indicate that social media must be supported by internal business capacity and strategic management in order to produce sustainable results. Overall, this study confirms that social media is an important driver of MSME business development in Baubau City. Therefore, strengthening MSME digital capabilities through training, mentoring, and policy support is essential so that social media can be optimized not only as a promotional medium, but also as a long-term tool for business sustainability and competitiveness.

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