



An Opinion Study Of MSME Employees On The Importance Of Social Media In Boosting Their Business

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Abstract

This study examines the perceptions of employees working in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) toward the importance of social media in enhancing business performance. With growing digitalisation and competitive market pressure, social media has emerged as a crucial tool for marketing, communication, customer engagement, and business expansion. The study is relevant as many MSMEs still face challenges in effectively adopting digital platforms due to limited resources, skills, and awareness. A quantitative survey method was used, involving 120 employees from various MSMEs across service, manufacturing, retail, and creative sectors. Descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were applied to analyse opinions and examine associations between demographic variables and social media adoption perceptions. Findings indicate that the majority of employees strongly believe social media significantly boosts business visibility, customer reach, brand engagement, and sales conversions. Results emphasise the

need for social-media-oriented training, digital literacy enhancement, and strategic adoption practices within MSMEs.

Keywords: MSMEs, Social-Media, Digital Marketing, Business Growth, Social Media Adoption

1. Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) form the backbone of economic development, contributing significantly to employment creation, poverty reduction, and GDP in developing nations (Tekola & Gidey, 2019; Puspitaningrum et al., 2021). Their agility, innovative capacity, and ability to operate in diverse market conditions make them essential to national competitiveness and social welfare. However, rapid technological change and intensifying global competition have forced MSMEs to reconsider their traditional business practices and adopt more digital, cost-efficient forms of marketing and communication (Rachmawati et al., 2018; Sari & Kusumawati, 2022). With conventional promotion methods becoming increasingly expensive or ineffective, social media platforms now offer a practical alternative for brand visibility, customer engagement, and market reach—especially for resource-constrained MSMEs (Agustina et al., 2023). Research shows that employee attitudes, digital skills, and willingness to embrace technological change strongly influence the success of digital transformation within small enterprises (Syaifullah et al., 2021; Subagja et al., 2022). Moreover, social media literacy among employees affects innovation levels, brand communication quality, and the effectiveness of online promotional strategies (Siregar et al., 2023; Aracil-Jordá et al., 2023). Understanding employee perceptions is therefore essential, as their readiness and motivation shape the organisation's ability to utilise digital platforms for business development (Yacob et al., 2023). Evaluating employees' opinions provides insight into both the opportunities and the barriers inherently linked to operational realities in MSMEs.

Research Questions

1. What are MSME employees' opinions regarding the importance of social media for business growth?
2. Does social media significantly improve MSME marketing, customer engagement, and performance?
3. Are employee opinions associated with demographic variables such as age, experience, and education?

Objectives

1. To assess MSME employees' perceptions of social media usage.
2. To analyse the role of social media in boosting business visibility and performance.
3. To examine associations between demographic factors and social media adoption opinions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Media Adoption Models in MSMEs

Research on social media adoption in MSMEs highlights that digital platform utilisation is shaped by both technological and organisational factors, drawing heavily from frameworks such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Diffusion of Innovations (DOI). Perceived usefulness and ease of use are consistently found to drive adoption intentions, with MSMEs embracing social platforms when they believe these tools will enhance operational efficiency, customer connectivity, and promotional capabilities (Rasheed & Nafiz, 2022). Organisational readiness—including availability of digital skills, technological infrastructure, and management support—also plays a pivotal role in determining adoption success. Studies emphasise that employees' digital literacy is a critical enabler of adoption, as frontline staff frequently manage social media accounts, respond to customers, and create content for online engagement (Subagja et al., 2022).

2.2 Digitalisation Drivers and Transformations in MSMEs

Digitalisation has become a central component of MSME competitiveness, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the shift toward online operations, virtual communication, and e-commerce solutions (Ellyawati & Kusumatriawan, 2023). Many MSMEs that were previously dependent on traditional marketing discovered the necessity of digital tools to maintain business continuity. Social media emerged as a particularly accessible avenue, enabling even micro-businesses to maintain customer relationships, share product updates, and expand market reach in cost-effective ways. Research shows that MSMEs with strong social media literacy and innovation capability exhibit higher levels of performance, adaptability, and resilience, particularly in dynamic sectors such as tourism and women-led enterprises (Aracil-Jordá et al., 2023; Parlyna et al., 2024). Digitalisation also enhances opportunities for personalised marketing, data-driven decision-making, and real-time engagement. In Indonesia and other developing markets, social media platforms have become essential for branding, driving customer traffic, and participating in digital marketplaces (Apidana & Rusvinasari, 2024). As digital transformation deepens globally, MSMEs unable to adopt these technologies risk falling behind competitors who leverage social media for sustained business growth and innovation.

2.3 Empirical Insights From Previous Research

Past research consistently confirms that social media plays an important role in shaping MSME creativity, marketing effectiveness, and entrepreneurial performance. Studies reveal that digital platforms support the development of innovative product ideas, foster improved communication efficiency, and enhance customer feedback processes, which collectively boost overall business performance (Budiarto et al., 2021). Other findings demonstrate that networking behaviour, communication skills, and partnership building significantly strengthen MSME competitiveness, especially when supported by digital channels (Aulia et al., 2024; Siregar et al., 2023; Sultan & Sultan, 2020).

2.4 Identified Gaps and Need for the Present Study

Although a growing body of research examines the relationship between social media and MSME performance, several gaps remain unaddressed, particularly related to employee-level perspectives.

Much of the existing literature focuses on owner decision-making, entrepreneurial orientation, or organisational outcomes, leaving limited empirical evidence on how employees perceive the importance and impact of social media in daily operations.

This omission is significant because employees are often responsible for implementing digital marketing activities, managing customer interactions, and monitoring online performance metrics.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A descriptive, quantitative research design using a structured questionnaire.

3.2 Sample

The study includes **120 MSME employees** from retail, manufacturing, services, and creative sectors.

3.3 Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling due to accessibility and diversity of respondents.

3.4 Questionnaire Structure

- **Section A:** Demographics
- **Section B:** 15 statements on social media importance (3-point Likert scale: 1 = Disagree, 2 = Neutral, 3 = Agree)
- **Section C:** Business impact perceptions

3.5 Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant association between employees' demographics and their opinion about social media importance.

H02: Social media has no significant impact on MSME business growth.

3.6 Analysis Tools

- Descriptive statistics
- Chi-square tests
- Hypothesis evaluation

4. Data Analysis and Results

This section presents the analysis of the primary data collected from 120 MSME employees across different sectors. The analysis is organised into three major subsections: the demographic profile of respondents, descriptive analysis of employees' perceptions toward social media use, and hypothesis testing using chi-square analysis. Together, these sections provide a comprehensive overview of how social media contributes to MSME operations, marketing activities, and business performance from an employee perspective.

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The first stage of data analysis involved examining the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Understanding the demographic profile is essential because age, education, gender, experience level, and business type can influence familiarity with digital platforms, confidence in using social media tools, and attitudes toward digital transformation. Table 1 provides a summary of demographic variables.

TABLE 1: Demographic Profile of MSME Employees (N = 120)

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	68	56.7
	Female	50	41.7
	Other	2	1.6
Age Group	18–25 years	28	23.3
	26–35 years	52	43.3
	36–45 years	26	21.7
	Above 45 years	14	11.7
Education	High School	14	11.7
	Undergraduate	58	48.3
	Postgraduate	36	30.0
	Professional/Other	12	10.0
Experience in MSME	< 1 year	18	15.0
	1–3 years	42	35.0
	4–6 years	36	30.0
	> 6 years	24	20.0

Type of MSME	Manufacturing	30	25.0
	Retail/Trading	34	28.3
	Services	32	26.7
	Creative/Online	24	20.0

The demographic data indicate a moderately diverse workforce engaging in MSME operations. Gender distribution shows a larger proportion of males (56.7%) compared to females (41.7%), suggesting broad participation from both genders in MSME activities. The sample is relatively young, with 43.3% of respondents aged 26–35 years and an additional 23.3% aged 18–25 years. This supports existing literature stating that younger employees tend to be more digitally active and more willing to adapt to social media technologies (Agustina et al., 2023; Syaifullah et al., 2021).

Educational levels reveal that nearly half of the respondents hold undergraduate degrees (48.3%), and another 30% hold postgraduate qualifications, indicating that the majority possess adequate literacy for digital tool adoption. Experience levels vary, with 35% having 1–3 years of MSME experience and 30% having 4–6 years. This balance reflects a mix of relatively new and more experienced employees, which is important in determining how experience influences the acceptance of new technologies. In terms of MSME categories, respondents represent four sectors—manufacturing, retail, services, and creative enterprises—ensuring that perceptions toward social media are not limited to a single industry but capture multi-sector diversity.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Social Media Perceptions

This section evaluates employees' perceptions of social media across five dimensions: visibility and reach, engagement and relationship building, sales and performance, competitiveness and branding, and challenges related to skills and training. All items were measured using a 3-point Likert scale (1 = Disagree, 2 = Neutral, 3 = Agree). The descriptive results provide insights into how MSME employees view the importance and impact of social media in their business contexts.

Likert Scale: 1 = Disagree, 2 = Neutral, 3 = Agree

TABLE 2: Visibility and Reach (N = 120)

Item	Disagree f (%)	Neutral f (%)	Agree f (%)	Mean	Interpretation
Social media improves business visibility	6 (5.0)	22 (18.3)	92 (76.7)	2.72	High
Social media enhances customer reach	5 (4.2)	20 (16.7)	95 (79.2)	2.75	High
Social media helps in promoting new products	7 (5.8)	24 (20.0)	89 (74.2)	2.68	High

The results show overwhelmingly positive perceptions of social media's role in improving visibility, expanding customer reach, and promoting products. A large majority—over 75% in each item—agreed that social media effectively enhances MSME visibility and reach. These findings confirm existing research demonstrating that social media enables small businesses to overcome geographic and financial barriers, allowing them to expand their customer base cost-effectively (Rachmawati et al., 2018; Maxwell et al., 2024). The high means (2.68–2.75) highlight that employees see visibility and reach as the most significant benefits of social media.

TABLE 3: Engagement and Relationship Building (N = 120)

Item	Disagree f (%)	Neutral f (%)	Agree f (%)	Mean	Interpretation
Social media helps in engaging with customers	8 (6.7)	26 (21.7)	86 (71.7)	2.65	High
Social media allows regular customer feedback	9 (7.5)	30 (25.0)	81 (67.5)	2.60	High
Social media helps build long-term customer relationships	10 (8.3)	32 (26.7)	78 (65.0)	2.57	Mod-High

Employees strongly agree that social media improves engagement with customers and facilitates regular feedback, with more than two-thirds of respondents acknowledging its contribution. Engagement is a key determinant of long-term customer loyalty, and these results align with studies showing that social media fosters continuous communication and stronger brand–customer relationships (Aracil-Jordá et al., 2023; Budiarto et al., 2021). While relationship-building scored slightly lower (2.57), the overall trend still shows that employees recognize social media as a vital tool for maintaining customer interaction and strengthening relationships over time.

TABLE 4: Sales, Growth and Performance Perceptions (N = 120)

Item	Disagree f (%)	Neutral f (%)	Agree f (%)	Mean	Interpretation
Social media contributes to sales growth	12 (10.0)	34 (28.3)	74 (61.7)	2.52	Moderate–High
Social media helps in generating leads	14 (11.7)	36 (30.0)	70 (58.3)	2.47	Moderate–High
Overall business performance improves with social media	11 (9.2)	33 (27.5)	76 (63.3)	2.54	Moderate–High

The descriptive data show moderately high agreement that social media supports sales growth, lead generation, and overall performance. While these mean scores (2.47–2.54) are slightly lower than earlier categories, they still indicate that most employees see clear commercial value in social media. This aligns

with research showing that social media platforms drive customer conversions, brand recognition, and market competitiveness (Apidana & Rusvinasari, 2024; Ellyawati & Kusumatriawan, 2023). However, the stronger presence of neutral responses suggests that some MSMEs may not yet fully optimise social media analytics or targeted advertising.

TABLE 5: Competitiveness and Brand Image (N = 120)

Item	Disagree f (%)	Neutral f (%)	Agree f (%)	Mean	Interpretation
Social media improves brand recognition	9 (7.5)	27 (22.5)	84 (70.0)	2.62	High
Social media helps MSMEs compete with larger firms	13 (10.8)	30 (25.0)	77 (64.2)	2.53	Mod-High
Social media increases MSME credibility in the market	12 (10.0)	31 (25.8)	77 (64.2)	2.54	Mod-High

The results highlight that social media significantly influences MSME competitiveness, brand visibility, and credibility. About 70% of respondents agree that social media enhances brand recognition, suggesting that digital platforms help level the playing field between MSMEs and larger firms. These findings support literature noting that social media allows smaller enterprises to project strong professional identities, improving customer trust and market standing (Agustina et al., 2023; Yacob et al., 2023). The mean scores (2.53–2.62) reinforce that branding benefits are highly acknowledged across employees.

TABLE 6: Challenges, Skills and Modern Necessity (N = 120)

Item	Disagree f (%)	Neutral f (%)	Agree f (%)	Mean	Interpretation
Our MSME has sufficient skills to use social media effectively	18 (15.0)	44 (36.7)	58 (48.3)	2.33	Moderate
Lack of training limits social media effectiveness	20 (16.7)	38 (31.7)	62 (51.7)	2.35	Moderate
Social media is essential for modern MSMEs	4 (3.3)	18 (15.0)	98 (81.7)	2.78	Very High

Although respondents overwhelmingly agree that social media is essential (81.7%), moderate means (2.33–2.35) for skills and training indicate that many MSMEs face capability gaps. Almost half of the employees feel their organisations lack the necessary expertise and training to use social media effectively. These findings align with studies showing that MSMEs often struggle with digital literacy, inadequate training, and limited strategic use of social media (Siregar et al., 2023; Sultan & Sultan, 2020). This suggests that while social media potential is widely recognised, actual implementation capabilities remain restricted.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1

H01: There is no significant association between age group and opinion on the importance of social media for MSME business.

TABLE 7: Age Group × Social Media Importance (N = 120)

Age Group	Moderate/Low Importance f (%)	High Importance f (%)	Total
18–25 years	6 (21.4)	22 (78.6)	28
26–35 years	8 (15.4)	44 (84.6)	52
36–45 years	9 (34.6)	17 (65.4)	26
Above 45 years	6 (42.9)	8 (57.1)	14
Total	29 (24.2)	91 (75.8)	120

TABLE 8: Chi-square Test – Age and Social Media Importance

Statistic	Value
Chi-square	9.86
df	3
p-value	0.020
Decision	Reject H01

The chi-square result ($\chi^2 = 9.86$, $p = 0.020$) indicates a statistically significant association. Younger employees between 18–35 years were far more likely to consider social media highly important. This aligns with literature noting that younger workers have greater digital exposure and adaptability (Damayanti et al., 2024). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that age plays a meaningful role in determining attitudes toward social media importance.

Hypothesis 2

H02: There is no significant association between education level and opinion that social media improves business growth.

TABLE 9: Education × Perception that Social Media Improves Business Growth (N = 120)

Education Level	Moderate/Low Growth f (%)	High Growth f (%)	Total
High School	6 (42.9)	8 (57.1)	14
Undergraduate	16 (27.6)	42 (72.4)	58
Postgraduate	7 (19.4)	29 (80.6)	36
Professional/Other	4 (33.3)	8 (66.7)	12
Total	33 (27.5)	87 (72.5)	120

TABLE 10: Chi-square Test – Education and Business Growth Perception

Statistic	Value
Chi-square	4.92
df	3
p-value	0.085
Decision	Fail to Reject H02

The chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 4.92$, $p = 0.085$) is not significant at the 5% level, meaning the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. This indicates that perceptions of social media's contribution to business growth are consistent across education levels, suggesting widespread recognition of social media benefits regardless of academic background. Several studies similarly report that social media offers intuitive and accessible tools for users with diverse educational experiences (Kumar et al., 2022; Subagja et al., 2022).

Hypothesis 3

H03: There is no significant association between overall perception of social media importance and perceived improvement in MSME business performance.

TABLE 11: Social Media Importance × Perceived Performance Improvement (N = 120)

Social Media Importance	Low/Moderate Performance f (%)	High Performance f (%)	Total
Moderate/Low Importance	18 (62.1)	11 (37.9)	29
High Importance	20 (22.0)	71 (78.0)	91
Total	38 (31.7)	82 (68.3)	120

TABLE 12: Chi-square Test – SM Importance and Performance Perception

Statistic	Value
Chi-square	15.84
df	1
p-value	0.000
Decision	Reject H03

The chi-square result ($\chi^2 = 15.84$, $p = 0.000$) shows a strong significant association. Employees who rated social media as highly important were far more likely to report improved MSME performance. This finding aligns with past studies showing strong links between social media adoption, marketing success, and business growth (Ellyawati & Kusumatriawan, 2023; Maxwell et al., 2024). The null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that positive attitudes towards social media correspond to higher perceived business performance.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study confirm that MSME employees overwhelmingly perceive social media as an essential tool for business improvement, echoing arguments presented in previous literature. The descriptive results show that visibility, customer reach, and promotional capacity are the most strongly endorsed benefits, with more than three-quarters of respondents agreeing that social media significantly increases public awareness of their business. This study demonstrates that MSME employees hold strong and positive perceptions of social media as a vital tool for enhancing business visibility, customer engagement, and overall performance. The descriptive results reveal consistently high agreement that social media expands market reach, strengthens communication, and contributes to sales growth, while the hypothesis tests confirm that age and perceived importance significantly influence employees' views on performance improvement. Despite widespread recognition of its benefits, challenges remain regarding digital skills, training, and organisational preparedness, indicating that many MSMEs are not yet fully equipped to maximise social media's strategic potential. The findings reinforce prior research emphasising the need for digital literacy development, structured training, and leadership support to enhance adoption effectiveness. Overall, the study highlights that empowering employees with adequate skills and resources is essential for achieving sustainable digital transformation and leveraging social media as a driver of MSME growth.

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