




Social Media Utilization of Microbusinesses in A Component City in Northern Philippines

Audrei Ceazar E. Binuluan¹, Sherry Joy D. Gonayon¹, Aleya Mae R. Maborrang¹,
Ma. Ruiza C. Panaligan¹, Khamylle Cate C. Sia¹, Rizza V. Ramos¹,
Karen Joy A. Catacutan^{1*} 

¹University of Saint Louis, Philippines

Received: July 9, 2024

Revised: Sept 10, 2024

Accepted: Sept 21, 2024

Online: Sept 30, 2024

Abstract

Social media has become an essential marketing and communication tool for businesses of all sizes, offering opportunities to engage with customers and promote products in a cost-effective manner. This study explored the use of social media by microbusinesses in a component city in the Northern Philippines, focusing on the platforms used, reasons for adoption, benefits gained, and challenges encountered. A qualitative approach was employed, and 30 microbusiness owners from the service, merchandizing, and manufacturing sectors were selected through quota sampling. Data were collected using an interview guide and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analysis. The results show that Facebook was the most widely used platform, followed by Instagram and TikTok. The primary reason for using social media was to promote products and services. Benefits include wider market reach, increased sales, and improved communication. However, challenges such as market competition and time management difficulties were identified. Despite these hurdles, social media has proved to be a vital tool for business continuity, particularly during a pandemic. The study highlighted the critical role of social media in supporting the growth and sustainability of microbusinesses and recommended further research to explore other social media platforms and business sizes.

Keywords Social Media Utilization, Microbusiness, Market Reach, Sales, Promotion, Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok

INTRODUCTION

Social media for businesses is much more than a fad that is no longer optional but a choice. It has provided enterprises with limitless prospects at little or no expense, and it has progressively gained traction throughout the world over the years (Yabilsu, 2018). Moreover, it is tempting to get swept up when utilizing social media for business; thus, tread cautiously and be informed of the positives and downsides before microbusiness owners begin. Tuguegarao is a 3rd class component city and the capital province of Cagayan North, Philippines. It is a major urban center and primary growth center. They also noted that it is one of the fastest-emerging cities in the Philippines; the city is a convergence of the provinces of Cagayan, Kalinga, Apayao, and northern Isabela. As of 2019, the city's total number of business registrations was 7,286 from both IRA and Local Sources; among these are microbusinesses. According to Section 3 of the Republic Act 6977, microbusinesses are businesses with total assets of not more than 3,000,000 PHP.

As per Jones et al., (2015), the benefits of using websites and social media channels involve increased awareness and queries, improved customer relationships, a rise in the number of prospective consumers, an optimized ability to access customers on a global scale, and the co-promotion of local businesses that strengthen the reputation of small businesses. A similar study was conducted by Ekanem and Erukusin (2017), who argued that social media contributes to or

Copyright Holder:

© Audrei, Sherry, Aleya, Ma. Ruiza, Khamylle,
Rizza, and Karen. (2024)

Corresponding author's email: irpo-cbrd@usl.edu.ph

This Article is Licensed Under:



increases sales figures, brand recognition, and exposure, all of which lead to better performance.

The social media environment provides both horizons and obstacles for businesses (Nadaraja & Yazdanifard, 2013). With that being said, numerous possibilities are lost due to a lack of awareness of the benefits of social media and how to use it to reach consumers. Although social media is a valuable tool for small businesses, its effectiveness is determined by the managers who use it (Barhatov et al., 2017). This was supported by Nwosu and Tafamel (2018), who stated that most businessmen were well-equipped, with a large portion having more than three years of experience. In addition, in the study of Demishkevich (2015) found that small business owners lack experience and means in the domains of Internet marketing, planning, administration, execution, and assessment.

With the changing times, social media has become a venue where businesses offer products and services. As the researchers were intrigued by the versatility of utilizing social media in business settings, stimulated by the eagerness to know how microbusiness owners in Tuguegarao City utilize social media to do their business, and that not a lot of studies in the city have been conducted regarding this, the researchers decided to carry out this study. Additionally, one of the gaps that the researchers addressed in this study is that most of the time, consumers are being asked about their experiences when purchasing through social media. Not much attention is given to how business owners perform their business agenda using social media. Accordingly, this study explored why microbusinesses use social media, the benefits they obtain from it, and the challenges they face when incorporating it into their businesses. Will all these, the study wants to answer the following research question:

1. What types of social media are used by microbusinesses in Northern Philippines?
2. What factors affect the use of social media?
3. What benefits and challenges do they obtain from it?

Therefore, this study explored how microbusinesses in Tuguegarao City utilize social media in their business operations and management as a whole.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Types of Social Media

Social media sites like Facebook are getaways for companies to earn profits and grow. According to Sarkar and Ghosal (2018), small companies can now benefit from Facebook pages that are better positioned to do so. It facilitates sharing and allows reaching billions of clients at a fraction of the cost of other social media marketing. Facebook also provides a platform for obtaining business leads that can then be shared outside the social media network. Yang (2014) stated that Facebook is a platform that allows marketers to engage in a dialog with their customers. It creates an open environment and transparent, allowing information to flow freely between customers and advertizers. Facebook is no longer viewed as a single social media platform. It has provided a diverse set of tools to address the needs of many sectors. It can be used for marketing initiatives. In addition, it can be used as a marketing tool. It is a growing marketing tool that businesses may use (Gopez, 2014).

Moreover, TikTok has become one of the most frequently used channels for marketing efforts because the content posted on this platform is brief, entertaining, trendy, original, and highly interactive. According to Mou (2020), the marketing on TikTok is getting more and more specialized and targeted. The brands can quickly and precisely reach their target audience with the help of the marketing ecosystem. Also, Azpeitia (2021) also stated that TikTok gives companies a new way to work with influencers who can help them reach their target markets. Meliawati et al. (2023) concluded that positive client purchase interest is influenced by TikTok's social media marketing and product quality. This research demonstrates how TikTok's social media marketing strategy

can influence customers by stimulating their interest in purchasing things shared on social media. TikTok can offer information and services that are of high value and are targeted to the demands of consumers in the social element. In addition, just like social media marketing, a good product's quality creates a desire to purchase it, and its appearance has a significant impact on a customer's interest in making a purchase.

Aside from Facebook and TikTok accounts, a new social media site is on the verge of providing a new platform for many marketers, Instagram. Many businesses have recently begun to connect their operations with the Instagram experience. As mentioned in an article published on [BBC News \(2012\)](#), a study has stated that Instagram is used by a significant number of leading brands throughout the world as part of their marketing strategies. Additionally, social media allows marketers to gain a deeper understanding of their customers. As stated by [Dennis \(2014\)](#), in the case of Instagram, leaving and getting comments on photo postings might help you obtain more client feedback about your goods. Followers are typically curious about how a business communicates with its customers; thus, paying attention to comments can improve the relationship with customers. [Huey and Yazdanifard \(2014\)](#) concluded that Instagram is a popular mobile application among social networking sites. It provides marketers with a new channel through which to communicate with customers. Instagram is also free to use. In social network marketing, Instagram is a powerful tool that is distinct from other social networking sites. It provides a more visual platform and makes it easier for users to communicate with one another.

The nature of micro businesses

Microbusinesses are described as self-owned enterprises that require less financing, operate with fewer employees, and often lack machinery. According to Philippine laws and the legal system, the determination of what differentiates a microbusiness from a small and medium enterprise is based on total assets. Microbusiness is defined as an enterprise with a sales turnover of less than 3,000,000 pesos and fewer than 10 employees.

They are typically run by their owners, which means they have greater freedom and fewer boundaries and may manage based on their personal and business objectives ([Adegbuyi et al., 2015](#)). From the above, it can be assumed that many micro business owners run their enterprises in whichever way suits them, with no regard for cautious administration, efficient planning, and strategizing ([Adegbuyi et al., 2015](#)).

There are also several types of micro businesses. The three major kinds are service, merchandizing, and manufacturing sectors. According to the findings of [Kazungu et al. \(2017\)](#), microbusiness owners usually engage in merchandizing since it is easier and less time-consuming. It is followed by service firms and small-scale manufacturing. In the Philippines, the most common type of microbusiness merchandizing is the sari sari store. An informal retailing operation that provides basic consumer goods at cheap prices and is commonly located in the streets ([Gano-An & Gempes, 2020](#)).

Another type of business is hybrid. It is a type of business that combines any of the three major kinds. An example is a restaurant that is uniquely positioned as both a service provider and manufacturer of finished goods. A manufacturer fabricates raw materials for a finished inventory and a service provider fulfills customer orders ([Muller, 2013](#)).

Roles of Social Media in Microbusinesses

In today's technologically driven world, microbusinesses must adapt to changes. Social media offers free access to a vast audience of potential customers who are looking for a product or service ([Fountain, 2021](#)). As everything has become digital, it is also notable that most of the world's population currently uses a variety of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and

Twitter. On top of that, [Mahoney \(2021\)](#) stated that an average individual has about eight social media accounts, and some of these social media platforms do not require payment for advertisements. Business competition is at its extremes with the development of technology; which connects people around the world with devices ([Fawzee et al., 2019](#)). This provides an opportunity for micro businesses to expand and engage with a community of current and future consumers. Hence, it is reasonable to argue that social media marketing is the current and future strategic approach to business advancement ([Veseli-Kurtishi, 2018](#)).

According to new research, social media has helped microbusinesses reach out to more customers and satisfy their needs by enhancing brand awareness, customer base, profit gain, sales volume, and brand image ([Kazungu et al., 2017](#)). Furthermore, social media has also reshaped the business-to-customer relationship through increased participation, interaction, communication, and, most importantly, information control ([Hashim et al., 2021](#)). Social media is a beneficial communication channel for microbusinesses because it allows owners to understand their customers better and helps businesses to have a competitive advantage ([Sweeney, 2018](#)). One of the primary reasons for this is that customers may help by sharing their experiences with other consumers and providing reviews and ratings on the products and services ([Lockett, 2018](#)).

In connection, the findings of [Chatterjee et al. \(2021\)](#) found that social media promotional strategies considerably and favorably impact the long-term growth of SMEs in emerging economies. This was supported by [Syaifulah et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Fakhreldin et al. \(2020\)](#), who noted that using social media for marketing has a positive impact on the operation of MSMEs, particularly in terms of improving sales, customer connections, efficiency, and inventiveness. Moreover, [Ekanem and Erukusin \(2017\)](#) also suggested that microbusinesses should establish their presence on social media platforms to boost their performance. They added that owners should adopt a learning approach, experiment with new strategies, and learn from their experiences what works and does not. In research by [Lakshmi et al. \(2017\)](#) found that many consumers use internet services and research to conduct preliminary product and price research before making their final decision. Furthermore, [Mahliza \(2019\)](#) stressed that using social media has proven to influence microbusinesses' performance, including increased profitability, sales, and a broader market. With this in mind, social media's role in microbusiness is vast, and with more innovations to be come, it will reach greater horizons.

Challenges in Social Media Utilization

Small businesses often face challenges in adopting social media marketing because of several key factors. According to research, the primary barrier is a lack of internet knowledge and marketing skills ([Demishkevich, 2015](#)), which leads to missed opportunities. Limited internet access, such as via smartphones or reliable connections, also hinders adoption ([Oji et al., 2017](#)). Some small business owners are unaware of the benefits of web marketing or struggle to keep up with rapidly evolving technologies ([Hanafizadeh et al., 2012](#); [Chaffey & Patron, 2012](#)). Additionally, businesses may lack the time, staff, or resources to manage social media effectively ([Tran, 2015](#)), and some only use it because competitors do, without reaping significant benefits ([Cesaroni & Consoli, 2015](#)). Social media marketing is not a one-time affair. Businesses should integrate marketing into other processes and systems to take advantage of the internet. [Spinelli et al. \(2013\)](#) concluded that some small business owners are not prepared to use technology effectively and lack a clear strategic goal to guide the implementation of technology. Successful integration of online marketing into a company's operations requires not only online marketing expertise but also suitable IT infrastructure and knowledge of how the two functions together.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the researchers used a qualitative research design to explore the social media use of microbusinesses in a component city in the Northern Philippines. This study was conducted among micro businesses in the city. The participants of this study were 30 microbusiness owners in Tuguegarao City. These microbusinesses were chosen based on the following types of business: service, merchandizing, manufacturing, and hybrid. Quota sampling was employed, with the inclusion criteria that the informants must be business owners of any type as long as the business falls into the microbusiness category, operates for at least five years, and utilizes social media in its business operations for at least two years. The researchers used an interview guide to gather data based on the study objectives and research questions. The interviews consisted of open-ended questions that were checked by content experts. Data were collected from September 2022 to December 2023. Thematic Analysis was used by the researchers to investigate the social media use of microbusinesses in Tuguegarao City. Six Thematic Analysis methodologies provided by [Braun and Clarke \(2012\)](#) were used. Specifically, before evaluating specific items, the researcher had an in-depth overview of all the data acquired during the interview session, which comprised reading the material and writing initial notes, as well as looking over the data to become acquainted with it. The data were then coded by the researchers, who provided a concise summary of the key points and specific interpretations. The researchers then found patterns between them and developed themes that were relevant to the data. Subsequently, the researchers ensured that the themes were accurate and contained relevant data. When the roster of themes has been completed, it is time to name and define each theme, precisely articulating what is meant by each topic and determining how it contributes to understanding the data. Finally, the researchers analyzed the data to address each theme.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study explored how microbusinesses in Tuguegarao City utilize social media in their business operations and management as a whole. Following a detailed examination of the respondents' responses and a thorough analysis of the interview transcripts, similarities were identified and main themes were established by the researchers. These were: (1) Types of social media platforms utilized by microbusinesses in Tuguegarao City, (2) Reasons affecting the utilization of social media among microbusinesses in Tuguegarao City, (3) Benefits obtained by microbusinesses in Tuguegarao City in the utilization of social media, (4) Challenges faced by microbusinesses in Tuguegarao City in the utilization of social media.

Table 1. Types of Social Media Platforms Used by Microbusinesses in Tuguegarao City

Observation	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Facebook	30	100%	1
Instagram	10	33.33%	2
TikTok	3	10%	3

The informants listed the social media platforms that they used for their businesses. The most prevalent type of social media according to the respondents was Facebook.

Facebook is the top most social media platform used in the Philippines. It is not surprising that most microbusinesses use such a platform to squeeze its benefits for the benefit of the business. Facebook offers flexibility in interacting and advertising, and its pervasive reach has particular purposes like selling products. With its utmost popularity, Facebook is a common platform that informants use in their businesses to potentially gain benefits. The average user of Facebook likes two (2) pages per day, making Facebook pages effective for promoting products or reaching a greater extent of the market. Some verbalizations are as follows:

1. *"We are using only Facebook so far. It has been three years since we started our Facebook page and we're always actively using it."-Informant 11*
2. *"After two (2) years since my business was established, I decided to create a Facebook page. It's been three and a half (3.5) years now since I created that page." -Informant 24*
3. *"We only created a Facebook page way back 2019 I think. If I'm not mistaken, it has been 3 years." -Informant 17*

The findings revealed that Facebook is the most used social media platform among microbusinesses. For a span of two (2) years, most of them have maintained a Facebook page for their businesses. It is undeniable that Facebook will be on top of the list because its features are easy to follow, and it is a leisure destination for many potential customers. As per [Al-Hadban et al. \(2014\)](#), in Saudi Arabia, most organizations choose Facebook as the ideal social marketplace because of its wide variety of users and proven brand awareness and reliability. Facebook also offers more than simply a venue for commercial promotion; it is essentially advertising with a social aspect.

Along with its esthetic and enticing features, Instagram is also a platform that businesses exploit for their business purposes. Instagram is characterized by multiple high-quality pictures with captions. Businesses tend to use this to let potential customers get a clear picture of the services or products that micro businesses offer. Some verbalizations are as follows:

1. *"Instagram and Facebook. It's been six (6) years already. The business is going into its 10th year."- Informant 02*
2. *"Just Facebook and Instagram. We've been using it for 5 years."- Informant 12*
3. *"Facebook and Instagram. For more than two (2) years now"- Informant 25*

Instagram for microbusinesses is a growing trend, particularly among young entrepreneurs. It is appreciated for its convenience in connecting with customers when sharing market information. It has also pushed businesses toward e-commerce by encouraging internet advertisement ([Camil, 2017](#)). With respect to the result of the study, Instagram is one of the social media platforms that they use to market their products. Instagram allows companies to generate high-quality images that contribute to the goal of capturing clients' attention. In addition, other than Facebook, most respondents stated that they have maintained an Instagram page for a period of two (2) years.

TikTok is one of the youngest social media platforms introduced in the world. TikTok's popularity increased in 2019 and 2020 when the pandemic hit the globe. With its enhanced feature of adding multiple slides of pictures and a TikTok shop, where videos are only seen, TikTok became one of the great competitors of social media platforms such as Facebook. This allowed some informants to use the platform. Some verbalizations are as follows:

1. *"Facebook, Instagram, even TikTok and also Shopee. Almost two (2) years for the business."- Informant 01:*
2. *"I have been using Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Shopee as my social media platforms for more than two years in my business." -Informant 21*
3. *"Before, I only used Facebook, but now I'm also using TikTok. Two (2) years for FB and five (5) months for TikTok." -Informant 28*

As demonstrated in the result of study, TikTok is an effective platform for micro businesses to stimulate growth. Given this is a new trend, the respondents stated that they had only been using the service for not more than a year. Since TikTok allows users to showcase their products through what is known as the Tiktok shop, microbusinesses can benefit from it because TikTok has amassed millions of users who could be their consumers. This ties well with the study of [Novita et al. \(2022\)](#). It stated that TikTok should be used by microbusinesses to carry out branding strategies for their products. It provides new alternatives and insights to help businesses develop.

Table 2. Reasons for the use of Social Media by Microbusinesses in Tuguegarao City

Observation	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Promotion of products and services	21	70.00%	1
The COVID-19 Pandemic	6	20.00%	2
To keep up with the trends	5	16.67%	3

Promoting products and services is the main reason why micro businesses in Tuguegarao chose to use social media. They realized that social media was an avenue for their businesses to gain more traction and eventually help their businesses grow by increasing sales and drawing new customers to their business. Some verbalizations are as follows:

1. *"We just want our business to grow, to increase our loyal customers."-Informant 1*
2. *"So we can increase our sales and we can sell others, too, not just those who come to our store."- Informant 15*
3. *"Social media has a wide scope to accommodate customers and reach others in different parts of the world. I am the one who handles my social media accounts. We should be familiarized with each platform to utilize it better for business and also sometimes we need to spend some money to boost our businesses." -Informant 21*

Within this research, the informants constantly mentioned the promotion of their products and services as a factor that affected their decision to use social media in their businesses. Social media applications in today's world are the most efficient tools for small business entrepreneurs. Normally, all small businesses use social media platforms for the advertising and publicity of their products, and they make fan pages for their followers to warmly welcome suggestions and opinions that help improve the business (Shabbir et al., 2016). The results of this study reveal that social media is an excellent platform where companies can boost their sales and promotions because it is free and convenient. With more businesses adopting social media these days, it is no longer optional.

The pandemic has caused a significant change in how businesses are managed. Micro businesses in Tuguegarao City are no exception. Owners depended on social media platforms to sell their products due to restrictions caused by COVID-19. As a result, microbusinesses are forced to adapt to change and try to save their business by using platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. Through these platforms, businesses are slowly regaining sales and reaching more consumers. Some verbalizations are as follows:

1. *"As of today, we can see that social media is the main platform. Especially when the pandemic hit, social media became an avenue for business."- Informant 1*
2. *"One reason why we created our page is of course because of the ongoing pandemic, we can't sell face-to-face due to strict policy set by the government. That's why we created our facebook page so we can sell our products online and increase our sales."- Informant 11:*
3. *"It has been hard earning revenue especially on the peak of the pandemic. That's why we were forced to create a page to post what we can offer. So, we can gain customers from various places."- Informant 14:*

The pandemic has caused many changes in our society, especially in the business sector. As restrictions were implemented, microbusinesses also had a hard time coping. According to the informants, the pandemic restrictions forced them to enter social media. They used social media to keep up with the changes caused by COVID-19. In the study of Engidaw (2022), small businesses moving online is one of the most significant developments to emerge during the COVID-19 pandemic, creating new opportunities to tackle various problems. Indeed, the internet remains a lifeline for many small enterprises, allowing them to survive the crisis. For some of these

microbusinesses, social media became a form of hope amid darkness.

Social media are playing a vital role in business today. Since everything has become digital, micro businesses have decided to set up social media accounts on various platforms. According to them, it is important to keep up with the trends. Social media is an easy and affordable way to reach a wider audience; thus, trends should be followed to allow businesses to break market boundaries. Some verbalizations are as follows:

1. *"Since there was a pandemic, Facebook became popular like that. It's even more threatening that almost everyone has an account."*- Informant 6
2. *"It was timely especially when there was covid. The number of customers also seems to be increasing."*-Informant 7
3. *"Because of the pandemic it has been the trend, so I tried to use one too."*-Informant 28

A trend is a shift or progression toward something different or fresh. To thrive and exist in the market, businesses tend to ride with momentum to meet the demands of society. Social media is a phenomenon that has altered how businesses function. Businesses can now access materials that would not otherwise be available to them (Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013). Being left out of what the market has a high demand for will make businesses perform inadequately. The results explicitly show that social media utilization has driven microbusinesses through extreme fluctuations in the market environment and the evolution of social media in various aspects.

Table 3. Benefits of Microbusinesses in Tuguegarao City's Utilization of Social Media

Observation	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Wider market reach	19	63.33%	1
Increase sales	17	56.67%	2
Low-cost revolutionary promotion platform	5	16.67%	3

A benefit that microbusinesses experienced was market reach. Marketers connect and interact with potential clients through social media on sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. Marketers engage their audience by establishing an effective social media strategy and producing interesting content. Some verbalizations are as follows:

1. *"People become more aware of the business and the amount of orders increased."*-Informant 04
2. *"More people can see it and they are encouraged to buy."*- Informant 07
3. *"It is very beneficial, it is more convenient to reach your customers, they can easily know about our store and our products."*- Informant 11

Regarding the manifestation through market reach, related literature reinforces the idea that using social media can provide microbusinesses with a wider market reach. Pancaningrum and Rahayu (2017) stated that social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram have emerged as significant tools for seeking a wider customer base. It is also a way to convey messages to target customers (Nadaraja & Yazdanifard, 2013). The results of the study show that the informants gradually shifted to social media to promote their products. Since the pandemic imposed tight restrictions on mobility, social media platforms have proven efficient strategies for increasing market reach.

Increasing sales is a thing that micro businesses hope will happen. Social media platforms are a crucial component of the sales funnel, which is the procedure through which a new contact transforms into a client. Social networks will become more crucial for product searches and e-commerce as the number of individuals using social media continues to rise and social sales tools develop. Thus, social marketing initiatives should now align with sales objectives. Some verbalizations are as follows:

1. *"Yes, you'll have a lot of sales and you'll receive feedback, including bad ones."*- Informant 01

2. *"There is an increase in inquiries and sales."- Informant 06*
3. *"Yes, we can increase our sales. Nope. Same way, when we increase our sales since we convince new buyers."- Informant 15*

According to [Jablonski \(2016\)](#), businesses rely on sales to survive, sustain, and scalability. Given the speed of internet communication and the abundance of internet sources, doing business on social media has become more profitable ([Duffett, 2015](#)). On the concept of utilizing social media to be beneficial in terms of increasing sales, this was perceived by the informants as one of their primary reasons for choosing to continue using social media in their mode of business. Several studies have asserted that bringing social media into play is indeed valuable for improving sales ([Marshall et al., 2012](#); [Wardati et al., 2019](#); [Malik & Siddique, 2016](#)).

The ability to target your audience based on their demographics, interests, and behaviors is one of the key reasons that social media is ideal for marketing initiatives. Promotion on social media is heavily reliant on advertising. It may be the most effective tactic to employ when promoting your business on social media. Social advertisements offer a wider audience than regular posts because they can be targeted more precisely, allowing an owner to connect with customers who have not yet heard of the company. Some verbalizations are as follows:

1. *"Yes, reach our consumers better, boost sales, promotion of products and services." -Informant 05*
2. *"Social media is one of the best ways to promote your products since most of the people right now have access to it." -Informant 08*
3. *"Yes, since most of the students are from rural areas who want to study in universities, I came up to this idea to use soc med to advertise or disseminate about my rental house" -Informant 10*

As per [Tsimonis and Dimitriadis \(2014\)](#), social media is a low-cost revolutionary marketing technique for attracting, retaining, and monitoring customer behavior, which leads to greater sales. In accordance with the result of the study, the respondents stated that they opted to use social media since they incur none or a small amount when promoting their products. This was also supported in the study of [Iblasi et al. \(2016\)](#), in which they stipulated that due to its inexpensiveness and the capability to reach a huge number of targeted customers in a short period of time, advertising via social media is essential for small businesses.

Social media provides a platform for communication between marketers and peers, clients, and potential customers. It allows one to read a message in a casual, conversational manner and personalizes the brand. Everyone uses social media to promote their businesses, goods, and services—from microbusiness owners to some of the largest corporations in the world. Companies use these free tools, like Tiktok, Instagram, and Facebook, to mix technology and social engagement using words, photos, and videos. Some verbalizations are as follows:

1. *"Yes, you'll have a lot of sales and you'll receive feedback, including bad ones" -Informant 01*
2. *"I can easily interact with my customers and even the potential ones." -Informant 28*
3. *"I get to learn more about my customer, which I can use to make better business decisions." - Informant 30*

The manner in which people interact, collaborate, acquire, and produce is radically altered by social media. Social media highlight one of the most revolutionary effects of information technology on business, whether inside or outside the firm's premises. In the study of [Cardon and Marshall \(2015\)](#), the findings indicate that and Gen Y business professionals believe that social networking platforms will become major tools for team communication in the future. That future that is now happening. With respect to the results of this study, the respondents disclosed that they were using social media to communicate with their clients regarding queries, feedback, and the like.

Table 4. Challenges Faced by Microbusinesses in Tuguegarao City in the Utilization of Social Media

Observation	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Increased rivalry and competition in the market	7	23.33%	2
Struggle in managing time	2	6.67%	3

One of the main challenges that microbusinesses encounter in using social media is the presence of competitors, which is common even in traditional business settings. As stated by the informants, comparisons of the same products are some things they cannot escape. As a result, they consistently update their products, so they differ from other brands. Some verbalizations are as follows:

1. *"Of course, in doing business you can't escape comparisons. That's the only challenge we had"- Informant 1*
2. *"Having many competitors who have the same products. We have the same products, and we can't avoid the fact that other sellers will gain some customers due to comparison that's why we find cheaper suppliers to sell at a cheaper price."- Informant 14*
3. *"Since I started during the pandemic, there are many competitors in the business. So, I need to give more, better, and new products to engage with customers." -Informant 21*

Increased rivalry, congestion on social media, and the emergence of social media algorithms have transformed the entire landscape for anyone wishing to market their businesses in recent years. Social media used to be a perk for businesses and innovators of all types—a way to get a leg up in the competition—but now, it is a prerequisite (Nunley, 2017). With this in mind, Khurana (2019) stated that the goal of e-commerce should be to dominate. If one does not have this drive, whether discreetly or explicitly, he/she is not going to stay long in e-commerce. In fact, they leverage their competitors' insights to uncover new business prospects. If so for every businessman, then there will be competition in the social media marketplace. This supports the results of this study, which showed that competition is an inevitable challenge for any platform that a microbusiness uses. Some informants affirmed that selling similar products in the same channel was one of the difficulties they faced while using social media in their business.

On the positive side of using social media to promote and sell products or services, it might be a little struggle to allocate time to giving immediate feedback or response to customers online. Considering that microbusinesses have in-store customers, they also have to deal with them, which makes it a little harder to communicate with both types of customers. Some verbalizations are as follows:

1. *"Yes, I had, managing my time in using facebook is a challenge since at the same time we entertain in-store customers. I just leave my phone open in order to monitor it in case something will pop-up. I have overcome everything so far."-Informant 11*
2. *"...It's just that I do not have someone who can manage the accounts for me especially when I get loads of demands."-Informant 28*

Becoming engrossed in social media while employing it for business is not a good deal either. As said by Spillane (2019) stated, when presented with several duties, most online entrepreneurs choose to complete them all at once. In accordance with the study, most of the informants indicated that they are the ones managing the platform they are using and, at the same time, are in charge of the physical business, which could be a time-consuming task. Businesses that do not have a solution to handle such social networks will struggle to compete (Nadaraja & Yazdanifard, 2013). As per Tan (2014), an online store owner must understand that it takes a lot of mental capacity to manage a business, and it is not something you can put on autopilot and ignore; otherwise, it could damper the success of the business.

CONCLUSION

This study provides important insights for microbusinesses in Tuguegarao and beyond. Facebook has emerged as the dominant platform for promoting and managing small businesses, suggesting its critical importance in reaching local markets. Instagram and TikTok are less commonly used, but their popularity is growing, especially among younger entrepreneurs. The study also highlights the adaptability of businesses during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, where social media became a lifeline for survival. Key motivations for using social media include promotion, adaptation, and trend-following. Benefits such as expanded market reach, sales growth, and cost-effective promotion are evident though challenges like increased competition and the need for ongoing engagement remain. Businesses must strategically use social media to maintain a competitive edge.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has several limitations. First, this study focuses solely on microbusinesses in Tuguegarao City, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or types of businesses because the local economic context might differ. Additionally, the study concentrates on three social media platforms—Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok—excluding other emerging platforms that could provide a broader view of how microbusinesses leverage technology. The study also lacks an in-depth exploration of the long-term effects of social media on business sustainability, particularly beyond the pandemic. Another limitation is the reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce bias or inaccuracies when assessing the effectiveness of social media use. Finally, the study's time frame, focused on the post-pandemic period, might affect its relevance as digital trends evolve.

Future research should broaden its scope by including microbusinesses from different regions and sectors to enable comparative analysis. It should also investigate platform-specific strategies across various industries and consider other digital tools and emerging platforms like e-commerce and messaging apps (e.g., WhatsApp, Telegram), to provide a more comprehensive understanding of digital transformation in microbusinesses.

REFERENCES

- Adegbuyi, O. A., Akinyele, F.A., & Akinyele, S.T. (2015). Effect of Social Media Marketing on Small Scale Business Performance in Ota-Metropolis, Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management*, 2(3), 275-283. <https://doi.org/10.3126/ijssm.v2i3.12721>
- Al-Hadban, N., Al-Ghamdi, H., Al-Hassoun, T., & Hamdi, R. (2014). The Effectiveness of Facebook as a Marketing Tool (Saudi Arabia case study). *International Journal of Management & Information Technology*, 10(2), 1815-1827. <https://doi.org/10.24297/ijmit.v10i2.637>
- Azpeitia, J. (2021). Social Media Marketing and its Effects on TikTok Users. *International Business*, 10(2), 11-12. <https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:amk-202104205240>
- Barhatov, V., Campa, A., & Pletnev, D. (2017). The Impact of Internet Technologies Development on Small Business Success in Russia. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 238, 552 – 561. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2018.04.035>
- BBC News. (2012). *Instagram Seeks Right to Sell Access to Photos to Advertisers*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-20767537>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic Analysis. In H. Cooper, P. M. Camic, D. L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf, & K. J. Sher (Eds.), *APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology, Vol. 2. Research Designs: Quantitative, Qualitative, Neuropsychological, and Biological* (pp. 57–71). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-004>
- Camil, A. J. (2017). *The Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing in Small Business Performance: A Case*

- Study of Central Business District Nairobi* (Doctoral dissertation, United States International University-Africa). <http://erepo.usiu.ac.ke/11732/3476>
- Cardon, P. W., & Marshall, B. (2015). The Hype and Reality of Social Media Use for Work Collaboration and Team Communication. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 52(3), 273–293. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2329488414525446>
- Cesaroni, F., & Consoli, D. (2015). Are Small Businesses Really Able to Take Advantage of Social Media. *Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management*, 13, 257–268.
- Chaffey, D., & Patron, M. (2012). From Web Analytics to Digital Marketing Optimization: Increasing the Commercial Value of Digital Analytics. *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice*, 14(1), 30–45. <https://doi.org/10.1057/dddmp.2012.20>
- Chatterjee, S., Chaudhuri, R., Sakka, G., Grandhi, B., Galati, A., Siachou, E., & Vrontis, D. (2021). Adoption of Social Media Marketing for Sustainable Business Growth of SMEs in Emerging Economies: The Moderating Role of Leadership Support. *Sustainability*, 13(21), 12134. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132112134>
- Demishkevich, M. (2015). *Small Business Use of Internet Marketing: Findings from Case Studies*. Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies. 1340.
- Dennis, Deana D. (2014). Successfully Social: A Non-Profit's Guide to Modern Social Media Marketing. *Senior Honors Theses*. 454. <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/honors/454>
- Duffett, R. G. (2015). Facebook Advertising's Influence on Intention-to-Purchase and Purchase amongst Millennials. *Internet Research*, 25(4), 498–526. <http://koreascience.or.kr/article/JAKO201816357065443.pdf>
- Ekanem, I., & Erukusin, K. S. (2017). The Emergence of Social Media and Its Impact on SME Performance. In *Technological Integration as a Catalyst for Industrial Development and Economic Growth* (pp. 132-150). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-2319-2.ch005>
- Engidaw, A. (2022). Small Businesses and Their Challenges during COVID-19 Pandemic in Developing Countries: In the Case of Ethiopia. *J Innov Entrep* 11, 1. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13731-021-00191-3>
- Fakhreldin, H., Ayman, A., & Miniesy, R. (2020). Social Media use and its Effect on the Performance of MSMEs in Egypt. *Proceedings of the European Conference on Innovation & Entrepreneurship*, 251–260. <https://doi.org/10.34190/EIE.20.056>
- Fawzee, B. K., Sofiyah, F. R., Sudardjat, I., & Muda, I. (2019). The Role of Technology Marketing Micro Business, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Agents for Repurchase Intention and Its Impact on the Community Satisfaction (Case in Indonesia). *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research*, 8(12), 1724-1730.
- Fountain, T. M. (2021, December 10). *Council Post: Why Small Businesses and Startups should Invest in Social Media Marketing*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2021/01/25/why-small-businesses-and-startups-should-invest-in-social-media-marketing/?sh=2fd513bb563e>
- Gano-An, J. C., & Gempes, G. P. (2020). The Success and Failures of Sari-Sari Stores: Exploring the Minds of Women Micro-Entrepreneurs. *HOLISTICA—Journal of Business and Public Administration*, 11(2), 25-51. <https://doi.org/10.2478/hjbpa-2020-0017>
- Gopez, R. A. (2014). *The Effectiveness of Facebook as a Marketing Tool for Zalora Philippines as Perceived by its Fans* (Doctoral Dissertation). University of Philippines Manila, 2010-20584. <http://dspace.cas.upm.edu.ph/jspui/bitstream/123456789/1161/1/F48.pdf>
- Hanafizadeh, P., Behboudi, M., Ahadi, F., & Varkani, F., G. (2012). Internet Advertising Adoption: A Structural Equation Model for Iranian SMEs. *Internet Research*, 22(4).

- <https://doi.org/10.1108/10662241211251015>
- Hashim, N. F., Alek, S. K., Asmali, K. N., Rosli, R., Halim, N. A., & Almunawar, M. N. (2021). Utilization of Social Media by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Brunei Darussalam. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 11(1), 8–20. <https://doi.org/10.32479/irmm.10906>
- Huey, L. S., & Yazdanifard, R. (2014). How Instagram can be used as a Tool in Social Network Marketing. *Kuala Lumpur: College of Art and Technology-(SNHU) Program HELP*.
- Iblasi, W. N., Bader, D. M., & Al-Qreini, S. A. (2016). The Impact of Social Media as a Marketing Tool on Purchasing Decisions (Case Study on SAMSUNG for Electrical Home Appliances). *International Journal of Managerial Studies and Research*, 4(1), 14-28. <https://www.arcjournals.org/international-journal-of-managerial-studies-and-research/volume-4-issue-1/2>
- Jagongo, A., & Kinyua, C. (2013). The Social Media and Entrepreneurship Growth. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(10), 213-227.
- Jablonski, A. (2016). Scalability of Sustainable Business Models in Hybrid Organizations. *Sustainability*, 8, 194. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su8030194>
- Jones, N., Borgman, R., & Ulusoy, E. (2015). Impact of Social Media on Small Businesses. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 22(4), 611-632. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-09-2013-0133>
- Kazungu, I., Matto, G., & Massawe, H. (2017). Social Media and Performance of Micro Enterprises in Moshi, Tanzania. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 7(5), 144-157. <http://repository.mocu.ac.tz/xmlui/handle/123456789/318>
- Khurana, A. (2019). *E-Commerce Basics: Types, Trends, and How Transactions Work*. <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/let-s-ask-the-basic-question-what-is-ecommerce-1141599>
- Lakshmi, V., Mahboob, A., & Choudhary, A. (2017). A Study on Impact of Social Media on Small and Medium Enterprises. *International Journal of Scientific Development and Research*, 2(11), 64-71.
- Lockett, A. (2018). *Online Marketing Strategies for Increasing Sales Revenues of Small Retail Business*. Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies. <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/5896/>
- Mahoney, M. (2021, December 15). *The Impact of Social Media on Business in 2022*. Single Grain. <https://www.singlegrain.com/blog-posts/impact-of-social-media-in-todays-business-world/>
- Mahliza, F. (2019). The Influence of E-Commerce Adoption Using Social Media Towards Business Performance of Micro Enterprises. *International Journal of Business, Economics and Law*, 18(5).
- Malik, H., & Siddique, M. (2016). *Impact of Social Media on Company's Growth: A Case Study of Smart Eye AB* (Master Thesis). Jonkoping University.
- Marshall, G. W., Moncrief, W. C., Rudd, J. M., & Lee, N. (2012). Revolution in Sales: The Impact of Social Media and Related Technology and the Selling Environment. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 32, 349– 363. <https://doi.org/10.2753/PSS0885-3134320305>
- Meliawati, T., Gerald, S. C., & Aruman, A.D. (2023). The Effect of Social Media Marketing TikTok and Product Quality Towards Purchase Intention. *Journal of Consumer Sciences*, 8(1), 77-92. <https://doi.org/10.29244/jcs.8.1.77-92>
- Mou, J. B. (2020). *Study on Social Media Marketing Campaign Strategy--TikTok and Instagram* (Doctoral dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology).
- Muller, C. (2013). The Restaurant as Hybrid: Lean Manufacturer and Service Provider. *Boston Hospitality Review*, 1.

- Nadaraja, R., & Yazdanifard, R. (2013). Social Media Marketing: Advantages and Disadvantages. *Center of Southern New Hampshire University*, 1-10.
- Novita, D., Yuliani, N., Erzed, N., & Herwanto, A. (2022). Effectiveness of Digital Strategic Branding for MSMEs using TikTok. *International Journal of Social Science*, 2(2), 1267-1270. <https://doi.org/10.53625/ijss.v2i2.3052>
- Nunley, D. (2017). *5 Reasons Why the ROI of Social Media is Higher than You Think*. Mission.org. <https://medium.com/the-mission/5-reasons-why-the-roi-of-social-media-is-higher-than-you-think-41b5d91947a1>
- Nwosu, L. N., & Tafamel, E. A. (2018). Effects of Social Media Entrepreneurship on Performance of Selected Small and Medium Enterprises in Onitsha Metropolis, Anambra State, Nigeria. *The International Journal of Management*, 4, 185.
- Oji, O. N. E., Iwu, C. G., & Tengeh, R. K. (2017). Social Media Adoption Challenges of Small Businesses: The Case of Restaurants in the Cape Metropole, South Africa. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 6(4), 1-12.
- Pancaningrum E., & Rahayu W. A. (2017). The Effectiveness of Facebook as an Advertising Strategic Method Using EPIC: A Case Study of Mie Jupe Jombang. *Chinese Business Review* 16(7), 309-315. <https://doi.org/10.17265/1537-1506/2017.07.001>
- Sarkar, M. D., & Ghosal, I. (2018). Impact of Social Media in Small Business Industry: A Study on Facebook. *International Journal on Recent Trends in Business and Tourism (IJRTBT)*, 2(3), 33-39. <https://ejournal.lucp.net/index.php/ijrtbt/article/view/191>
- Shabbir, M. S., Ghazi, M. S., & Mehmood, A. R. (2016). Impact of Social Media Applications on Small Business Entrepreneurs. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 6(3), 203-05. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4172/2223-5833.1000203>
- Spillane, J. (2019). *How Multitasking Kills Your Online Business (And What to do Instead)*. Business2Community. <https://www.business2community.com/online-marketing/how-multitasking-kills-your-online-business-and-what-to-do-instead-02172707>
- Spinelli, R., Dyerson, R., & Harindranath, G. (2013). IT Readiness in Small Firms. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 20(4), 807-823. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-01-2012-0012>
- Sweeney, D. (2018, August 9). *The Importance of Social Media for Small Business*. <https://www.business.com/articles/social-media-small-business-importance/>
- Syaifulah, J., Syaifudin, M., Sukendar, M. U., & Junaedi, J. (2021). Social Media Marketing and Business Performance of MSMEs during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 8(2), 523-531. <https://doi.org/10.13106/JAFEB.2021.VOL8.NO2.0523>
- Tan, G. (2014). Why Multitasking is Bad for Your Online Business. <https://www.volusion.com/blog/why-multitasking-is-bad-for-your-online-business/>
- Tran, N. (2015, March) Adoption and Utilization of Social Media by Micro-enterprises in Jyväskylä. https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/90131/Nhu%20Tran_Thesis.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- Tsimonis, G., & Dimitriadis, S. (2014). Brand Strategies in Social Media. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 32, 328-344. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-04-2013-0056>
- Veseli-Kurtishi, T. (2018). Social Media as a Tool for the Sustainability of Small and Medium Businesses in Macedonia. *European Journal of Sustainable Development*, 7(4), 262-262. <https://doi.org/10.14207/ejsd.2018.v7n4p262>
- Wardati, N. K., & Mahendrawathi, E. R. (2019). The Impact of Social Media Usage on the Sales Process in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs): A Systematic Literature Review. *Procedia Computer Science*, 161, 976-983. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2019.11.207>

- Yabilsu, S. J. (2018). Impact of Social Media on Brand Equity and Profitability in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Nigeria. *Covenant Journal of Business and Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.20370/cjbss.v9i2.1193>
- Yang, D. (2014). Using Facebook for Marketing Case: Picnic Finland Oy. *Lahti University of Applied Sciences*, 49. <https://www.theseus.fi/handle/10024/7911>