

# Embracing Social Media as Business Marketing Tool: Its Use, Opportunities, and Challenges for Micro Businesses

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analyze the use, opportunities, and challenges of micro-business marketing tools. A valuable marketing tool for micro businesses looking to engage clients and build their business. Social marketing theory aims to merge marketing ideas, principles, tools, strategies, and socially useful concepts to enhance communication and benefit society. This study used a descriptive quantitative research method, with 246 participants filling out survey questionnaires and sharing their thoughts on the usage of social media in micro-business. To provide an overview of impact assessments, a quantitative and subjective questionnaire created by the researcher was employed. Furthermore, the study found that micro-business owners strongly recognize Social media as a powerful tool for micro-business, recognizing its positive impact on business growth, cost reduction, and customer service improvement, and despite acknowledging persistent challenges such as competition and trust issues, the finding emphasizes the potential for Social media to create new opportunities.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Micto businessess, Challenges, Opportunities

## INTRODUCTION

In today's technologically advanced world, social media has emerged as a marketing tool for micro-enterprises, bringing people together and making communication easier. It is incredibly advantageous to all types of businesses and entrepreneurs and has become increasingly popular in recent years. However, of all the social media platforms, Facebook exposes businesses to the largest audience and offers the most comprehensive set of commercial capabilities of any social network.

The term "social media" refers to new media tactics that involve communication between individuals or groups of people. Social networking services allow individuals or organizations to communicate, and micro businesses can benefit from social media. Businesses can make their marketing more appealing to all clients by using social media platforms such as Facebook. According to Escalano, V (2023), using Facebook for your small business may appear tough because the platform's regulations and algorithms change on a frequent basis. He stated that, despite the frequent problems, using efficient methods makes Facebook the best choice for businesses on social media. It gives you access to a targeted audience, which helps you engage with customers and expand your online audience. Additionally, Sandberg, S. (2021) also says that Facebook is in the business of small businesses, and over a million enterprises use this app every month to construct virtual shops and reach clients, with millions relying on it to assist them shift online since the pandemic began. According to Bianchi, C., & Andrews, L. (2015). believes that regardless of the obstacles they encounter in 2021 and beyond, Facebook will continue to do everything it can to help them survive

and, hopefully, prosper online.

Despite the ubiquitous use of social media for business purposes, there has been little research into how to access the usage, problems, and opportunities of social media for micro businesses. So, the study's gap is focused on how micro businesses grew and how their industry went viral during the pandemic, as micro businesses existed both before and after the pandemic. Micro businesses were common before the epidemic, but despite the hurdles, social media emerged as a marketing tool for micro businesses. However, according to Ibrahim, B., and Aljarah, A. (2018) despite the growing use of social media for business purposes, it was discovered that some micro-firms lack internet access, gadgets, or knowledge of how to use social media. Furthermore, the majority of the enterprises were impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak, with some going bankrupt. Furthermore, Internet selling via social media is gaining traction as a competitive advantage for reaching target clients. The purpose of this study is to assess micro businesses' social media utilization, difficulties, and potential.

This research study is vital because it will provide insight into why social media is an important marketing tool for micro businesses. Understanding its usage, problems, and potential teaches researchers and micro business owners how to better use social media as a marketing tool for micro businesses and contact their target clients via social media. Furthermore, this study will contribute to the current body of information on this topic, which will benefit future generations.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study used a quantitative research approach. The primary data-gathering tool utilized in the study was questionnaires. The questionnaire data was evaluated using descriptive statistics before being synthesized and processed to determine the results. The study's findings were presented in tables to make them easier to read. Furthermore, this study used a quantitative research design to collect numerical data and provide objective interpretations.

### **Research Instrument**

The researcher instrument utilized research-created survey questionnaire respondents for validation by experts who functioned as validators of a questionnaire or tool in content validity research and have a comparable level of interest, background, and appropriate competence in the given issue. Academic specialists and practitioners from the subject or industry evaluated the survey instrument's face and content validity. It was also tested and retested to guarantee that the questionnaire would effectively collect the data needed for this study. The results of validation and dependability were used to develop the instrument. The respondents completed survey questionnaires and picked from a list of answers provided by the researchers. The questionnaire was organized into four pieces. Each component of the questionnaire was answered using a 4-point Likert scale.

### **Respondents and Statistical Treatment**

The study's participants were registered micro business owners from the Province of Surigao del Sur who were active on social media. The statistical treatments utilized in this study included frequency counting, which was used to determine the frequency of respondents' responses to the demographic profile. The weighted mean was used to calculate the counted replies to each indication and to interpret the responses, while Pearson product-moment correlation was used to quantify the link between the respondent's profile, opportunities, and the challenges encountered.

### Data gathering procedure

To develop rapport and cooperation, the researchers obtained consent from the local government before collecting the data. Before disseminating the questionnaire to respondents, the researchers invited experts to validate it. Furthermore, a letter of authority was written to the Governor’s/Mayor’s office requesting permission to conduct the study among micro-businesses in Surigao del Sur. After obtaining authorization, the researcher handed the validated survey questionnaire to the respondents in person, meticulously according to all health and safety guidelines. The respondents then completed the survey questionnaire, which was retrieved on the same day it was distributed or as soon as they finished it.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

<b>Age</b>	<b>Age Bracket</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank</b>
	18-25	39	15.85%	4
	26-35	62	25.20%	1
	36-45	53	21.54%	3
	46-55	54	21.95%	2
	56-60	27	10.98%	5
	61 above	11	4.47%	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>246</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	
<b>Sex</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank</b>
	Male	101	41.06%	2
	Female	145	58.94%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>246</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	
<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank</b>
	Single	119	48.37%	1
	Married	97	39.43%	2
	Widowed	17	6.91%	3
	Separated	13	5.28%	4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>246</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	
<b>Monthly Income</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank</b>
	Less than P50,000	97	39.43%	1
	P50,001-250,000	71	28.86%	2
	P250,001-500,000	53	21.54%	3
	more than P500,001	25	10.16%	4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>246</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	
<b>Years in Business Operation</b>	<b>No. of years</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank</b>
	Less than 3 years	71	28.86%	2
	4-6 years	88	35.77%	1
	7-9 years	48	19.51%	3
	10 years and above	39	15.85%	4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>246</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of micro business owners’ demographic

characteristics, including age, gender, marital status, monthly income, and enterprise operations. The majority of respondents are 26-35 years old, with the greatest rank and a percentage of 4.47%. According to McAdam et.al (2019) Individual-level factors influence organizations, and these interactions result in emergent, collective, and organizational-level results, which may influence macro-level institutional determinants that cause gender inequalities in entrepreneurs’ growth objectives. Welter et al. (2017). However, respondents aged 60 and up have the lowest percentage and rank. The majority of responses are female, with the greatest rank and a percentage of 58.94%; males have the lowest rank and a percentage of 41.06%. In terms of marital status, the majority of respondents were single (48.37%) According to Mehay, S and Bowman W. (2005) In the sphere of doing business, there are estimates on the delivery of business services and control for selection originating from business decisions. The size of the marital status and productivity effect decreases but stays substantial in most circumstances. The majority of single people are willing to start a business because they have the most free time in their lives. , with separated coming in last (5.28%) according to Mehay, S. and Bowman W, (2005) . In terms of monthly income, respondents with less than P50,000 pesos had the greatest rank (39.43%), while those with more than ₱500,000.00 had the lowest rank (10.16%). In terms of years of business operation, 4-6 years received the greatest rank and a percentage of 35.77%, while 10 years or more received the lowest rank and a percentage of 15.85%.

The demographic research provides useful insights into the micro business scene, According to Shabbir, M.S et.al (2016) contributions to effectuation provide an additional interpretive framework that supports the study’s conclusions. This emphasis on adaptive decision-making is consistent with the study’s findings of primarily younger entrepreneurs skillfully using resources in uncertain situations. The report acknowledges the important role of women. Furthermore, the fact that nearly half of the respondents acknowledged financial difficulties emphasizes the theoretical framework’s importance in facilitating a full comprehension of demographic profiles and decision-making processes in micro business settings.

Table 2. Usage of Social Media to Micro businesses

Indicators	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Social Commerce	3.52	Strongly Agree
Social Media	3.41	Strongly Agree
Perceived Usefulness	3.38	Strongly Agree
Perceived Ease of Use	3.35	Strongly Agree
Satisfaction	3.20	Agree
Trust	3.51	Strongly Agree
<b>Over-all</b>	<b>3.39</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

The data in Table 2 show that the highest-rated variable is social commerce, According to Nasabi and Sujaya (2023) *Social commerce applications and social interactions on the Internet created new economic opportunities. This is mostly due to the spread of social networking sites, which has also contributed to the growth of e-commerce* with a mean of 3.52, while the lowest-rated variable is agreed, with a mean of 3.20 and an adjectival rating of agree. This suggests that the majority of respondents firmly believe that social commerce provides considerable benefits to organizations, such as increased business growth, lower costs, better customer service, and expanded distribution channels. As a result, the researcher believes that social media can help micro businesses succeed. According to the study’s findings, micro-businesses strongly support the use of social media. Social networking is a wonderful tool for linking businesses and customers, resulting in mutual value. This backs up respondents’ positive attitudes toward social commerce, particularly in areas such as business growth and customer service. According to Zarpou et.al (2012) The analysis tries to extract and potentially use the qualities of the found patterns in sales strategy and marketing

and found that social commerce is seen positively. Emphasizing social commerce as a beneficial and advantageous tactic in a variety of contexts. The usage of social media is a critical component of today’s world. It enables users to stay connected and share ideas, thoughts, and opinions with others in a safe and secure setting. It can also be used to promote businesses, groups, and causes, as well as keep up with current events and trends.

Table 3. Opportunities of Social Media to Micro businesses

Indicators	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Variety	3.56	Strongly Agree
Communication	3.57	Strongly Agree
Cost-Effective	3.54	Strongly Agree
Convenience	3.59	Strongly Agree
Time-Saving	3.54	Strongly Agree
<b>Over-all</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

Table 3 shows that the highest-rated variable for social media opportunities for micro businesses is convenience, with a mean of 3.59 and an adjectival rating of strongly agree, while the lowest-rated variable is time-saving and cost-effective, with a mean of 3.54 and an adjectival rating of strongly agree. This shows that respondents strongly agree on the usefulness of social media platforms for businesses. The high median and strongly agreed-upon evaluation of convenience in using social media among micro businesses demonstrates its perceived importance in their operations. However, the significantly lower mean for time-saving implies that, while convenience is important, there may be room for improvement in terms of improving time efficiency through social media use. This reflects a favorable view of social media’s efficiency and impact on expediting corporate procedures. The given findings, which are supported by substantial agreement and positive perception, imply that enterprises should emphasize social media platforms. This is consistent with the discussion on the benefits of social media for businesses. Exploring specific tactics that correspond to these perceived benefits could result in more effective company practices and higher overall performance. Furthermore, more research into the varied characteristics of social media usage in various businesses may yield insights for specialized techniques to optimize its conveniences and time-saving benefits. According to Mandal and McQueen (2012). Social networking can help you connect with your customers and learn what they’re saying about your company. You can also utilize social media for advertising, giveaways, and mobile applications. Extend your market reach, including overseas markets. Increase revenue by developing customer networks and advertising.

Table 4. Challenges of Social Media to Micro businesses

Indicators	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Competition	3.07	Agree
Prices	2.94	Agree
Trust Issues	3.11	Agree
Customer Support	2.81	Agree
Product Information	2.94	Agree
<b>Over-all</b>	<b>2.94</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 4 shows that the highest-rated variable is trust issues, with a mean of 3.11 and an adjectival rating of agree; the lowest-rated variable is customer support, with a mean of 2.81 and an adjectival rating of agree. The consensus on adjectival evaluation suggests that micro-businesses have trust concerns on social media.

It implied that people were aware of the issues with online platforms. It lends credence to the idea that consumers are beginning to understand the benefits and drawbacks of online shopping. The current study focuses on the essential aspect of regulating, maintaining, and earning user trust using social media marketing tactics. According to Montenegro, D (2023), the most serious issues have been customer retention, contentment, and a lack of experience in managing many platforms for social media and other innovative enterprises. Establishing and retaining consumer trust is now essential to keeping both current clients and luring in new ones. In order to work closely with business partners and present and potential clients in an online setting, trust management becomes the most important issue. This article describes the many models of trust management that are currently in use and provides convincing reasons for businesses to employ social media marketing to create consumer trust. Effective use of social media can provide significant potential for any organization, but it will necessitate some thought and planning. Social media can be a low-cost and successful tool to launch a marketing campaign, with a significant impact attainable for a small expenditure. Moving with the fast-paced advances in online technology can help you improve your brand, raise your profile, and possibly even win new customers.

Table 5. The significant relationship between respondents' profiles and opportunities encountered by micro businesses

<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>					
<b>Variable Tested</b>		<b>Computed r</b>	<b>P-value</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
<b>Variety</b>	Age	0.168	0.307	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Sex	0.135	0.411	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Marital Status	0.047	0.776	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Monthly Income	0.209	0.202	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Years in Business Operation	0.185	0.260	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
<b>Communication</b>	Age	0.145	0.379	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Sex	0.082	0.621	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Marital Status	0.158	0.338	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Monthly Income	0.191	0.245	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Years in Business Operation	0.090	0.587	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
<b>Cost-effective</b>	Age	0.094	0.570	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Sex	0.108	0.512	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Marital Status	0.143	0.384	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Monthly Income	0.297	0.066	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Years in Business Operation	0.251	0.124	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
<b>Convenience</b>	Age	0.035	0.831	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Sex	0.073	0.661	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Marital Status	0.092	0.579	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Monthly Income	0.262	0.107	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Years in Business Operation	0.116	0.481	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
<b>Time-Saving</b>	Age	0.073	0.660	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Sex	0.114	0.488	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Marital Status	0.232	0.155	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Monthly Income	0.229	0.162	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant
	Years in Business Operation	0.043	0.793	Failed to reject Ho	Not Significant

Table 5 shows the findings from the analysis undertaken to identify the association between the respondent's profile and the opportunities encountered by micro business owners. The correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) and  $p$ -values were calculated for all factors investigated in opportunities: variety, communication, cost-effectiveness, convenience, and time-saving. It revealed that, in terms of diversity, there is no significant association between the owner's opportunities and monthly income, with the maximum calculated  $r$  of 0.262. Furthermore, the respondent's time savings in years of business operation, with a computed  $r$  of 0.043, indicates no meaningful link with the owner. It failed to reject the hypothesis for each variable. This means that age, gender, marital status, monthly income, and years of business operation do not influence the prospects recognized by micro business owners on social media sites. The researcher concluded that there is no significant link between these demographic characteristics and the identified opportunities because all  $p$ -values were greater than 0.05. These findings are consistent with Lambert's 2020 study; the research shows that there is no substantial relationship between the consumer profile and the owner or firm itself. According to Veluchamy et.al, (2020). The proper use of social media has helped entrepreneurs and startups accelerate their enterprises and generate significant profits. Social media is recognized as a versatile tool for modifying content and promoting brands in response to changing customer needs and business environments. This suggests that the customer's changes do not affect either of these parties.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Summary of Findings

The study then delved into the usage of social media to micro businesses in terms of social commerce, social media, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, satisfaction, and trust. The highest-rated variable is Social commerce, while the lowest-rated variable is Satisfaction. Meanwhile, the study uncovered the opportunities offered by social media to micro businesses in terms of variety, communication, cost-effectiveness, convenience, and time-saving. The highest-rated variable is convenience, while the lowest-rated variable is time-saving.

Despite recognizing these benefits, the study also uncovered the challenges offered by social media to micro businesses in terms of competition, prices, trust issues, customer support, and product information. The highest-rated variable is trust issues, while the lowest-rated variable is customer support. Meanwhile, the research in Table 5 provided persuasive evidence of a significant association between respondents' profiles and the obstacles faced by micro-enterprises. The study's findings also revealed no significant association between the obstacles experienced by micro businesses. On the other hand, Table 5 analysis provided persuasive evidence of a significant link between respondents' characteristics and micro business opportunities. The data revealed that there is no substantial association between the opportunities available to micro businesses. Furthermore, the study's intervention is titled Strategic Plan Proposal: Maximizing Use for Micro Business Growth by Capitalizing on Opportunities and Overcoming Constraints.

## CONCLUSIONS

This information could help provide personalized support, such as money management advice or ways to build their company even on a modest salary. Understanding these specifications helps to provide better support for this group. The study's findings found that, among the different factors evaluated, social commerce received the highest grade, while satisfaction with micro businesses' use of social media was the lowest. The study underlines the importance of social commerce for micro-businesses, as well as the need to address and improve satisfaction levels associated with social media use. Meanwhile, the survey indicated that social media provides substantial prospects for micro businesses, particularly in terms of ease. This

highlighted the perceived importance of social media in assisting various corporate procedures and offered areas for improvement, notably in terms of time-saving. Furthermore, despite realizing the benefits, micro-businesses faced hurdles on social media, with trust issues being the most prevalent. This suggests the necessity for efforts to establish and sustain trust in the online platform. Customer assistance, on the other hand, received the lowest rating of any of the challenges, implying that it may not be as pervasive as other issues. On the other hand, the study found no significant association between the respondents' profiles and the opportunities faced by micro businesses. This shows that these opportunities are either universal or not strongly influenced by micro business demographics. Similarly, no significant association was discovered between respondents' profiles and the obstacles faced by micro businesses. This shows that issues on social media may be common across demographics or are not driven by individual responder characteristics. In conclusion, the recommended strategy plan named "Maximizing Usage for Micro business Growth by Leveraging Opportunities and Overcoming Challenges" This intervention seeks to capitalize on possibilities and minimize barriers highlighted in the study to promote the growth of micro-businesses through smart use of social media platforms.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the following findings and drawn conclusions, the following are highly recommended by the researchers:

Based on the revealed demographic profile of micro business owners, it is recommended to assist younger entrepreneurs (26-35 years old) and empower women in micro businesses. Financial literacy initiatives and microfinance solutions might benefit persons earning less than ₱50,000 per month. Tailor long-term support for businesses in the 4-6 year phase, while addressing difficulties in the 7-9 year span to promote growth. Micro business entrepreneurs should use social commerce to drive growth, cut costs, improve customer service, and extend distribution channels. Innovative solutions adapted to specific needs, as well as ongoing trend monitoring, are required to ensure optimal utilization and competitive advantage.

Promote a constant and intriguing online presence to build customer relationships and take advantage of the convenience that social media provides for micro businesses. Establish a feedback loop with customers via social media channels, allowing for quick adjustments to operations based on customer insights and increasing overall efficiency. Given the accepted importance of trust issues on social media platforms for micro businesses, it is advised that companies actively address and minimize these concerns. Priority should be given to tactics for establishing and maintaining trust, such as honest communication, dependable transactions, and timely response to consumer feedback.

Given the study's findings that there is no significant relationship between respondent profiles and micro business opportunities, it is recommended that when exploring and pursuing business opportunities, focus on broader market trends and industry dynamics rather than individual respondent characteristics. Similarly, the study's findings show no substantial association between respondent profiles and the obstacles experienced by micro businesses. It is proposed that a business dynamics approach be used to solve and mitigate the obstacles that micro businesses confront, thereby supporting their empowerment and long-term success. Furthermore, it is advised that the proposed strategy plan "Maximizing Usage for Micro business Growth by Leveraging Opportunities and Overcoming Challenges" be implemented, with a focus on engagement and value propositions to optimize the impact on micro business growth.

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