

Micro-Scale Strategy Management: A Study on the Effectiveness of Smallscale Actions in MSMEs and Startups

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Abstract

This research explores how Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and startups can address increasingly complex challenges in dynamic and competitive markets, particularly in the context of rapid digitalization and technological advancement, by adopting micro-scale strategy management. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive method with a literature review approach, the study identifies several effective micro-scale strategies: adjusting prices based on thorough market research and competitor analysis, leveraging social media platforms for targeted promotions, developing comprehensive price lists and product catalogs, enhancing customer service through digital channels, and offering time-limited discounts to stimulate demand. These strategies are found to be especially practical and accessible for MSMEs and startups, which often operate with constrained resources. The findings highlight that when these micro-scale strategies are applied consistently and integrated into the overall business model, they not only improve the efficiency of resource utilization but also establish a more adaptive and resilient foundation for responding to ongoing market changes. As a result, MSMEs and startups are better equipped to navigate intense competition, sustain business operations, and achieve growth objectives despite facing resource limitations. This research underscores the importance of strategic agility and the proactive adoption of micro-scale management practices as key drivers of long-term business sustainability in the MSME and startup sectors.

Keywords: MSMEs, Startups, Micro-Scale Strategies

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (hereinafter referred to as MSMEs) and startups constitute a fundamental component of Indonesia's economic infrastructure, contributing approximately 60% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employing over 97% of the nation's labor force (Syastra & Amrizal, 2019). Nevertheless, a substantial number of MSMEs and startups continue to encounter significant obstacles in the advancement of their enterprises, particularly due to constrained resources, encompassing capital, technology, and human capital. These constraints frequently impede their capacity to compete.

As they expand, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and startups encounter a multitude of obstacles arising from both internal and external variables (Mncube, 2025). On the internal front, the primary challenges consist of: (1) approximately 60-70% of SMEs have not secured access to financing from financial institutions, representing a significant hindrance to business progression; (2) insufficient knowledge pertaining to contemporary production technologies, resulting in suboptimal productivity and business efficacy; (3) marketing methodologies that remain traditional and fail to effectively leverage digital technologies; (4) a majority of SMEs lack legal recognition, which constrains opportunities for collaboration and legal safeguards; and (5) deficiencies within the financial administration system and

management practices, culminating in irregularities in enterprise operations and complications in financial reporting. effectively and achieve prominence within competitive marketplaces.

Meanwhile, external challenges encompass: (1) the insufficiency of synergistic coordination among stakeholders, including governmental entities, private sector participants, and financial institutions, in their collective support of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); (2) the continued reliance on relatively rudimentary production technologies by the majority of SMEs, which adversely affects their product competitiveness; and (3) constrained access to raw materials, with respect to availability, pricing, and distribution mechanisms. This amalgamation of internal and external difficulties underscores that the fortification of SMEs necessitates a holistic strategy rather than piecemeal interventions. In this regard, the authors contend that microscale strategy management holds significant relevance in surmounting the diverse challenges and impediments faced by SMEs and startups. Microscale strategy pertains to a series of incremental yet intentional actions that can yield substantial enhancements in business performance. This methodology accentuates adaptability, nimbleness in response to change, and the optimal deployment of existing resources.

Furthermore, the researchers have performed a comprehensive literature review which elucidates that minor interventions, such as the implementation of basic technological applications including social media for promotional purposes and product innovation driven by consumer feedback (testimonials), can significantly enhance the competitive stance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and startups. The investigation conducted by Putren et al. posits that digital marketing education encompassing the utilization of social media platforms, e-commerce frameworks, and digital analytical instruments can substantially augment the engagement levels of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with their clientele and vendors (Herlina et al., 2024). While certain empirical investigations indicate a substantial impact of micro-scale strategies on the advancement of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and startups, the research conducted by Farkhah and Wibowo elucidates that the implementation of such micro-scale strategies within SMEs and startups does not consistently occur without challenges (Farkhah et al., 2023). This inconsistency arises from the numerous obstacles encountered by SMEs and startups, which include constraints related to limited human capital, restricted access to technological resources, and a deficient comprehension of genuinely efficacious strategies. A pertinent illustration of such a limitation is the prevalence of SMEs and startups that continue to employ traditional marketing methods and have yet to fully leverage social media as an effective marketing platform. Consequently, comprehending the effective application of strategic micro-schools within the framework of MSMEs and startups in Indonesia is of paramount importance. Furthermore, this research endeavors to evaluate the efficacy of minor interventions in management strategies and to ascertain how these interventions can enhance both the performance and the competitive edge of SMEs and startups.

Previous studies have identified key internal and external obstacles that MSMEs and startups must navigate. Internally, MSMEs struggle with limited access to financing (60-70% of them are excluded from financial institution loans), insufficient knowledge of modern production technologies, outdated marketing strategies, lack of legal recognition, and poor financial management (Farkhah et al., 2023). Externally, they face challenges such as inadequate coordination between stakeholders, reliance on outdated production methods, and

difficulties accessing raw materials (Putri & Widadi, 2024). Given these challenges, MSMEs and startups need strategic management approaches that can help them adapt and overcome these limitations.

In this context, micro-scale strategy management is crucial. These strategies consist of small, incremental actions that can significantly improve business performance, adaptability, and sustainability. For example, the use of social media for promotion, customer service via digital platforms, and adjustments in pricing based on market research are all effective micro-scale strategies that can help MSMEs and startups become more competitive and sustainable in the digital era (Herlina et al., 2024). However, implementing these strategies consistently remains challenging due to limited human capital, technological barriers, and a lack of understanding of effective strategic practices (Farkhah et al., 2023).

This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of micro-scale strategies in enhancing the competitiveness and sustainability of MSMEs and startups. Specifically, it examines how these strategies—ranging from digital marketing to network expansion—can help overcome the internal and external barriers faced by MSMEs. The research also investigates the role of stakeholder collaboration and government policies in facilitating the adoption of these strategies.

The benefits of this research are twofold. First, it provides a deeper understanding of the micro-scale strategies that can significantly improve the operational efficiency and market positioning of MSMEs and startups. Second, the findings will offer actionable insights to entrepreneurs and policymakers on how to foster an environment conducive to the success of small businesses. By examining the practical application of these strategies, this study aims to contribute to the broader body of knowledge on MSME management and inform future policies aimed at supporting these businesses in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employed a qualitative descriptive methodology to systematically elucidate the phenomena under investigation. The approach was bolstered by an extensive literature review, involving meticulous gathering, scrutiny, and interpretation of diverse sources—including scientific journals, scholarly books, peer-reviewed articles, and authoritative documents—to establish a robust conceptual framework addressing the research complexities.

Data collection primarily utilized secondary sources such as academic articles, books, and research reports. These provided foundational insights into MSME/startup landscapes and micro-scale strategy effectiveness. Content analysis of these sources identified key patterns, trends, and best practices in strategy application.

Thematic analysis was applied to interpret recurring themes across literature, enabling categorization of micro-scale strategies and their impacts. This synthesis yielded an integrative understanding of strategy effectiveness and growth potential.

The study population comprised Indonesian MSMEs and startups. Purposive sampling selected businesses that had implemented micro-scale strategies to address market challenges, focusing on adaptive and innovative enterprises across industries to ensure relevant case inclusion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Micro Scale: Concept and Strategy

The micro-school strategy, which can be defined as a comprehensive approach aimed at significantly enhancing both the efficiency and effectiveness of small businesses, is an activity that encompasses a wide array of initiatives and methodologies designed to optimize operational performance and market outcomes. This multifaceted strategy includes, but is not limited to, the enhancement of product quality, the implementation of robust financial management practices, the strategic expansion of networks, the integration and utilization of advanced technology, as well as the formulation and execution of effective marketing campaigns that resonate with the target audience. Within this overarching framework, one can identify a variety of microscale strategies that are particularly applicable to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurial startups, among numerous other entities that operate within the dynamic business landscape.

a. Market Research

The process of conducting thorough market research and meticulous segmentation serves as a critical and foundational element for achieving success in SMEs and startups, particularly when it comes to crafting and designing business strategies that are meticulously tailored to meet the specific needs and preferences of the target demographic. Through the systematic gathering and analysis of data related to market trends, consumer behaviors, and emerging demands for particular products or services, business operators are afforded the invaluable opportunity to gain profound insights into the purchasing decisions made by consumers. For instance, empirical research may reveal that the millennial demographic exhibits a strong preference for environmentally sustainable products and tends to engage in shopping activities primarily through digital platforms that facilitate online transactions.

Moreover, the practice of market segmentation allows business operators to categorize consumers into distinct groups based on a variety of criteria such as age, income levels, geographical location, and specific shopping habits that may vary across different demographics. For example, if a micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) specializes in the production of health-oriented beverages, they could strategically focus their marketing efforts on the demographic segment consisting of consumers aged 25 to 40 years who reside in urban settings and lead active lifestyles characterized by health consciousness. By acquiring a deep understanding of the unique characteristics inherent to each consumer segment, companies are empowered to fine-tune their offerings in terms of product features, pricing strategies, promotional techniques, and distribution channels. The effective application of such research and segmentation methodologies not only amplifies the potential for increased sales but also enhances the overall efficiency of the marketing budget, as the implemented strategies become more targeted and aligned with prevailing market demands. In the contemporary digital landscape, MSMEs can leverage various tools such as Google Trends, social media analytics, and online surveys to execute these strategies at relatively low costs, thereby maximizing their reach and impact.

b. Expanding Network and Collaboration

The endeavor to expand networks and foster collaborations within the context of a microscale strategy necessitates the deliberate cultivation and strengthening of relationships

with an array of stakeholders, which may include fellow entrepreneurs, suppliers, distributors, and even government entities. Such strategic initiatives can manifest in several forms, such as engaging with local community organizations or business associations, forming partnerships with other business operators to share valuable human resources, and actively participating in trade fairs or regional bazaars to effectively showcase and introduce products to prospective consumers. A noteworthy study conducted by researchers Fiati and Zuliyati demonstrated that micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) engaged in the craft of calligraphy within the Demak and Kudus regions successfully managed to broaden their market reach internationally through the strategic development of business networks and collaborative partnerships with various stakeholders (Fiati & Zuliyati, 2016). The specific actions undertaken by these calligraphy artisans included the provision of training programs, technological guidance, and assistance in acquiring production equipment, which collectively contributed to a significant improvement in the quality of their products. Consequently, this enhancement in product quality, coupled with the expansion of their distribution networks, positioned these SMEs to effectively penetrate the export market, thereby elevating their overall business prospects and sustainability in a competitive global arena.

c. Digitalization dan Technology Use

The strategic deployment of digitalization and technology represents a meticulously crafted micro-scale initiative that plays a pivotal role in enhancing operational efficiency, broadening market accessibility, and fostering innovation in both products and services specifically within the realms of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as burgeoning startups. These seemingly minor yet fundamentally crucial steps, which may include the adoption of social media platforms, the integration of e-commerce solutions, and the utilization of sophisticated business management applications, can collectively exert a profound influence on the trajectory of business growth and development (Putri & Widadi, 2024). The myriad advantages associated with the implementation of digitalization and technology encompass not only enhanced operational efficiencies that capitalize on the advantages of automation within various business processes but also the remarkable ability to extend market reach, thereby allowing businesses to connect with customers or consumers who reside outside of traditional geographical boundaries.

d. Human Resources Quality Enhancement

In the particular realm of small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as burgeoning startups, the enhancement of human resources can be significantly achieved through a multifaceted approach that encompasses not only comprehensive training and education but also the invaluable processes of mentoring and coaching, along with the provision of ample opportunities for employees to gain practical, hands-on experience in their respective fields of work. The research conducted by esteemed scholars Sono and Limpo underscores the critical importance of strategic human resource management practices in relation to enhancing the overall performance of small and medium-sized enterprises, which encompass a variety of strategies such as selective recruitment processes, ongoing training initiatives, and robust career development programs that collectively foster a culture of growth and improvement. The effective implementation of these strategic approaches is likely to lead to an increase in

employee motivation and overall productivity levels, which in turn would yield a markedly positive influence on the operational performance and competitive edge of small and medium-sized enterprises (Sono et al., 2024). Consequently, it becomes abundantly clear that the investment in human resource quality is not merely a beneficial endeavor but rather an essential component for the sustained success and growth of SMEs in today's dynamic business environment.

In the contemporary landscape of business, it is paramount that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and startups implement a rigorous and thorough selection process during the recruitment of their employees, as this strategic approach significantly enhances the overall quality of their human resources. However, it is also important to note that many of these SMEs and nascent ventures often operate independently, managing their business activities without the assistance of additional personnel or labor. In this particular context, the business operations are frequently overseen and executed solely by the entrepreneur, wherein every aspect of the business—ranging from production and marketing to customer service—is handled directly by the owner themselves. It is essential to highlight, though, that the management of a business on an individual basis does not imply that entrepreneurs can overlook the significance of personal and professional self-development opportunities. On the contrary, in such isolated conditions, the capability to engage in continuous learning and to adapt to the ever-changing market landscape becomes an exceedingly vital element for success.

Furthermore, it is imperative for SMEs and self-employed entrepreneurs to cultivate a diverse array of essential skills, including, but not limited to, time management, effective business communication, a comprehensive understanding of digital marketing strategies, as well as fundamental financial literacy. The possession of these competencies serves as a critical foundation for ensuring the sustainability of the business and for maintaining a competitive edge in a marketplace that is characterized by fierce competition and rapidly evolving consumer preferences. In the current digital era, it is also expected that entrepreneurs remain receptive to technological advancements and consistently seek to enhance their capabilities through avenues such as online training initiatives, participation in entrepreneurial communities, or engaging with business mentors who can provide guidance.

Moreover, a research study conducted by SM Nelis and colleagues reveals that micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that actively participate in digitalization training programs are significantly better equipped to enhance their understanding and practical skills related to the utilization of digital technologies, specifically in areas such as e-commerce platforms and social media, which are instrumental in supporting their business operations and marketing endeavors (SM et al., 2025). Consequently, this proactive engagement in digital training leads to a notable expansion in market reach, improved operational efficiency, and an overall enhancement of the competitiveness of SMEs amidst an economy that is becoming increasingly interconnected through digital means. Thus, it becomes evident that, despite the absence of a larger team, entrepreneurs possess the potential to experience growth and development as long as they maintain a steadfast commitment to enhancing the quality of their business practices. Ultimately, the pursuit of sustainable self-development stands out as one of the key determinants of success for SMEs and for startups that are managed independently.

Micro-scale strategies provide specific and tangible steps that micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) along with startups can effectively put into practice in order to not only

survive but also to flourish in an environment characterized by increasingly fierce and cutthroat market competition. By utilizing a systematic and well-considered approach as delineated by the authors previously, business operators have the opportunity to:

- Enhance their competitiveness by tailoring their products or services to meet the evolving demands and preferences of the market.
- Broaden their market presence both within local communities and on a global scale, thereby tapping into a larger customer base.
- Maximize their operational efficiency to ensure that their business practices are more cost-effective and yield greater returns.
- Establish an adaptive and sustainable business model that is resilient in the face of rapid economic shifts and technological advancements.

The implementation of micro-scale strategies is not just a mere option but rather serves as a crucial pillar in the process of constructing a robust business foundation right from the very inception of the business venture. This strategic approach empowers small and medium enterprises, along with startups, to embark on their journey from the grassroots level equipped with thoughtful planning and relatively modest yet impactful capital investments. For instance, entrepreneurs might engage in straightforward forms of digitization, such as leveraging social media platforms for promotional activities, utilizing financial planning applications that are readily accessible via smartphones, or forging collaborations with local communities, all of which constitute elements of a micro-strategy that can significantly expedite the growth trajectory of their businesses.

However, it is imperative to recognize that the successful execution of these strategies should not be solely attributed to the efforts of business operators alone. A collaborative framework that includes synergistic support from various stakeholders is essential, including favorable government policies that prioritize the interests of SMEs, the provision of technical training opportunities from educational institutions or business incubators, as well as the establishment of strategic partnerships with entities in the private sector. Only through the cultivation of a robust support ecosystem can a micro-scale strategy genuinely serve as a vital conduit to achieving long-term growth and ensuring the sustainability of a business that is resilient and capable of navigating challenges.

Micro-Scale Strategic Approaches to Ensuring the Sustainability of MSMEs and Startups in Contemporary Markets

Amid the accelerating wave of digitalization and intensifying market competition, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and startups face increasing pressure to innovate and adapt to ensure long-term sustainability. A promising and practical approach in responding to these challenges lies in the adoption of micro-scale strategies—tactical, low-cost interventions that can be directly implemented within the daily operations of a business. These strategies may include price adjustments based on localized market research, active promotional engagement through social media platforms, the development of structured product catalogs and pricing lists, direct customer service integration via messaging applications like WhatsApp, and offering time-sensitive discounts aligned with national observances (e.g., National Education Day or Independence Day). Although modest in scope,

these initiatives—when applied consistently—can substantially enhance a business's competitive positioning and operational resilience in modern market environments.

a. Market Price Adjustment and Competitor Price Research

Market competition emerges when multiple enterprises offer similar products or services, creating a dynamic environment where pricing becomes a critical determinant of competitiveness. In such context, small businesses and startups are compelled to enhance production efficiency to remain provitable while competing on price (Susilawati et al., 2021). A central micro-strategy in this scenerio is conducting competitor price benchmarking – a process where businesses analyze the pricing structure of rivals to calibrate their own offerings accordingly. This practice not only enables more competitive pricing but also stimulates product innovation, encouraging entrepreneurs to develop unique or improved offerings that can differentiate them from competitors and attract customers interest. From customer perspective, such price competition often results in more affordable goods and services. Lower prices- driven by enterprises seeking to draw cutomers away from competitors- create a distinct value proposition for price-sensitive buyers. Moreover, as businesses diversify their product lines and introduce enhanced variants, consumers benefit from a broader selections and improved quality. However, this environment also necessitates that entrepreneurs contunuesly innovate – not ony to maintain price appeal, but also to strengthen consumer purchasing interest through differentiated value and superior service (Regina, 2023).

b. Daily Social Media Promotion

In the current era of rapid digitalization and technological advancement, social media platforms have become integral to daily life, serving pusposes ranging from entertainment to commerce. Given their pervasive accesibility – across time and location – micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and startups must strategically leverage social media to enhance their visibility, customer engagement, and long-term viability. Adopting daily promotional strategies via social media enables businesses to significantly increase the discoverability of their products through online channles. This is particularly critical for MSMEs and startups seeking to expand their market reach beyond traditional geographical limitations. Platforms such as Facebook, for example, offer dedicated marketplace features that serve as low-barrier entry points for entrepreneurs to showcase and distribute their products to broader audiences (Mardinawati et al., 2023).

The strategic use of social media marketing offers several distinct advantages (Sahputri et al., 2023):

- Cost-effectiveness: Promotional campaigns can be conducted with minimal financial investment compared to traditional media. One of the most significant advantages of utilizing social media for business development lies in its cost efficiency, particularly for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) operating under limited budgets. Unlike traditional advertising channels that often require substantial financial investment, social media platforms offer free and low-cost promotional opportunities that are readily accessible. Moreover, the ability to self-manage content creation and distribution empowers MSMEs to maintain control over brand messaging and promotional timing, further enhancing operational agility and resource optimization.

- Targeted advertising: Businesses can tailor their messages to specific demographic groups based on user behavior and preferences. By leveraging algorithmic insights into user behavior, interests, geographic location, and purchasing patterns, entrepreneurs—particularly within MSMEs and startups—can design campaigns that resonate with clearly defined demographic groups.

- This strategic segmentation not only enhances the efficiency of marketing efforts but also increases the likelihood of conversion by aligning promotional messages with consumer preferences. The data-driven nature of targeted advertising thus allows for resource optimization and higher return on investment compared to traditional mass-marketing approaches.

- Real-time engagement: Interactive features facilitate immediate communication with potential customers, enhancing service quality and responsiveness. This two-way communication channel plays a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing purchasing decisions. These practices contribute to a more personalized and responsive customer experience, which not only supports brand loyalty but also positively affects conversion rates and overall sales performance. By fostering ongoing dialogue and showcasing transparent feedback, businesses can build stronger emotional connections with their audiences and more effectively position their offerings in competitive digital markets.

- Brand building: Consistent content sharing contributes to the development of a recognizable brand identity. Platforms such as Instagram provide a suite of integrated features that enable businesses to create high-quality visual content, enhance image and video presentation, and refine the aesthetic appeal of their product displays. These tools are instrumental in cultivating consumer interest and purchase intent, especially in visually-driven markets. By improving the visual storytelling of their offerings, MSMEs can create a more compelling digital presence, increasing the likelihood of customer engagement and conversion. In essence, the visual-centric design of platforms like Instagram allows businesses to simulate product tangibility in a digital space—bridging the gap between online browsing and consumer decision-making. This visual enhancement capability is not merely cosmetic but strategically aligned with consumer psychology, where well-curated visuals can significantly influence perceptions of product quality and brand credibility.

Collectively, these benefits position social media as a powerful tool in the arsenal of micro-scale strategies aimed at strengthening the market presence and sustainability of emerging enterprises.

c. Product Catalogs and Price List as Tools for Direct Digital Marketing

An essential component of digital marketing for MSMEs and startups is direct marketing, which encompasses mechanisms such as online purchasing, transparent price listings, and structured product catalogs (Anwar et al., 2023). These tools not only enhance information accessibility but also contribute to greater consumer trust and purchasing confidence in digital environments. By presenting a comprehensive price list and well-organized catalog, businesses provide potential buyers with clear, upfront information regarding available products and pricing structures. This transparency is particularly crucial in online contexts, where customers are unable to physically inspect products. Organized catalogs can also streamline the decision-making process, reduce uncertainty, and facilitate quicker transaction cycles. Furthermore, the creation of digital catalogs allows for easier distribution

across various platforms—including social media, messaging apps, and e-commerce sites—thereby amplifying product visibility and improving marketing efficiency.

d. **Consume Services via Instant Messaging Platform**

Responsive and accessible customer service is vital for the sustainability of MSMEs and startups in the digital era. Using smartphone applications like WhatsApp allows direct, real-time communication between businesses and consumers, enabling swift responses to inquiries, complaints, and product-related questions. This approach fosters trust and customer loyalty, while also enhancing the business's image. Quick and effective responses show that customers are valued, which strengthens satisfaction. Moreover, feedback received through these channels can inform product improvements and service refinement. By integrating instant messaging into customer service, MSMEs can build stronger relationships and remain competitive in an increasingly digital marketplace. Empirical evidence increasingly supports the notion that the utilization of WhatsApp Business and the quality of customer service are positively correlated with customer satisfaction. This relationship underscores a broader strategic insight: the integration of digital communication technologies into customer service operations is not merely an operational upgrade, but a transformative driver of business value (Irmawati et al., 2024).

e. **Time-Sensitive Discounts as a Strategic Pricing Tool**

An effective pricing strategy is central to sustaining consumer interest and market competitiveness. Among the most widely used and impactful approaches is the implementation of time-sensitive discounts, which involves temporarily reducing the price of goods or services during specific occasions or commemorative days. Discounts serve not only as a direct financial incentive but also as a psychological trigger that enhances the perceived value of a product (Hakim et al., 2024). When timed with culturally significant dates—such as National Education Day or Independence Day—these promotions can evoke emotional engagement, foster a sense of urgency, and drive higher purchase volume. discount strategies contribute significantly to consumer purchase decisions, particularly when combined with promotional messaging and strategic timing. For MSMEs and startups, these campaigns offer a cost-effective mechanism to boost short-term sales, strengthen customer loyalty, and clear inventory without compromising brand equity.

3. **Evaluating the Effectiveness of Micro-Scale Strategies in Sustaining MSMEs and Startups**

Micro-scale strategies consist of practical, low-cost measures that offer an adaptive approach for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and startups facing volatile and competitive market conditions. As outlined in this study, these include price adjustments based on market and competitor analysis, social media marketing, digital product catalog development, customer service via messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, and event-based discounting. This section evaluates the effectiveness of each strategy in supporting business sustainability. Among these strategies, pricing informed by market research and competitive benchmarking plays a pivotal role. A clear understanding of price structures allows entrepreneurs to remain competitive without eroding profit margins. This form of pricing

strategy not only facilitates more informed decision-making but also enhances the effectiveness of marketing and product positioning.

Moreover, strategic pricing acts as a catalyst for product innovation—encouraging improvements in packaging, product quality, and brand differentiation. To remain competitive, MSMEs must deliver added value that distinguishes their offerings in the market. As such, pricing becomes more than a technical adjustment; it evolves into a strategic lever for innovation, market relevance, and long-term growth. Ultimately, price optimization rooted in market intelligence serves as both a competitive tool and a bridge to business transformation, positioning MSMEs for sustainable success.

In the digital era, social media has emerged as a powerful promotional tool for MSMEs and startups. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp offer cost-effective avenues to reach broader audiences, particularly when compared to traditional marketing methods. The use of social media as a promotional channel has been proven effective in increasing both product visibility and sales for small businesses (Dwijayanti et al., 2023). Social media offers several strategic advantages: 1) Broader distribution of promotional content, 2) direct and interactive communication with consumers, 3) greater flexibility in shaping and delivering brand messages, and 4) with the right content strategy, MSMEs can foster stronger customer relationships and build brand loyalty. Social media also serves as a key information channel for consumers, influencing their purchasing decisions and allowing them to align product preferences with personal needs.

In parallel, the use of digital product catalogs (e-catalogs) plays a vital role in facilitating informed consumer decisions. E-catalogs provide accessible, structured information that enhances transparency, builds consumer trust, and supports repeat purchasing behavior. The ability to continuously update product information helps entrepreneurs keep offerings relevant and competitive. Furthermore, the integration of e-catalogs with digital platforms—such as linking to Google Drive—improves data management, reduces operational inefficiencies, and strengthens the overall marketing process. In this way, both social media and digital catalogs function as essential components of a digitally integrated marketing strategy that supports business growth and customer retention in MSMEs and startups.

The use of WhatsApp Business as a customer service channel represents a key micro-scale strategy for MSMEs and startups, offering direct, personalized, and efficient communication. This platform is easily accessible and widely adopted, making it ideal for facilitating trust-building and two-way interaction with customers (Asmayanti et al., 2022). Features such as automated messaging, product catalogs, and status updates can be leveraged to deliver product information, handle customer complaints, and cultivate closer relationships. Human-centered and responsive communication remains central to fostering long-term customer loyalty. The immediacy and informality of WhatsApp Business contribute to a more engaging customer experience, positioning it as a cost-effective yet powerful tool in customer relationship management.

In addition, offering discounts on specific calendar dates—such as National Education Day or other commemorative moments—can generate a sense of urgency and attract consumer attention. While this tactic can boost short-term sales and enhance brand visibility as a socially responsive business, it must be implemented with careful margin analysis to avoid financial strain. For such promotions to be effective, they should be supported by digital campaigns, clear

price catalogs, and responsive customer service. When aligned, these components form an integrated strategy that not only stimulates immediate consumer action but also reinforces sustainable brand value.

A comprehensive review of the micro-scale strategies discussed reveals that, when applied consistently and informed by data, such approaches hold significant potential to foster sustainable growth among MSMEs and startups. The core strength of micro-scale strategies lies in their flexibility and affordability, making them particularly well-suited for enterprises operating with limited resources, capital, and market access. Their success, however, is not determined solely by technical implementation. Rather, it depends on the entrepreneur's ability to interpret market dynamics, recognize emerging opportunities, understand consumer needs, and cultivate mutually beneficial relationships with customers. In this way, micro-scale strategies become more than just operational tools—they evolve into a strategic mindset that enables small businesses to remain adaptive, resilient, and customer-focused in a competitive digital economy.

CONCLUSION

Micro-scale strategies—such as market-informed pricing, daily social media promotions, clear product catalogs, and responsive customer service via platforms like WhatsApp Business—have become essential for the survival and growth of MSMEs and startups amid rapid economic and digital transformation. These approaches are most effective when integrated with data-driven insights and creative execution, enabling businesses to deliver not just products, but also meaningful experiences and trust to their customers. The transformative impact of these strategies depends on a commitment to continuous learning, innovation, and responsiveness to market feedback, positioning Indonesian MSMEs and startups to compete beyond local markets. For future research, it is recommended to examine the long-term effects of micro-scale strategies on the scalability and global market entry of MSMEs, as well as to explore best practices for adopting advanced digital tools while preserving business authenticity and adaptability in an increasingly digitalized economy.

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