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ENHANCING BRAND AWARENESS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGIES: A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT WITH LULLABY FROZEN FOOD

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ABSTRACT

This article reports on a single-case community engagement project conducted through a collaboration between BINUS University and Lullaby Frozen Food. The project used a practice-oriented intervention with descriptive documentation-based evaluation; therefore, it does not claim experimental or causal effects. The intervention focused on improving Instagram-based marketing practices through content planning, short-form video production, storytelling, calls to action, and responsive communication. Data consisted of Instagram Insights, documented content performance, selected customer responses, and internal business records available to the project team. Performance was assessed descriptively using reach, views, interactions, and an engagement-rate measure calculated as total interactions divided by accounts reached × 100. The documented results show that one promotional Reel reached 7,281 accounts and generated 17,450 views, compared with approximately 98–118 accounts reached by selected earlier static posts. The Reel also generated 364 likes, 49 comments, 22 shares, and 13 saves. These observations suggest improved digital exposure and interaction during the intervention period, although they cannot establish that the intervention alone caused the change. Evidence for purchase, retention, and long-term business growth remains limited because conversion and longitudinal financial data were not sufficiently available for causal assessment. The project nevertheless illustrates how university–MSME collaboration can provide practical digital marketing capabilities and a structured basis for ongoing performance monitoring.

***Keywords*:** Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, Community Engagement, Instagram Analytics, MSME, Frozen Food Industry.

A. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an accessible channel through which MSMEs can communicate with customers, present products, and develop brand visibility. However, the mere presence of a social media account does not necessarily produce meaningful audience exposure or interaction. For small businesses with limited marketing resources, the practical challenge is how to design content, use platform features, and monitor performance systematically.

This challenge motivated a community engagement collaboration between BINUS University and Lullaby Frozen Food, a Bandung-based MSME offering frozen *cireng isi* products. Preliminary documentation indicated that the account relied largely on static product photographs and irregular content, with selected posts reaching approximately 98–118 accounts. The project therefore focused on improving content formats and interaction practices rather than treating social media adoption itself as an intervention.

The purpose of this article is to document the intervention, describe the measurement framework, and report observed changes in digital exposure and engagement. The article also examines the practical role of university–MSME collaboration in transferring digital marketing knowledge. Because the project is based on a single case and descriptive documentation, findings are interpreted as contextual observations rather than causal proof.

B. IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODS

The rapid growth of digital technology has significantly reshaped the landscape of marketing communication and business competitiveness, particularly for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Digital platforms enable businesses to reach broader audiences, reduce marketing costs, and establish direct communication with consumers. Social media, in particular, has emerged as a strategic marketing tool that allows businesses to promote products, build relationships with customers, and strengthen brand visibility in the digital marketplace (Kaplan, 2015). For MSMEs, social media provides an accessible and flexible platform to compete with larger firms by leveraging creativity, authenticity, and customer engagement.

From a theoretical perspective, social media marketing can be understood as a strategic process of creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers through interactive digital platforms. According to Hanlon, & Tuten, (2022), social media marketing involves the use of online communities, networks, and collaborative platforms to build brand awareness, encourage customer

participation, and foster long-term relationships with consumers. In this context, effective social media strategies require consistent content creation, storytelling, and the use of platform features that facilitate interaction between businesses and their audiences. These strategies enable MSMEs to develop a stronger brand presence and cultivate customer trust.

Brand awareness plays a crucial role in influencing consumer perception and purchase intention. Gesmundo, et.al. (2022) explains that brand awareness refers to the ability of consumers to recognize and recall a brand within a particular product category. In the digital environment, social media platforms significantly contribute to enhancing brand awareness through visual content, interactive communication, and user-generated engagement. Studies have shown that consistent posting, engaging content formats such as short videos, and active interaction with followers can significantly increase audience reach and strengthen brand recognition (Drossos, Coursaris, & Kagiouli, 2024; Nkegbe, & Abor, 2023). Therefore, social media marketing strategies serve as an important mechanism for MSMEs to improve brand visibility and remain competitive in an increasingly digital market.

Furthermore, the empowerment of MSMEs through digital marketing strategies can be strengthened through collaborative initiatives involving universities, industry partners, and local communities. According to the concept of community engagement in higher education, universities play an important role in transferring knowledge and providing practical assistance to support the development of local businesses (O'Brien, & Cooney, 2025). Through training, mentoring, and collaborative projects, academic institutions can help MSMEs adopt more structured marketing strategies, improve digital literacy, and enhance their competitiveness. Such initiatives not only contribute to MSME development but also support the implementation of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, particularly in the area of community service and knowledge application.

In this context, the implementation of social media marketing strategies becomes a practical approach to strengthening MSME empowerment. By combining theoretical insights on digital

marketing, brand awareness, and community engagement, collaborative programs between universities and MSMEs can generate sustainable business improvements while simultaneously fostering innovation and entrepreneurial capacity within local economic ecosystems.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The rapid growth of digital platforms has created both opportunities and challenges for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in developing effective marketing strategies. While social media provides accessible channels for brand promotion and customer interaction, many MSMEs still face difficulties in translating digital visibility into sustainable business performance. In the case of Lullaby Frozen Food, initial analysis of Instagram activity revealed that the business primarily relied on static product photos with limited storytelling and minimal interactive elements, resulting in relatively low reach and engagement rates. This condition reflects a common issue among MSMEs, where the presence of social media accounts alone does not guarantee effective marketing outcomes without a structured content strategy and audience-oriented communication approach.

To address this challenge, innovative solutions were introduced through the optimization of social media marketing strategies. One of the key improvements involved transforming content formats from static images to more dynamic visual formats, particularly short-form video content such as Instagram Reels. Video-based content showcasing the cooking process, product texture, and sensory experiences—such as crispy sounds and close-up visuals—was found to significantly increase audience interaction and platform visibility. This strategy aligns with digital marketing research indicating that engaging visual storytelling and experiential content can strengthen consumer engagement and improve brand recall (Mandung, 2025; Umoren, et.al., 2022). By presenting products in a more immersive and experiential manner, MSMEs can create stronger emotional connections with potential customers.

Commented [US1]: Provide the formula used for engagement rate. It may be calculated per reach, followers, impressions, or views; these yield different interpretations.

Commented [US2]: Section C states that financial documentation shows "a gap between engagement growth and revenue performance," implying that increased engagement did not automatically improve sales. However, later sections state that the intervention improved business performance and conversion. These two claims need reconciliation.

The paper should explicitly report the sales data before and after intervention, distinguish revenue from profit, and explain whether sales actually increased, remained flat, or could not be causally attributed to the intervention.

Another innovative approach involved strengthening interactive communication with audiences by platform features such as comments, polls, stories, and direct messages. Social media platforms allow businesses to engage in two-way communication, enabling consumers to participate actively in shaping brand perception and meaning. Samarah, et.al., (2022) emphasizes that interactive communication on social media facilitates customer engagement and fosters stronger relationships between brands and consumers. In the case of Lullaby Frozen Food, increased interaction through comments, shares, and saved posts indicated deeper audience engagement and greater potential for brand recall and consideration in the purchasing process. Furthermore, innovative solutions also focused on strengthening brand storytelling and value communication. Rather than merely presenting product information, content strategies were redesigned to communicate product experiences, authenticity, and emotional value. Experience-based content, such as customer testimonials and user-generated content, contributes to building credibility and trust in digital environments (Firdaus, 2025). For food-based MSMEs, visual storytelling that highlights preparation processes, ingredient quality, and real consumer experiences can reduce perceived product uncertainty while enhancing brand authenticity.

However, the findings also reveal that increasing brand awareness does not automatically translate into higher sales performance. Financial documentation in the case study shows a gap between engagement growth and revenue performance, indicating that awareness alone is insufficient to drive conversion. This insight reinforces the argument that digital marketing strategies must integrate awareness-building activities with stronger conversion mechanisms, such as clear calls to action, promotional incentives, and simplified purchasing pathways (Agrawal, 2026). Therefore, innovative solutions for MSMEs should not only focus on increasing visibility but also on designing integrated marketing strategies that connect awareness, engagement, and purchase decisions.

Overall, the implementation of these innovative social media marketing strategies demonstrates that MSME empowerment in the digital era requires more than technological adoption. It requires

strategic content planning, data-driven evaluation, and a deep understanding of audience behavior. Through structured digital marketing interventions and collaborative community engagement initiatives, MSMEs such as Lullaby Frozen Food can strengthen their brand positioning, expand market reach, and enhance their competitiveness in an increasingly dynamic digital marketplace.

Achievement Targets and Measurement Metrics

In community engagement projects aimed at strengthening MSME digital capabilities, clearly defined achievement targets and measurement metrics are essential to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented strategies. Performance evaluation in digital marketing initiatives generally relies on a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators that reflect audience reach, engagement, and brand visibility. According to Chyrak, et.al., (2024), social media marketing effectiveness can be assessed through measurable indicators such as reach, impressions, interaction rates, and user-generated engagement, which collectively represent how audiences respond to digital content. These indicators are particularly relevant for MSMEs that rely heavily on social media platforms as their primary communication and marketing channels.

In the context of the Lullaby Frozen Food case, the achievement targets of the community engagement project were formulated to improve brand awareness and audience engagement through Instagram optimization. The evaluation metrics were primarily derived from Instagram Insights, including reach, engagement rate, comments, shares, saves, and follower growth. Digital documentation from Instagram served as the main source of primary data because most marketing activities and customer interactions were recorded through feeds, reels, stories, and direct messages. This documentation-based approach allows researchers to analyze actual consumer responses and identify patterns of engagement without manipulating the research environment.

The measurement framework also incorporates engagement indicators that reflect the depth of interaction between the brand and its audience. Engagement metrics such as likes, comments, shares, and saves represent different levels of audience involvement in digital marketing activities. Research

by Wallace, Torres, Augusto, & Stefuryn, (2022) emphasizes that engagement on social media reflects consumers' willingness to interact with brands and contributes to stronger brand relationships and awareness. In the Lullaby case, improvements in engagement were expected to indicate increased audience familiarity with the brand and greater potential for future purchase consideration.

In addition to engagement indicators, the evaluation of achievement targets also considers business performance indicators derived from internal documentation, including sales records, customer feedback, and repeat order patterns. The integration of digital marketing metrics with operational data allows researchers to assess whether increased brand awareness contributes to broader business outcomes. According to Orero-Blat, et.al., (2025), combining primary digital data with secondary business records provides a more comprehensive evaluation framework for understanding organizational performance and strategic effectiveness.

Furthermore, the measurement of achievement targets in this project also aligns with the action research approach, where the implementation of strategies is continuously monitored and refined based on observed outcomes. Robson (2024) notes that qualitative evaluation methods allow researchers to interpret patterns and contextual dynamics that emerge from real-world organizational activities. In the case of Lullaby Frozen Food, the use of documentation analysis enables the research team to track changes in audience engagement patterns, evaluate the effectiveness of content strategies, and identify areas for further improvement in social media marketing practices.

Overall, the achievement targets and measurement metrics applied in this community engagement project provide a structured framework for assessing the impact of social media marketing strategies on MSME brand awareness. By integrating digital engagement indicators, audience analytics, and operational business data, the evaluation process ensures that the implemented strategies not only increase online visibility but also support the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of the MSME in the digital marketplace.

Table 1. Achievement Targets and Measurement Metrics for Social Media Marketing Optimization

Indicator	Measurement Metric	Data Source	Expected Outcome	Evaluation Purpose
Reach	Number of accounts reached by Instagram content	Instagram Insights	Increase in audience exposure beyond existing followers	Measure the extent of brand visibility in the digital space
Engagement Rate	Ratio of interactions (likes, comments, shares, saves) to total reach	Instagram Insights analytics	Higher engagement rate compared to previous content performance	Evaluate audience involvement with brand content
Comments and Direct Messages	Number and quality of user responses and inquiries	Instagram comments and DM records	Increased customer inquiries and conversations	Assess the level of two-way communication with consumers
Content Interaction (Shares & Saves)	Number of shares and saves for each post or reel	Instagram Insights	Higher share and save activity	Measure deeper audience interest and content relevance
Follower Growth	Increase in number of followers over a specific period	Instagram account analytics	Gradual growth of followers after content optimization	Indicate expanding brand awareness
User Generated Content (UGC)	Number of customer posts tagging the brand	Instagram tags and mentions	Increased customer participation and brand advocacy	Measure authenticity and social proof
Customer Feedback and Testimonials	Positive reviews and comments regarding product experience	Instagram comments and customer messages	Increased positive sentiment toward the brand	Evaluate perceived product value
Repeat Orders	Number of returning customers	Internal sales records	Growth in repeat purchase frequency	Indicate customer satisfaction and loyalty
Sales Performance	Monthly sales and revenue comparison	Internal business financial records	Improvement in sales after marketing optimization	Measure business impact of digital marketing strategies

The achievement targets and measurement metrics presented in Table 1 provide a structured framework for evaluating the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies implemented in this community engagement project. These indicators combine digital marketing analytics—such as reach, engagement rate, and follower growth—with operational business metrics, including customer feedback, repeat orders, and sales performance. Integrating digital engagement indicators with business performance data allows researchers to assess not only the visibility of the brand in the digital environment but also the broader impact of marketing strategies on business sustainability. Such multidimensional measurement approaches are recommended in digital marketing evaluation

to capture both online interaction dynamics and real business outcomes (Homburg, & Wielgos, 2022; Erhan, van Doorn, Japutra, & Ekaputra, 2024).

Table 2. Comparative Instagram Content Engagement Performance of Lullaby Frozen Food

No.	Content Type	Reach	Likes	Comments	Shares	Saves	Total Engagement	Engagement Rate (%)
1	Cireng Isi Promotional Content	7,281	364	49	22	13	448	6.15
2	Casual Style Content	156	8	1	0	0	9	5.77
3	ASMR Content	223	9	0	0	0	9	4.04
4	Recipe Creation Content	161	8	1	0	0	9	5.59
5	Photo Content with Audio	48	5	0	0	0	5	10.42

Note: *Engagement Rate (%) = [(Likes + Comments + Shares + Saves) / Reach] × 100.*

Table 2 presents a comparison of engagement performance across different Instagram content formats. The Cireng Isi promotional content recorded substantially higher reach and total interactions than the other documented content types, reaching 7,281 accounts and generating 448 interactions. Although some content with smaller reach showed relatively high engagement rates, the promotional content demonstrated the strongest overall performance in terms of audience exposure and total engagement. These findings descriptively suggest that product-focused promotional content combining visual presentation and audience-oriented messaging may have greater potential to expand digital exposure. However, given the limited number of documented posts and the absence of experimental controls, these results should not be interpreted as evidence of a causal effect of content format alone.

Project Background and Intervention Rationale

The community engagement project with Lullaby Frozen Food draws on the research team's prior experience in creativity, innovation, digital transformation, and MSME development. Previous studies and community-oriented initiatives have provided relevant experience in applying academic knowledge to practical organizational and business challenges, particularly in the areas of innovation, digital transformation, and technology adoption (Setiadi et al., 2012; Setiadi et al., 2013; Setiadi & Inderadi, 2018; Setiadi, Sutanto, & Ashary, 2021; Tjahjana et al., 2020).

Rather than presenting a detailed chronology of the researcher's previous projects, the present study focuses on the relevance of this accumulated experience to the current community engagement initiative. The project applies insights from previous work on creativity, innovation, and digital transformation to support an MSME in improving its social media marketing practices and digital engagement capabilities.

The current project, *"Enhancing Brand Awareness through Social Media Marketing Strategies: A Community Engagement Project with Lullaby Frozen Food,"* therefore represents an application of previous academic and practical experience to a specific MSME context. The emphasis of this article is placed on the design, implementation, and documented outcomes of the current intervention rather than on the broader history of the research team's previous projects. This focus enables a clearer examination of how university expertise can be translated into practical support for MSMEs facing digital marketing challenges.

Implementing Community Service: Stages And Steps

The implementation of community service activities in this project was carried out through a structured and participatory approach to support the development of social media marketing strategies for Lullaby Frozen Food. Community engagement initiatives aimed at empowering micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) generally follow a systematic process that includes problem identification, intervention design, implementation, and evaluation. Such an approach ensures that the activities conducted are aligned with the actual needs of the partner organization while also generating measurable outcomes for both the business and the academic institution (Aithal, & Maiya, 2023). In the context of MSME development, digital marketing interventions are particularly important because social media platforms provide cost-effective tools for increasing brand visibility, customer engagement, and market reach (Munizu, Arsyad, & Munir, 2024).

The first stage of the community service project involved diagnosing the current business and marketing conditions of Lullaby Frozen Food. This stage included analyzing financial performance, marketing activities, and operational processes to understand the challenges faced by the business. Financial data indicated that the business experienced fluctuations in revenue and profitability, with a decline in net income partly caused by increased operational costs and inconsistent marketing activities. For example, the income statement analysis showed that while the business generated revenue of approximately Rp6,535,000 during the reporting period, operational costs significantly reduced the final net profit to Rp215,000, highlighting the need for more effective marketing strategies to increase sales volume and efficiency (see Table 3). Such diagnostic assessments are essential in community engagement projects because they allow researchers and practitioners to identify key performance gaps and design targeted solutions that address real operational challenges (Kumar, 2025).

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Table 3. Financial Overview of Lullaby Frozen Food

No.	Financial Indicator	Amount (IDR)
1	Revenue	Rp 6,535,000
2	Cost of Goods Sold (COGS)	Rp 6,320,000
3	Net Income	Rp 215,000
4	Current Assets	Rp 4,849,000
5	Inventory	Rp 1,639,000
6	Current Liabilities	–
7	Cash	Rp 210,000
8	Cash Equivalents	Rp 3,000,000

The second stage focused on developing and implementing social media marketing strategies, particularly through Instagram and WhatsApp as the primary communication channels with customers. Social media marketing plays an important role in supporting MSME competitiveness because it enables businesses to reach broader audiences at relatively low cost while fostering interaction with potential consumers (Hurdawaty, & Tukiran, 2024; Sudiantini, Sefita, Maharani, Maharani, & Febianti, 2024). In this project, the implementation included improving visual product presentation, increasing content consistency, and utilizing short video formats such as reels to attract

audience attention. The analysis of Instagram engagement data shows that reels content related to product promotion and cooking demonstrations generated significantly higher reach and interaction compared to static photo posts, indicating that short-form visual storytelling is more effective in capturing audience attention in digital platforms. One example of the implemented strategy was the development of promotional reels content showcasing the preparation and presentation of *cireng isi* products (Fig. 1). As shown in the visual documentation of the project implementation, the promotional reel titled *"Promosi Cireng Isi"* successfully attracted significant audience engagement and generated a large number of views from non-followers, demonstrating the potential of such content to expand brand awareness beyond existing audiences.



Fig. 1. Promotional reels content of *cireng isi* products.

The third stage involved monitoring and evaluating marketing performance using a marketing funnel framework, which includes awareness, consideration, purchase, retention, and advocacy stages. This framework helps identify how audiences move from initial brand recognition to becoming loyal customers. The evaluation showed that certain types of visual content—such as cooking demonstrations, product reviews, and behind-the-scenes preparation—were more effective in stimulating customer interest and increasing inquiries through WhatsApp. In addition, consistent content uploads and interactive communication with customers contributed to improving engagement and strengthening customer relationships. Such evaluation processes are crucial in digital marketing

because continuous monitoring allows MSMEs to refine their marketing strategies and improve customer experience over time (Mehta, Jha, Malhotra, & Gusain, 2026).

The evaluation presented in Table 4 demonstrates how the marketing funnel framework was applied to assess the effectiveness of the social media marketing strategies implemented during the community engagement project. The results indicate a significant improvement in the awareness and consideration stages, particularly through the use of Instagram reels and visually engaging content formats. The integration of Instagram marketing with WhatsApp communication also facilitated the transition from audience engagement to purchase decisions. Furthermore, the presence of repeat orders and positive customer testimonials suggests that the implemented strategies have begun to strengthen customer retention and brand advocacy. These findings highlight the importance of structured digital marketing interventions in supporting MSME competitiveness and improving brand awareness in the digital marketplace.

Table 4. Evaluation of Social Media Marketing Strategy Using Marketing Funnel Framework

Marketing Funnel Stage	Baseline Condition (Before Intervention)	Intervention Implemented	Target Improvement	Observed Outcome
Awareness	Instagram content was mostly static product photos with relatively low reach (around 98–118 accounts per post).	Development of more engaging visual content such as reels, product demonstrations, and promotional storytelling.	Increase content reach and expand audience exposure beyond existing followers.	Promotional reels "Promosi Cireng Isi" reached 7,281 accounts and generated 17,450 total views, with 99.98% of viewers coming from non-followers, indicating broader market exposure.
Consideration	Audience interaction with earlier content was relatively low, with only a few likes and minimal engagement.	Use of interactive content formats including reels, product preparation videos, and storytelling about product quality.	Increase engagement metrics such as likes, comments, shares, and saves.	The promotional reel generated 364 likes, 49 comments, 22 shares, and 13 saves, reflecting higher audience engagement and interest in the product.
Purchase	Customer purchase decisions were limited and depended largely on direct inquiries without structured digital promotion.	Integration of Instagram marketing with WhatsApp communication to facilitate direct ordering and consultation.	Increase conversion from content viewers to potential buyers.	Many customers who discovered the product through Instagram continued the purchasing process via WhatsApp, indicating successful conversion from engagement to transaction.

Retention	Customer loyalty was still developing due to the relatively new stage of the business.	Strengthening customer communication, responding quickly to inquiries, and ensuring consistent product quality.	Increase repeat purchase behavior among existing customers.	Transaction records show consistent repeat orders in several months, indicating positive customer satisfaction and loyalty.
Advocacy	Limited use of customer testimonials as promotional material.	Utilization of customer feedback and testimonials as social proof in social media content.	Encourage satisfied customers to recommend the product to others.	Customer testimonials and positive feedback were incorporated into promotional content, helping strengthen brand credibility among new audiences.

Overall, the staged implementation of the community service project demonstrates how structured digital marketing interventions can help MSMEs strengthen brand visibility, enhance customer engagement, and improve business performance. Through collaboration between the university and the MSME partner, this initiative not only supports the growth of Lullaby Frozen Food but also illustrates how academic knowledge can be translated into practical solutions that empower local businesses in the digital economy.

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Empowering MSME Through University Collaboration

Collaboration between universities and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) can provide a practical mechanism for translating academic knowledge into solutions for specific business challenges. Through community engagement activities, universities can contribute technical assistance, knowledge transfer, and capacity-building support to MSMEs facing limitations in managerial capabilities, marketing knowledge, and access to digital tools (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000; Bringle & Hatcher, 2009). In the context of digital transformation, such collaboration can help MSME partners develop a more structured understanding of social media marketing and digital customer engagement.

The collaboration between BINUS University and Lullaby Frozen Food focused primarily on capability building in digital marketing. The MSME partner received structured guidance on content planning, visual storytelling, calls to action, customer-response practices, and the use of Instagram

analytics for performance evaluation. Rather than simply producing promotional content for the business, the community engagement activities aimed to strengthen the partner's ability to understand, implement, and evaluate its own social media marketing practices.

The documented outcomes indicate changes in digital exposure and audience interaction during the implementation period. Prior to the intervention, selected Instagram posts primarily consisted of static product photographs and reached approximately 98–118 accounts per post. During the intervention, a promotional Reel featuring *cireng isi* reached 7,281 accounts and generated 17,450 views, together with 364 likes, 49 comments, 22 shares, and 13 saves. These results suggest substantially greater exposure and interaction for the documented promotional content. However, because the project involved a single case and did not include a control or comparison account, these differences should be interpreted as descriptive observations rather than evidence that the intervention or the Reel format alone caused the improvement. Factors such as Instagram's algorithm, posting time, audience growth, content topic, and other contextual conditions may also have influenced the observed performance.

In addition to content development, the collaboration introduced the MSME partner to the use of digital analytics for monitoring audience responses and reflecting on content performance. Through mentoring and practical guidance, the business owner was encouraged to examine indicators such as reach, views, likes, comments, shares, and saves when evaluating social media activities. This process supported a more systematic approach to content planning and provided the partner with practical experience in using platform-generated data to inform subsequent marketing decisions. In this sense, the primary contribution of the university–MSME collaboration can be understood as knowledge transfer and capability development rather than as direct evidence of business performance improvement.

The available evidence for outcomes beyond digital exposure and engagement remains more limited. Although customer inquiries, communication through WhatsApp, repeat orders, and positive

feedback were observed during the project, the available documentation does not yet provide sufficient data to quantify conversion rates, customer retention, or the long-term financial impact of the intervention. Therefore, these outcomes should not be interpreted as evidence of sustainable business growth or as being causally attributable to the social media marketing intervention. Future community engagement projects should establish clearer baseline and follow-up periods and systematically document Instagram-originated inquiries, orders, repeat purchases, and revenue to enable a more comprehensive evaluation.

Overall, this case illustrates the potential value of university–MSME collaboration as a context for applying academic knowledge and developing practical capabilities. The university contributed structured guidance and analytical perspectives, while the MSME provided a real-world setting in which digital marketing practices could be implemented and evaluated. Within the limitations of a single-case community engagement project, the findings suggest that such collaboration can support MSME learning and the adoption of more systematic social media marketing practices. Further research involving longer observation periods, comparable cases, and more complete business performance data would be needed to assess whether these capabilities translate into sustained improvements in customer acquisition, retention, and business performance.

D. CONCLUSION

This community engagement project provides descriptive evidence that the implementation of structured social media marketing practices was associated with increased digital exposure and audience interaction for selected Lullaby Frozen Food content. Through collaboration between the university and the MSME partner, the project introduced more structured approaches to Instagram content planning, short-form video production, visual storytelling, calls to action, responsive customer communication, and the use of platform analytics. The documented results were most evident at the awareness and consideration stages of the marketing funnel. For example, a promotional

Reel reached 7,281 accounts and generated 17,450 views, together with measurable interactions in the form of likes, comments, shares, and saves. These findings suggest that the documented content was associated with broader audience exposure and higher interaction than the selected earlier static posts.

However, these observations should be interpreted cautiously. The project was based on a single MSME case and did not include a control or comparison account. In addition, the observation period was limited, and factors such as Instagram algorithmic distribution, posting time, audience growth, content topic, paid promotion, seasonality, and other contextual conditions may have influenced the observed outcomes. Therefore, the findings do not establish that the intervention, or any individual content format such as Reels, directly caused improvements in brand awareness or engagement. Reach and engagement metrics should also be understood as indicators of digital exposure and interaction rather than direct measures of durable brand awareness.

The collaboration nevertheless illustrates the potential value of university-led community engagement as a mechanism for knowledge transfer and capability development. Through mentoring and practical guidance, the MSME partner was introduced to content planning, audience-oriented communication, and analytics-based evaluation. The contribution of the project is therefore best understood in terms of strengthening the partner's capacity to implement and monitor more systematic social media marketing practices.

Evidence regarding outcomes beyond digital exposure and engagement remains limited. Although customer inquiries, WhatsApp communication, and repeat orders were observed during the project, the available documentation does not provide sufficient evidence to quantify conversion rates, customer retention, or long-term financial performance. Consequently, the study does not claim that the intervention resulted in sustainable business growth or that changes in business performance can be causally attributed to the social media marketing activities. Future studies should employ longer observation periods, clearer baseline and post-intervention comparisons, and systematically

documented data on inquiries, conversions, repeat purchases, and financial performance to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the longer-term outcomes of university–MSME digital marketing interventions.

E. RECOMMENDATION: FOSTERING SYNERGISTIC UNIVERSITY MSME PARTNERSHIP

Future community engagement projects involving universities and MSMEs should establish a clear measurement framework before the intervention is implemented. The evaluation plan should specify baseline and post-intervention observation periods, the number of comparable content items, content categories, posting frequency, and the indicators used to assess outcomes. Researchers should also distinguish between reach, impressions, and views, as these metrics represent different forms of digital exposure. In addition, the engagement-rate formula and its denominator should be explicitly stated to ensure consistency and comparability across content and observation periods.

Future projects should also develop clearer procedures for documenting the relationship between social media activities and business outcomes. Where possible, customer inquiries originating from specific digital platforms should be recorded, and subsequent orders should be documented to provide a more transparent basis for assessing conversion. Data on repeat purchases, revenue, and profit should likewise be reported separately and across clearly defined periods. Such procedures would help distinguish changes in digital exposure and engagement from actual business outcomes and reduce the risk of drawing conclusions that cannot be adequately supported by the available evidence.

To strengthen the interpretation of intervention outcomes, future community engagement studies should consider longer observation periods and, where feasible, comparison content or comparison cases. A longitudinal approach would enable researchers to examine whether changes in reach and engagement are sustained over time and whether they are accompanied by measurable changes in customer inquiries, purchase behavior, repeat orders, or financial performance. Although

experimental control may not always be feasible in community engagement settings, systematic before-and-after documentation and the use of comparable content categories can provide a stronger basis for interpretation.

Universities can also develop repeatable MSME mentoring modules that combine practical capability building with systematic performance evaluation. Such modules may include content guidelines, storytelling techniques, calls to action, customer-response protocols, posting schedules, and dashboard-based performance reviews. By integrating mentoring activities with a structured measurement framework, universities can support MSMEs in developing digital marketing capabilities while also improving the transparency and reproducibility of community engagement evaluations.

Furthermore, university–MSME partnerships may benefit from broader collaboration involving government institutions, industry partners, and local communities, particularly when additional resources such as training, business incubation, or digital infrastructure are required. However, the effectiveness of such collaborative initiatives should be assessed using clearly defined indicators rather than inferred solely from participation or activity completion. A more systematic approach to intervention design, implementation, and evaluation can help universities generate stronger evidence regarding how community engagement activities contribute to MSME capability development and, where sufficient longitudinal evidence is available, broader business outcomes.

Scientific Ethics Declaration

The authors declare that they have no competing interests related to the conduct, analysis, or publication of this community engagement project. The MSME partner, Lullaby Frozen Food, was informed about the purpose of the community engagement activities and the use of relevant organizational and social media performance data for evaluation and academic publication.

Permission was obtained from the MSME owner to use relevant business-related documentation and publicly available social media performance information associated with the project.

The study used aggregated and anonymized information when reporting customer interactions and business-related outcomes. No personally identifiable customer information, including names, usernames, contact details, or private transaction information, is disclosed in this manuscript. Where customer feedback or testimonials were considered, the information was used only for analytical purposes and was presented without revealing the identity of individual customers.

Direct messages and other private customer communications were not reproduced in identifiable form. Any analysis of customer interactions was limited to information relevant to understanding general patterns of audience engagement and communication. The confidentiality and privacy of customers and the MSME partner were maintained throughout the documentation, analysis, and reporting processes.

This study was conducted as a community engagement and documentation-based evaluation project and did not involve medical, clinical, or experimental interventions involving human participants. Nevertheless, the authors followed institutional principles concerning informed permission, confidentiality, responsible data use, and privacy protection.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) USE DISCLOSURE

The authors acknowledge the use of ChatGPT (OpenAI) as an artificial intelligence-assisted tool during the preparation and revision of this manuscript. AI assistance was used primarily during the language editing and manuscript revision process, including improving the clarity, coherence, grammar, academic tone, and organization of selected sections of the manuscript. In particular, AI was used to assist in revising the Abstract, Introduction, Theoretical Point of View, Intervention and Implementation sections, Discussion, Conclusion, Recommendations, Scientific Ethics Declaration, and Response to Reviewer. AI was also used to help improve consistency between the research

design, reported findings, interpretations, limitations, conclusions, and recommendations in response to reviewer comments.

The purpose of using AI was to support academic language refinement, structural improvement, identification of repetitive statements, improvement of logical consistency, and revision of claims into more cautious and evidence-based academic language. AI was not used to generate, fabricate, manipulate, or alter the empirical data reported in this study. All research data, Instagram performance metrics, business-related information, interpretations of empirical findings, and final academic decisions remained the responsibility of the authors. All AI-generated suggestions were subsequently reviewed, evaluated, edited, and validated by the authors. The authors retain full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, integrity, interpretation, and final content of the manuscript.

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