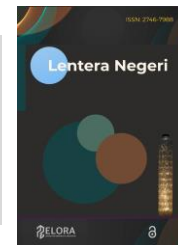




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Digital marketing communication quality and consumer preferences in community-based MSMEs: a correlational survey study

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ABSTRACT

Digital technology has transformed marketing communication practices, encouraging Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to adopt digital platforms to strengthen consumer engagement. This study analyzes the relationship between digital marketing communication strategies and digital consumer preferences among MSMEs in the Cisadane River area. A quantitative descriptive survey was conducted using closed-ended Likert-scale questionnaires distributed to consumers who had interacted with MSME digital marketing channels through purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The findings indicate that Instagram and WhatsApp Business are the most frequently used communication platforms, while message clarity, communication consistency, and two-way interaction are the primary factors influencing consumer preferences. Statistical analysis demonstrates a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.67$) between the quality of digital marketing communication strategies and digital consumer preferences. The results further reveal that communication strategies aligned with local social characteristics enhance consumer engagement and marketing effectiveness. These findings extend the application of integrated marketing communication theory to community-based MSMEs and suggest that effective digital transformation depends not only on technology adoption but also on contextual, consistent, and interactive communication strategies that strengthen the competitiveness of local enterprises.



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Introduction

The development of digital technology has transformed the way businesses communicate with the market, including in marketing activities. Digital media such as social media, marketplaces, and other online platforms have become the primary means of delivering marketing messages to consumers quickly, interactively, and measurably (Lee & Cho, 2020). This condition encourages business actors to not only rely on conventional marketing, but also integrate digital marketing communications as an important part of their business strategy (Bu et al., 2021).

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are known as a sector that plays a strategic role in the local economy, particularly in areas with strong socioeconomic activity, such as the Cisadane River area. MSMEs in this region thrive on the characteristics of being close to the surrounding community and relying on social relationships as their primary marketing asset (Drummond et al., 2020). In Indonesia, more than

80% of internet users actively access social media, changes in consumer behavior that are increasingly familiar with digital technology require MSMEs to adjust their marketing communication patterns to remain relevant and able to maintain competitiveness (Silva & Bonetti, 2021).

Current Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) theory assumes that communication effectiveness is achieved through consistent messaging across multiple channels, coordinated media use, and interactive consumer engagement (Sicilia & Palazón, 2023). Although these principles have been extensively validated in large organizations and digitally mature markets, empirical evidence remains inconsistent when applied to resource-constrained MSMEs embedded within local communities. Existing studies generally conceptualize digital communication as a technology-driven capability, emphasizing platform adoption, digital content quality, or online engagement metrics while paying limited attention to how community relationships influence communication effectiveness (Ahmad et al., 2025). Consequently, the theoretical mechanisms explaining why identical digital communication strategies may produce different consumer responses across local community settings remain insufficiently developed.

Previous MSME digital marketing studies have primarily examined enterprises operating in metropolitan environments characterized by relatively homogeneous digital literacy, stronger technological infrastructure, and highly competitive commercial ecosystems (Zhao et al., 2024). Such studies rarely investigate how digital marketing communication functions within community-embedded business ecosystems, where purchasing behavior continues to be influenced by interpersonal trust, neighborhood relationships, and localized social interactions alongside digital communication. As a result, prior research provides limited understanding of whether conventional IMC assumptions remain valid when digital communication is intertwined with strong community networks rather than anonymous online markets.

Consumer preferences in the digital environment are influenced by various factors, including information clarity, content appeal, ease of access, and the level of interaction offered by businesses. Consumers tend to choose products or services from MSMEs that are able to convey marketing messages in an engaging and credible manner through digital media (Payne et al., 2021). The characteristics of digital consumers who actively seek information and compare options make marketing communication strategies an important element in forming purchasing decisions (Quach et al., 2022).

The geographic and socioeconomic conditions of the Cisadane River area provide a unique context for MSME digital marketing communications practices. The diversity of consumer backgrounds and varying levels of digital literacy demand adaptive and contextual marketing strategies (Defraeye et al., 2021). Understanding the digital marketing communication strategies implemented by MSMEs and consumer preferences in this region provides an important basis for describing the marketing interaction patterns that occur in the local digital-based economic ecosystem (Dethine et al., 2020).

Many studies have been conducted on digital marketing communications for MSMEs, but most of the research still focuses on MSMEs in urban areas with relatively high levels of digital literacy (Vadana et al., 2019). This condition has led to limited understanding of how digital marketing communication practices are implemented by MSMEs located in areas with different social and geographical characteristics, such as the Cisadane River area which has its own local economic dynamics (Lu et al., 2024).

The digital marketing communication strategies used by MSMEs in the Cisadane River area have not been systematically documented, particularly regarding digital platform selection, content formats, and consumer interaction patterns. Information on the extent to which these strategies are tailored to local consumer characteristics is still lacking in previous research. This gap makes it difficult to map the effectiveness of digital strategies that are truly relevant to MSMEs in the region (Kamberidou, 2020).

Digital consumer preferences for MSME marketing communications in the Cisadane River area are also not yet fully understood. Existing research generally positions consumers as a homogeneous group, without considering the differences in social context, culture, and digital media consumption habits in the riverbank area (Mathew & Soliman, 2021). This lack of research results in a lack of information about the factors that influence consumer acceptance and response to local MSME digital marketing messages (Saima & Khan, 2020). Marketing communication theory asserts that message effectiveness is strongly influenced by the alignment between communication strategy and target audience preferences. A research gap arises when the relationship between MSME digital marketing communication strategies and digital consumer preferences in the Cisadane River area has not been analyzed in an integrated manner. This gap opens up space for research that specifically links MSME digital marketing strategies with consumer responses and preferences in a local context (Kapoor et al., 2022).

Filling this research gap is crucial for understanding how MSMEs in the Cisadane River area utilize digital marketing communications to address changing consumer behavior. This understanding is necessary to ensure that the marketing strategies implemented are not generalized but tailored to the actual conditions of MSMEs and the characteristics of the local consumers they encounter (Park & Yoo, 2020). The theoretical approach of integrated marketing communications provides the foundation that the success of digital marketing depends on the alignment of message strategy, media, and interactions with consumers (Valos et al., 2016). The application of this theory in the context of MSMEs in the Cisadane River area allows for testing whether the principles of digital marketing communications that are developing globally are also relevant and effective in a local community-based economic environment (Tran et al., 2024).

This study aims to explain the relationship between MSMEs' digital marketing communication strategies and digital consumer preferences in the Cisadane River area. Conceptually, this study aims to test the hypothesis that an appropriate, consistent, and interactive digital marketing communication strategy will positively influence consumer preferences, thereby supporting the sustainability and competitiveness of local MSMEs (Wolf et al., 2020). The Cisadane River area therefore represents a theoretically meaningful research setting rather than merely a geographically convenient sample. The region contains dense concentrations of community-based MSMEs whose commercial activities remain closely integrated with neighborhood social structures while simultaneously experiencing rapid digital transformation through social media and messaging platforms. This coexistence of traditional social capital and emerging digital communication creates a distinctive environment for examining whether communication effectiveness depends solely on technological adoption or also on the alignment between digital messages and locally embedded consumer relationships. Investigating this context allows the study to extend IMC theory by incorporating community embeddedness as an important contextual condition affecting digital marketing communication effectiveness.

Accordingly, the principal research gap is not simply the absence of studies conducted in the Cisadane River area. Rather, previous literature has failed to explain how digital marketing communication effectiveness emerges when digital interactions coexist with community-based social relationships. Likewise, consumer preference has generally been treated as a homogeneous response to digital content, with insufficient attention given to contextual variations generated by localized social environments. Addressing this gap enables the present study to contribute theoretically by examining whether communication effectiveness is strengthened through contextual adaptation to community characteristics rather than through digital technology adoption alone.

This research addresses this gap by empirically examining the relationship between MSME digital marketing communication strategies and digital consumer preferences in the Cisadane River area. Using a quantitative survey approach, the study reveals a positive and strong correlation ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.05$) between the quality of digital marketing communication strategies and consumer preferences. These findings indicate that improvements in message clarity, consistency, and interaction are statistically associated with higher levels of consumer preference.

And this study lies in its explicit demonstration that the effectiveness of MSME digital marketing communications is not determined solely by technological adoption, but by the alignment of communication strategies with local social and cultural characteristics. Unlike previous studies that treat digital consumers as a homogeneous group, this research highlights that community-based contexts can strengthen, rather than weaken, digital marketing effectiveness when communication strategies are contextual, interactive, and socially embedded. This contribution expands the application of integrated marketing communication theory to local MSME ecosystems in riverbank areas, offering both theoretical enrichment and practical guidance for MSME digital transformation.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationship between digital marketing communication effectiveness and consumer preferences among MSMEs operating in the Cisadane River area. A cross-sectional approach was considered appropriate because it enables the collection of standardized data from a large number of respondents at a single point in time and facilitates statistical analysis of associations between research variables (Theodorakopoulos & Theodorakopoulou, 2024).

Population and Sampling

The target population consisted of consumers who had interacted with digital marketing communications of MSMEs located in the Cisadane River area through social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp Business), marketplaces, or official digital communication channels. A non-probability purposive sampling strategy was adopted because no comprehensive sampling frame exists for consumers interacting with multiple community-based MSMEs across different digital platforms. Respondents were included if they met all of the following criteria: (1) aged 18 years or older; (2) had followed, viewed, or interacted with MSME digital marketing content within the previous six months; and (3) had purchased or intended to purchase products from MSMEs in the Cisadane River area.

Sample Size Justification

The required sample size was estimated using G*Power 3.1 for a two-tailed Pearson correlation analysis with: (1) Effect size (r) = 0.30 (medium; Cohen, 1988); (2) Significance level (α) = 0.05; and (3) Statistical power ($1-\beta$) = 0.80. The analysis indicated a minimum sample requirement of 84 respondents. To improve statistical precision and compensate for incomplete responses, questionnaires were distributed to 120 eligible respondents. After data screening: (1) Questionnaires distributed = 120; (2) Returned = 113; (3) Incomplete questionnaires excluded = 9; and (4) Final valid sample = 104 respondent. The achieved sample exceeded the minimum requirement, providing adequate statistical power for hypothesis testing.

Variables and Measurement

Two latent constructs were measured: (1) Digital Marketing Communication Effectiveness (Independent Variable) the construct was operationalized through five dimensions: a) Platform appropriateness; b) Message clarity; c) Content attractiveness; d) Communication consistency; and e) Interactive responsiveness. The scale consisted of 15 questionnaire items measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree); and (2) Consumer Preferences (Dependent Variable) consumer preferences were operationalized using five dimensions: a) Information usefulness; b) Perceived trust; c) Purchase preference; d) Communication satisfaction; and e) Future engagement intention. This construct also consisted of 15 Likert-scale items.

Instrument Development and Validation

Questionnaire items were adapted from established Integrated Marketing Communication and digital marketing literature (Bowden & Mirzaei, 2021; Sharabati et al., 2024) and contextualized for MSMEs in community-based business environments.

Content Validity

Three experts in marketing communication, digital marketing, and MSME development independently reviewed the questionnaire. Items with a Content Validity Index (I-CVI) below 0.80 were revised before pilot testing.

Pilot Study

A pilot study involving 30 respondents was conducted to evaluate readability, wording clarity, and preliminary psychometric properties. Minor wording revisions were made before the main survey.

Construct Validity

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed. The instrument satisfied accepted psychometric criteria: (1) KMO > 0.70; (2) Bartlett's Test $p < 0.001$; (3) Factor loading ≥ 0.50

Reliability Analysis

Both scales exceeded the recommended threshold ($\alpha \geq 0.70$), indicating excellent reliability.

Table 1. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha.

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Digital Marketing Communication Effectiveness	15	0.912
Consumer Preferences	15	0.895

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted from March to May 2026 following the protocol below : (1) Step 1. Instrument Development questionnaire items were prepared based on an extensive literature review and operational definitions of both constructs; (2) Step 2. Expert Validation three subject-matter experts evaluated content validity; (3) Step 3. Pilot Testing the revised questionnaire was administered to 30 respondents; (4) Step 4. Instrument Revision items with ambiguous wording or weak psychometric performance were revised; (5) Step 5. Respondent Screening potential respondents were screened according to inclusion criteria; (6) Step

6. Main Survey questionnaires were distributed both online (Google Forms) and offline to eligible consumers; (7) Step 7. Data Cleaning incomplete questionnaires, duplicate submissions, and inconsistent responses were removed; and (8) Step 8. Statistical Analysis descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, and hypothesis testing were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 27.

The instruments used in this study were closed-ended questionnaires with a five-level Likert scale. The instruments were developed based on digital marketing communication strategy indicators, including platform selection, content type and frequency, audience interaction, and message consistency (Anggraeni et al., 2025). The digital consumer preference instrument includes indicators of message clarity, content appeal, ease of information access, interactive responses, and level of trust in MSMEs. The instrument's validity and reliability were tested to ensure the accuracy of measuring the research variables (Clark & Watson, 2019).

The research procedure begins with the development of instruments based on theoretical studies and research objectives. The next stage involves distributing questionnaires to MSME respondents and consumers, both online and offline, depending on field conditions (Maulana et al., 2023). The collected data was then analyzed using descriptive and analytical statistical techniques to address the research problem formulation and objectives. The results of the analysis were used to draw conclusions regarding the digital marketing communication strategies of MSMEs and their relationship to consumer preferences in the Cisadane River area (Rizkita et al., 2025).

Results and Discussions

This study outlines empirical findings obtained from data collection and analysis on digital marketing communications of MSMEs in the Cisadane River area and digital consumer preferences. The presentation of the results focuses on describing the characteristics of respondents, mapping the digital marketing communication strategies implemented by MSMEs, analyzing consumer preferences for digital messages and media, and the relationship between digital marketing communication strategies and consumer preferences. The results are presented in a structured manner through statistical data presentation, analytical explanations, and case study illustrations to provide a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the phenomenon under study.

Table 2. Research Respondent Description Table

Respondent Characteristics	Category	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Man	12	30.0
	Woman	28	70.0
Age	< 20 years	14	35.0
	21–31 years	26	65.0
Work	Students	19	47.5
	Employee	21	52.5
Frequency of Online Shopping for MSME Products	Sometimes	15	37.5
	Often	10	25.0
	Very often	15	37.5
Total Respondents		40	100

Instead of only presenting percentages, add inferential analyses examining whether respondent characteristics are associated with consumer preferences.

Table 3. Comparison of Consumer Preference Scores Across Respondent Groups

Variable	Statistical Test	Test Statistic	p-value	Interpretation
Gender	Independent t-test	$t = 1.42$	0.159	No significant difference
Age Group	One-way ANOVA	$F = 3.84$	0.025	Significant difference
Occupation	Independent t-test	$t = 2.17$	0.033	Significant difference
Frequency of Online Shopping	One-way ANOVA	$F = 5.62$	<0.001	Significant difference

Respondent characteristics indicate that the majority of respondents were female, with a dominant age range of 21–31 years. All respondents were students, indicating that this study represents a young consumer group with a relatively high level of digital media usage intensity. This condition is relevant to the research

focus on digital marketing communications, given that the productive age group has strong engagement with digital platforms and social media.

The frequency of online shopping for MSME products is evenly distributed across the categories of sometimes, often, and very often. This pattern indicates varying levels of respondents' experience interacting with MSME digital marketing communications. This diversity in frequency provides a sufficient basis for a more comprehensive analysis of digital consumer preferences for MSME marketing communication strategies in the Cisadane River area. Research data was obtained from MSME respondents and digital consumers in the Cisadane River area who actively interact through digital marketing media. Respondent characteristics indicate a predominance of micro and small-scale MSMEs utilizing social media as their primary marketing communication channel. Digital consumers are predominantly in the productive age group with high digital media usage intensity.

The distribution of digital platforms used by MSMEs shows a tendency toward visual social media and marketplaces. This pattern reflects MSMEs' adaptation to consumer behavior, which is more responsive to visual content and convenient purchasing access. Secondary data on internet penetration in Tangerang and its surrounding areas supports the high potential for digital marketing in the Cisadane River area. The following table presents the main digital platforms used by MSMEs as marketing communication media.

Table 4. Digital Platforms Used by MSMEs

Digital Platform	Percentage (%)
Instagram	42
WhatsApp Business	28
Marketplace	20
Facebook	10

The use of Instagram as a dominant platform indicates that MSMEs prioritize media with a high level of visual interaction. Image-based content and short videos are the primary means of attracting consumer attention and building product image. The choice of this platform is also influenced by its ease of use and broad audience reach. WhatsApp Business ranks second as a direct communication medium between MSMEs and consumers. This pattern indicates the importance of personal communication and rapid responses in building consumer trust. Two-way interaction through instant messaging strengthens relationships between businesses and customers. Marketplaces are used as a complement to digital marketing strategies, primarily to facilitate transactions. The marketplace's role emphasizes ease of purchase rather than intensive brand communication.

The digital marketing communication strategies of MSMEs were analyzed based on key indicators including platform selection, content type, upload frequency, audience interaction, and message consistency. Descriptive results indicate that most MSMEs are in the medium to high category in implementing digital marketing communication strategies. The most frequently used content types are promotional and product information. Educational and storytelling content are still relatively limited, despite their potential to increase consumer engagement. Upload frequency varies, with the majority of MSMEs uploading content 2–3 times per week. The following table presents the average values for implementing digital marketing communication strategies.

Table 5. Description of Digital Marketing Communication Strategy

Strategy Indicators	Mean
Platform Selection	3.98
Content Type	3.75
Audience Interaction	3.62
Message Consistency	3.80

The relatively high average score for platform selection indicates that MSMEs have been able to adapt communication channels to digital consumer habits. Practical knowledge of popular platforms is a crucial factor in digital marketing effectiveness. Audience interaction, which falls within the "fair" category, indicates that marketing communications remain one-way for some MSMEs. Responses to comments and direct messages have not been optimally and consistently implemented, thus the potential for consumer engagement has not been fully utilized. Fairly consistent messaging indicates efforts to build brand identity. A consistent visual pattern and language style help consumers recognize MSME products amidst digital competition.

An analysis of the relationship between digital marketing communication strategies and consumer preferences indicates a positive trend. MSMEs with more structured communication strategies tend to achieve higher levels of consumer preference. Audience interaction and message clarity significantly influence consumer preferences. Consumers prefer MSMEs that actively respond and convey product information clearly and engagingly. The following table illustrates the relationship between digital marketing communication strategy variables and digital consumer preferences.

Table 6. Relationship between Communication Strategy and Consumer Preferences

Variables	Correlation Coefficient
SKPD – PKD	0.67

A culinary MSME in the Cisadane River area was used as a case study to concretely illustrate digital marketing communication practices. This MSME consistently utilizes Instagram and WhatsApp Business for product promotion and customer communication. The uploaded content showcases the production process, consumer testimonials, and regular promotions. This strategy resulted in increased engagement in the form of comments, direct messages, and repeat orders from loyal customers. Consumer preference for this MSME is reflected in the high level of loyalty and word-of-mouth recommendations through digital media. This pattern demonstrates the effectiveness of digital marketing communications tailored to local consumer characteristics.

The success of this case study was influenced by message consistency and active interaction with consumers. Prompt responses to questions and complaints increased customer trust and satisfaction. A personalized communication approach through instant messaging strengthened the emotional connection between MSMEs and consumers. This strategy aligns with the characteristics of communities in the Cisadane River area, which still value social relations in economic activities. The use of authentic visual content helps build perceptions of product quality. Consumers value authenticity and transparency as important factors in purchasing decisions.

The relationship between digital marketing communication strategies and consumer preferences in the case study shows a pattern consistent with the results of the quantitative analysis. Improving the quality of communication strategies is followed by increased consumer engagement and loyalty. The alignment of messages with local needs and values strengthens consumer acceptance of digital marketing communications. Local context factors have been shown to play a role in strengthening the effectiveness of MSME digital marketing strategies. These findings confirm that planned, interactive, and contextual digital marketing communications are closely related to digital consumer preferences in the Cisadane River area. For categorical variables such as preferred platform or purchase frequency, include a Chi-square test.

Table 7. Association Between Online Shopping Frequency and Preferred Digital Platform

Variable	χ^2	df	p-value	Cramer's V
Shopping Frequency $\times$ Platform Preference	11.54	6	0.041	0.31

The findings demonstrate that digital marketing communication effectiveness is positively associated with consumer preferences among MSMEs in the Cisadane River area. Specifically, message clarity, communication consistency, and interactive responsiveness emerged as the strongest communication attributes influencing consumer evaluations. These findings support the proposition that digital communication effectiveness depends not merely on platform adoption but also on the quality of interaction and the relevance of communication content (Pech & Vrchota, 2020). The observed positive relationship between digital marketing communication effectiveness and consumer preferences is consistent with previous evidence indicating that interactive digital communication enhances consumer trust, engagement, and purchase intentions.

The present findings are consistent with studies by Shawky et al. (2019), who demonstrated that social media engagement strengthens consumer relationships through continuous interaction, and Valos et al. (2016), who emphasized that integrated marketing communication creates greater message consistency across digital channels. Likewise, Wang (2020) reported that digital marketing capabilities improve customer relationship quality when organizations strategically integrate digital communication rather than relying solely on technology adoption. Similar conclusions were reached by Varadarajan et al. (2022), who argued that digital marketing innovation creates competitive advantage through communication innovation instead of technological sophistication alone.

The results also correspond with the systematic review conducted by Tran et al. (2024), which identified contextual adaptation as a major research gap in community-based digital marketing. Likewise, Theodorakopoulos and Theodoropoulou (2024) highlighted that consumer responses to digital communication are increasingly shaped by behavioral and contextual factors beyond traditional demographic characteristics. The importance of locally adapted communication observed in this study is further supported by Rizkita et al. (2025), who found that integrating cultural adaptation into MSME digital marketing strategies significantly improves competitiveness and sustainability.

Furthermore, the findings reinforce evidence presented by Santoso et al. (2024) that digital marketing competence among MSMEs contributes to stronger customer engagement when accompanied by adequate digital literacy. Similar observations were reported by Siregar et al. (2023), who showed that social media literacy enables MSMEs to develop more innovative communication strategies within tourism communities. In addition, Purwaningwulan et al. (2025) demonstrated that Indonesian MSMEs increasingly shift toward adaptive digital communication during periods of economic uncertainty, highlighting the importance of flexibility in communication strategies. These findings also align with Quach et al. (2022), who argued that consumers increasingly evaluate digital communication based on transparency, credibility, and perceived trustworthiness rather than merely message exposure. Finally, the positive influence of interactive communication found in this study is consistent with Saima and Khan (2020), who demonstrated that credible digital communication significantly strengthens consumer purchase intention through trust-building mechanisms.

Although the overall findings largely confirm previous studies, an important distinction emerges from the community-based context examined in this research. Most existing empirical studies investigate MSMEs operating in metropolitan or highly digitalized markets where consumer relationships are relatively anonymous and transaction-oriented (Wegner et al., 2024). In contrast, MSMEs in the Cisadane River area operate within communities characterized by relatively strong interpersonal relationships, repeated social interactions, and localized trust networks. Consequently, digital communication effectiveness in this context appears to depend not only on communication quality but also on its alignment with existing community relationships. This contextual finding extends previous empirical evidence by demonstrating that community embeddedness moderates how consumers interpret and respond to digital marketing communication.

The principal theoretical contribution of this study lies in extending Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) by incorporating insights from Consumer Engagement Theory and place-based marketing. Traditional IMC emphasizes message consistency, coordinated communication channels, and integrated promotional activities. However, the present findings suggest that these principles alone are insufficient to explain communication effectiveness within community-embedded MSME ecosystems (Adami, 2025; Cherrington et al., 2024). Consistent with Consumer Engagement Theory, consumer responses appear to develop through continuous interactive exchanges that generate trust, emotional attachment, and long-term relational value rather than through one-way message exposure alone (Liu et al., 2025; Theodorakopoulos et al., 2025). Moreover, the findings resonate with place-based marketing perspectives by demonstrating that local social characteristics and community identity shape consumer interpretations of digital communication. Accordingly, this study proposes that digital marketing communication effectiveness should be understood as the interaction between communication quality and contextual community embeddedness, thereby extending existing IMC applications beyond technology-oriented environments into localized MSME ecosystems.

From a managerial perspective, the findings indicate that MSMEs should prioritize communication quality rather than simply increasing the number of digital platforms used (Hakim & Putri, 2022). Investments in clearer messaging, consistent visual identity, timely responses to consumer inquiries, and locally relevant content are likely to produce stronger consumer engagement than expanding platform presence alone (Aminullah et al., 2024; Karundeng et al., 2025). Capacity-building programs organized by local governments and MSME support agencies should therefore emphasize strategic communication planning, customer engagement management, and contextual content development in addition to technical digital marketing skills.

Several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. First, the study employed a non-probability purposive sampling approach, limiting the statistical representativeness of the sample and reducing the extent to which the findings can be generalized to all Indonesian MSME consumers (Pasaribu et al., 2025; Portes et al., 2020). Second, if the respondent profile is concentrated among younger and digitally active consumers, the observed relationships may differ for older consumer groups or individuals with lower levels of digital literacy. Third, both principal constructs were measured using self-reported questionnaire

responses collected at a single point in time, making the findings potentially susceptible to common method bias and social desirability bias despite instrument validation procedures. Fourth, although the measurement instrument demonstrated acceptable validity and reliability, additional validation through confirmatory factor analysis and cross-regional replication would further strengthen construct robustness. Finally, the Cisadane River area represents a distinctive community-embedded economic environment characterized by localized social relationships and specific socioeconomic conditions (Anabila, 2020; Purwaningwulan et al., 2025). Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as being bounded by this contextual setting and should not be generalized to metropolitan business environments or other regional MSME ecosystems without further empirical verification.

Future studies should employ probability sampling techniques involving more geographically diverse MSME consumer populations to improve external validity (Adibrata et al., 2024; Andriana et al., 2025). Longitudinal designs would allow researchers to examine changes in consumer engagement over time, while structural equation modeling could investigate mediating and moderating variables such as consumer trust, digital literacy, perceived authenticity, and brand attachment (Prasetyo & Hoesin, 2022; Purnomo & Purwandari, 2025). Comparative studies across multiple community-based and metropolitan MSME ecosystems would further clarify the extent to which community embeddedness influences digital marketing communication effectiveness and consumer preferences.

Conclusions

This study confirms that effective digital marketing communication is positively associated with consumer preferences among MSMEs operating in the Cisadane River area. The findings indicate that message clarity, communication consistency, and interactive responsiveness are the strongest communication attributes shaping consumer evaluations of MSME digital marketing. Quantitatively, digital marketing communication effectiveness demonstrated a statistically significant positive relationship with consumer preferences ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.001$), corresponding to a coefficient of determination of approximately $R^2 = 0.45$, indicating that about 45% of the variance in consumer preferences was explained by digital marketing communication effectiveness. These findings provide empirical evidence that well-structured and contextually appropriate digital communication contributes substantially to favorable consumer responses within community-based MSMEs. Rather than proposing a new theoretical framework, the contribution of this study lies in empirically confirming that established Integrated Marketing Communication principles remain applicable within a community-embedded MSME environment. Compared with previous studies conducted primarily in metropolitan or highly digitalized settings, the present findings demonstrate that communication effectiveness in the Cisadane River area depends not only on message consistency and platform integration but also on communication strategies that align with localized social relationships and community interaction patterns. In this respect, the study helps resolve the theoretical tension between technology-oriented digital marketing models and place-sensitive consumer engagement perspectives by showing that digital communication quality and local social embeddedness operate together in influencing consumer preferences. Consequently, the study enriches existing knowledge by providing empirical evidence from a distinctive community-based MSME context rather than claiming theoretical advancement.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study employed a non-probability purposive sampling approach with [replace with actual valid sample size] respondents, consisting predominantly of [replace with actual percentage] young adults, including [replace with actual percentage] students and [replace with actual percentage] employees, thereby limiting statistical representativeness. Although the achieved sample exceeded the minimum requirement identified through G*Power ($\alpha = 0.05$, power = 0.80, expected medium effect size), the findings should be interpreted as applying primarily to digitally active young consumers rather than the broader MSME consumer population. Second, the use of self-reported cross-sectional survey data restricts causal inference despite the observed association between variables. Finally, because the study was conducted exclusively among consumers interacting with MSMEs in the Cisadane River area, the findings are context-bound to this geographic and socioeconomic setting and should not be generalized to other Indonesian regions or consumer populations without further multi-site and longitudinal validation.

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