

Does Social Media Marketing Matter, Or Is It Just Digital Noise? Insight from Arifah Jaya SME

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of social media marketing in the revenue growth and brand awareness of Arifah Jaya SME, a producer of white oyster mushroom chips and bitter melon chips in Trawas Village, Mojokerto Regency. Located in a strategic tourist area, this SME capitalizes on the local souvenir market opportunity. The study employs a qualitative approach through observation and in-depth interviews with the business owner, covering business development from 2005 to 2026. Marketing implementation was carried out through Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp Business, and Shopee, supported by national television coverage. The results show an increase in monthly revenue from IDR 6 million in 2019 to IDR 30 million in 2023–2026. This success was supported by consistent organic content, product certifications, participation in the BRI Incubator Srikandi community, and integrated use of multiple digital platforms.

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing; SMEs; Digital Marketing; Arifah Jaya*

1. INTRODUCTION

Arifah Jaya is a food processing SME established in 2005 in Trawas Village, Trawas District, Mojokerto Regency, East Java. The business initially focused on oyster mushroom cultivation with a capacity of approximately 100 baglog units. As market demand grew, production capacity expanded to reach 8,000 baglog units by 2015. However, the entry of large-scale commercial mushroom producers into the local market caused a significant decline in oyster mushroom prices. This situation prompted the owner, Mrs. Arifah, to make a strategic decision to shift the business focus from fresh mushroom sales to value-added product processing. This transformation was realized through the production of white oyster mushroom chips, which was subsequently developed further with the innovation of bitter melon chips. Efforts to improve quality and consumer trust were also made through obtaining PIRT (Home Industry Food Production) certification and MUI Halal certification, both of which are displayed on product packaging. Currently, Arifah Jaya markets its products through local markets, bazaar activities, and various digital channels such as WhatsApp Business and Shopee, reaching consumers across various cities in East Java.

In a broader context, SMEs play an important role in the Indonesian economy. The Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs (2023) recorded that more than 65 million SMEs contribute approximately 61% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, 2023). Nevertheless, many SMEs still face challenges in expanding their market reach due to limited marketing budgets and reliance on conventional promotional methods. The development of digital technology, particularly social media, offers a more effective and cost-efficient marketing alternative for SMEs, including food processing businesses in rural and semi-urban areas (Deb et al., 2024). Arifah Jaya began using Facebook as a promotional medium in 2019, although digital marketing activities at that time were still limited. More intensive social media marketing implementation began in 2021 through the integrated use of multiple digital platforms, namely Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp Business, and Shopee. This strategy became an important step in increasing product visibility and expanding market reach.

Business development accelerated in 2022 when Arifah Jaya received coverage from two national television stations, iNews and GTV. This media coverage generated significant public attention and a surge in orders. Subsequently, in 2023, Arifah Jaya joined the BRI Incubator Srikandi program, which provided support in the form of production machinery, entrepreneurship training, and access to a wider market network. In the same year, Mrs. Arifah was also entrusted with the position of Chair of BRI Incubator Srikandi Trawas. The success of Arifah Jaya demonstrates that product innovation and the use of social media can serve as effective strategies in the development of local food SMEs. Based on prior research on the role of social media in tourism destination marketing (Setyawan et al., 2025), this study aims to examine the implementation of organic social media marketing at Arifah Jaya SME. Specifically, this study

analyzes the digital marketing journey of Arifah Jaya and the relationship between social media marketing activities and the increase in brand awareness and revenue growth.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative case study approach to analyze the implementation of social media marketing at Arifah Jaya SME. The study focuses on the business development journey from its establishment in 2005 to 2026, specifically on the use of social media to enhance brand awareness and business revenue. Research data were obtained through direct observation and in-depth interviews with Mrs. Arifah as the owner of Arifah Jaya SME. In addition, business documentation, sales data, social media activities, and various publications related to business development were also used as supporting data sources. Data collection was focused on marketing implementation through various digital platforms, namely Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp Business, and Shopee.

The data obtained were then analyzed descriptively to identify the relationship between social media marketing activities and business development. The analysis also considered other supporting factors, such as national media coverage, participation in the BRI Incubator Srikandi program, product certifications, and the organic marketing strategy implemented by Arifah Jaya SME. This approach is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of social media marketing in supporting the growth of local food SMEs in the Trawas tourist area.

3. RESULTS

The findings of this study cover several main aspects: social media marketing, digital content strategy, the impact of national television coverage, and the role of BRI Incubator Srikandi on the development of Arifah Jaya SME. The analysis shows that digital marketing implementation supported by social media publications and institutional mentoring programs contributed to increased brand visibility, expanded marketing networks, and revenue growth. Overall, these findings indicate that social media marketing plays an important role in supporting the development of Arifah Jaya SME as a local food producer in the Trawas tourist area. The social media marketing of Arifah Jaya is divided into four distinct phases as described in Table 1.

Table 1. Revenue Growth and Social Media Marketing of Arifah Jaya

Period	Monthly Revenue (IDR)	Growth (%)	Digital Platforms Used
2019 (Before Active Social Media)	IDR 6,000,000	Baseline	Facebook account created, not yet actively used
2021 (Active Social Media on Multiple Platforms)	IDR 10,000,000	+66.7%	Active on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp Business, and Shopee
Post-June 2022 (National TV Coverage)	IDR 15,000,000	+150%	iNews & GTV broadcast on 18 June 2022, organic order surge
2023–2026 (BRI Incubator & Market Expansion)	IDR 30,000,000	+400%	Joined BRI Incubator Srikandi; production machinery support; wider market reach

Source: In-depth interview with owner of Arifah Jaya SME (2026)

Research by Koay et al. (2021) shows that well-managed social media marketing activities can enhance brand equity, or brand value in the eyes of consumers. The findings from Arifah Jaya SME support this result. For SMEs operating in the food sector, information about certifications and product quality displayed through social media can increase consumer trust and reduce hesitation in making online purchases. This is important because food safety and quality are primary factors consumers consider when choosing processed food products. Furthermore, the expansion of Arifah Jaya's customer reach to various regions in East Java through social media is consistent with Aliyah et al. (2024), who found that social media marketing can help SMEs reach consumers beyond their local area. For Arifah Jaya SME, this situation provides an opportunity to expand the market, increase sales, and reduce dependence on consumer demand in the surrounding area.

In 2019, Arifah Jaya created a Facebook account but had not yet actively used it for marketing, with monthly revenue of approximately IDR 6,000,000. The business still relied on word-of-mouth promotion as well as participation in local bazaars and exhibitions. Starting in 2021, the business shifted to an active multi-platform social media strategy, using Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp Business, and Shopee simultaneously. Monthly revenue increased to IDR 10,000,000, reflecting growth of 66.7% from 2019. The following shows customer reviews from the Shopee marketplace.

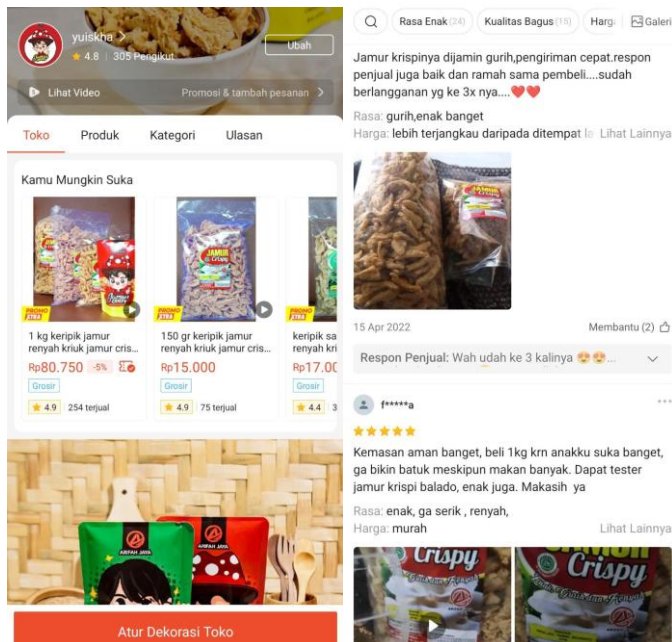


Figure 1. Customer Reviews on Shopee Marketplace

In 2022, Arifah Jaya was featured and broadcast on two national television stations, iNews and GTV. This media coverage was obtained without any financial arrangement, generating significant public attention and a surge in orders. Monthly revenue increased to approximately IDR 15,000,000 following the broadcast, representing a 150% increase from the 2019 baseline. Television coverage also expanded the business reach, with orders received from various cities in East Java.

This study also confirms and extends existing literature on social media marketing for SMEs. Arli (2017) showed that social media significantly influences consumer awareness, attitudes, loyalty, and purchase intention. The case study of Arifah Jaya SME demonstrates that a consistent social media presence, even with a relatively small number of followers, can generate steadily increasing revenue growth over time. Content featuring entertainment and informativeness, identified by Arli (2017) as key drivers of consumer attitudes toward social media, is reflected in Arifah Jaya's content strategy. Posts showcasing business activities, production processes, and participation in bazaars provide informative yet entertaining content that generates audience and customer engagement. Cheung et al. (2020) found that interaction, electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM), and trendiness are key elements driving consumer brand engagement. Arifah Jaya's visibility through national television strengthened its EWOM effect, with viewers sharing information about the brand through their own social networks following the television broadcast. The following shows the marketing activities carried out by Arifah Jaya SME after becoming active on various social media platforms.

Table 2. Arifah Jaya Social Media Platforms

Platform	Year Created	Current Followers	Main Content Type
Facebook	2019	1,600	Product photos, bazaar activities, training, product promotions
Instagram	2021	249	Product photos, packaging display, PIRT & Halal certifications

Platform	Year Created	Current Followers	Main Content Type
TikTok	2021	209	Short videos of production process and product demonstrations
WhatsApp Business	2021	-	Direct ordering, customer service, product catalog sharing
Shopee	2021	305	Online sales channel, out-of-town customers

Source: Direct observation and in-depth interview with owner of Arifah Jaya SME (2026)

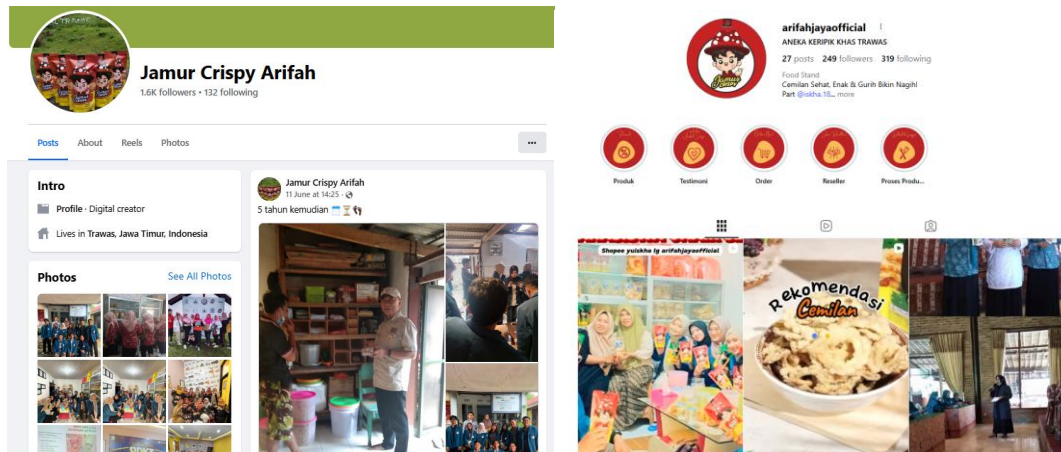


Figure 2. Facebook and Instagram Social Media Accounts

The content strategy implemented by Arifah Jaya relies entirely on organic reach without paid endorsements. To support digital marketing activities, the business owner recruited a dedicated marketing staff responsible for managing all social media accounts. Published content covers various business activities, such as participation in bazaars and trade exhibitions, documentation of production processes, product promotions, and community activities and training attended by the SME. This approach is consistent with the findings of Setyawan et al. (2025), who noted that posting visually engaging content effectively expands information reach and increases brand awareness for small businesses. A distinguishing feature of Arifah Jaya's content strategy is the consistent display of PIRT and MUI Halal certifications across various social media posts. This information serves as a form of product quality and safety assurance, thereby enhancing consumer trust. The presence of certifications is also an important factor in driving purchase decisions, especially for consumers conducting online transactions who cannot physically inspect products before buying.

In addition to social media activities, Arifah Jaya's brand awareness growth was also supported by national television coverage on iNews and GTV on June 18, 2022. This television coverage was entirely organic, featuring the business without any financial arrangement from the media. The positive impact included an increase in social media followers across various platforms and a rise in direct orders through WhatsApp Business. The increase in monthly revenue from an average of IDR 10,000,000 (in 2021) to IDR 15,000,000 (in 2022) demonstrates the positive impact of an active social media presence. Consumers who watched the television broadcast subsequently searched for Arifah Jaya on social media platforms, resulting in an increase in followers and engagement across the digital platforms.

The development of Arifah Jaya was further strengthened after joining the BRI Incubator Srikandi program in 2023. This program provided institutional support that complemented the digital marketing strategies previously implemented. The support included entrepreneurship and marketing training, production machinery assistance to improve product capacity and quality, and access to a wider network of fellow SME entrepreneurs. Furthermore, Mrs. Arifah was entrusted with the role of Chair of BRI Incubator Srikandi Trawas, expanding her role not only as a business operator but also as a community leader among SMEs. This position further enhanced the visibility and credibility of the Arifah Jaya brand within a broader business network. Thus, the combination of consistent social media marketing, national media publications, and institutional support from BRI Incubator Srikandi created a synergy that contributed to the growth and development of Arifah Jaya SME.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that social media marketing has become an important factor in the revenue growth and brand awareness of Arifah Jaya. Over five years from 2019 to 2024, monthly revenue increased from IDR 6,000,000 to IDR 30,000,000, representing a growth of 400%. This is associated with the shift from conventional marketing to active multi-platform social media in 2021 (+66.7%), organic national television coverage in June 2022 (+150% from baseline), and participation in the BRI Incubator Srikandi program starting in 2023. The case study of Arifah Jaya SME demonstrates that an organic social media strategy, when combined with institutional support through the BRI Incubator Srikandi program, can effectively drive brand awareness and revenue growth for local food SMEs. The presence across multiple platforms (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp Business, Shopee) and the consistent uploading of authentic content have built a sustainable promotional ecosystem that continues to expand the brand's reach at both local and national scales.

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