

Content-Driven Instagram Marketing and Brand Awareness: Evidence from SMEs in Indonesia's Ornamental Fish Industry

¹Alicia Tania, ²Sugianto

^{1,2}Creative Business, Politeknik Tonggak Equator, Pontianak, Indonesia

Received *date*; Received *date*; Accepted *date*; Published *date*

Abstract

Background: Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in niche markets face challenges in building brand awareness through digital platforms. Although Instagram is widely used, many SMEs lack structured content strategies and a professional digital presence, limiting engagement and market reach.

Objective: This study examines the implementation and effectiveness of a content-driven Instagram marketing strategy in enhancing brand awareness and business performance in an ornamental fish SME in Pontianak, Indonesia.

Methods: A case study was conducted through a two-month intervention applying the AIDA framework to guide content planning and audience engagement. The strategy included developing video reels, educational, and promotional content tailored to platform characteristics. Data were collected from platform analytics and business records and analyzed using a comparative approach.

Results: The findings show that a structured content-driven strategy enhances digital visibility, strengthens audience engagement, and expands market reach, while also contributing positively to business performance.

Conclusion: Content-driven Instagram marketing is an effective approach for improving brand awareness and supporting SME growth. Consistent content quality, audience-oriented messaging, and strategic platform use are key to achieving sustainable outcomes.

Keywords: Instagram marketing, brand awareness, SME digital strategy, social media marketing, content marketing.

Introduction

The proliferation of digital technology has fundamentally transformed how businesses communicate with consumers and establish market presence. Digital marketing has emerged as a critical tool for organizations seeking to expand audience reach and strengthen brand recognition (Jaiwant & Vazirani, 2024; Malik et al., 2022). Social media platforms, particularly Instagram, have become essential channels for business-consumer interaction, offering opportunities for direct engagement, community building, and cost-effective market penetration.

Instagram has evolved into a comprehensive marketing ecosystem with over 2 billion monthly active users globally (Martincorena-Goñi & Aramendia-Muneta, 2023). However, effective Instagram marketing requires strategic content planning, consistent engagement, and data-driven optimization. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) frequently struggle to implement structured digital strategies due to resource constraints, limited marketing expertise, and competing operational priorities.

In Indonesia, internet penetration has reached substantial levels, with over 200 million users by 2023 (Jaya et al., 2024). This creates unprecedented opportunities for businesses to access wider markets efficiently. However, many Indonesian SMEs remain underutilized in digital spaces, particularly in specialized niche markets like the ornamental fish retail industry.

¹ Corresponding author: Alicia Tania
email: aliciatania.09@gmail.com



The emergence of social media as dominant marketing channel reflects broader digital transformation reshaping global commerce. Traditional marketing paradigms emphasizing one-way mass communication through television, radio, and print advertising have given way to interactive, personalized digital engagement enabling direct conversation between brands and consumers. This shift has democratized market access, allowing small businesses to compete with larger corporations on relatively equal footing in digital spaces. However, this democratization paradoxically creates new challenges as market saturation, algorithmic complexity, and audience attention scarcity make simply having digital presence insufficient for business success.

For SMEs, particularly those operating in niche specialized markets, digital transformation presents unique strategic opportunities and implementation challenges. Niche market businesses serve narrow customer segments with specialized needs, often competing on expertise, product quality, and community relationships rather than price or scale economies. Digital platforms offer unprecedented ability to identify, reach, and engage these dispersed specialized audiences who would be prohibitively expensive to access through traditional marketing channels. Social media platforms functioning as interest-based communities enable niche businesses to find and cultivate relationships with potential customers sharing specific passions, hobbies, or professional interests.

Indonesia's digital landscape has experienced remarkable growth over the past decade, driven by increasing smartphone penetration, improving telecommunications infrastructure, and growing digital literacy across demographic segments. The Indonesian internet user base has expanded from approximately 72 million users in 2013 to over 200 million by 2023, representing penetration rate exceeding 73% of total population. This growth has been particularly pronounced in urban centers like Jakarta, Surabaya, Medan, and second-tier cities including Pontianak, where this research is situated. Indonesian internet users demonstrate high engagement with social media platforms, spending average 3 hours 14 minutes daily on social media according to 2023 Digital Report, ranking Indonesia among highest social media usage countries globally.

Indo Arwana, an ornamental fish retail business established in Pontianak in November 2022, typifies these challenges. Despite offering quality products and competitive pricing, the business maintained minimal Instagram activity with only 82 followers after two years. This case presented an opportunity to investigate whether systematic application of digital marketing principles could transform an inactive social media presence into a functional marketing channel.

This study addresses the research gap regarding practical implementation of social media marketing strategies in resource-constrained SME environments. Research questions include: (1) How can SMEs in niche markets develop effective Instagram content strategies with limited resources? (2) What content types generate highest engagement in specialized retail contexts? (3) How does systematic social media marketing impact brand awareness and sales? (4) What frameworks can be replicated by other SMEs?

The research employs the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) framework, implementing comprehensive content strategy over two months. Contributions include empirical evidence of social media marketing effectiveness for SMEs, detailed implementation documentation, and practical insights for small business owners in resource-limited contexts.

Literature Review

2.1 Digital Marketing and Social Media in SME Context

Digital marketing encompasses the application of internet-based technologies to promote products and achieve organizational objectives (Malik et al., 2022). For SMEs, digital marketing presents both opportunities and challenges. The primary advantage lies in reduced barriers to market entry and customer access. Traditional advertising requires substantial financial investment, while digital channels enable targeted reach with flexible spending and measurable outcomes (Malley & Westby, 2024).

Small and medium enterprises face distinct digital marketing challenges differentiating their contexts from large corporations. Resource constraints manifest not only as limited budgets for paid advertising and professional services but also as constrained management time, with owner-operators typically juggling marketing responsibilities alongside core business operations. Knowledge gaps regarding digital platforms, content creation techniques, analytics interpretation, and algorithmic optimization create uncertainty about effective strategies and result in tentative, inconsistent implementation efforts. Cultural factors in some SME contexts contribute to digital marketing hesitation, including concerns about public visibility, unfamiliarity with self-promotion practices, and preference for traditional relationship-based marketing approaches. Despite these challenges, digital marketing offers SMEs transformative potential through reduced customer acquisition costs compared to traditional channels, ability to target narrow demographic and psychographic segments with precision impossible in mass media, real-time performance measurement enabling agile strategy adjustment, and opportunity to build direct customer relationships without intermediary gatekeepers. Research examining SME digital marketing adoption identifies critical enablers including owner-manager digital literacy and commitment, clear strategic planning aligning digital activities with business objectives, realistic resource allocation sustaining consistent implementation, willingness to experiment and learn from failures, and access to affordable training or mentoring resources providing practical implementation guidance.

However, SMEs encounter specific constraints including limited financial resources, time constraints, and knowledge gaps. Many SMEs maintain social media presence without structured strategy, posting irregularly and producing generic content. This gap between potential and actual utilization motivates research examining practical implementation frameworks appropriate for resource-constrained contexts.

2.2 Instagram as a Marketing Platform

Instagram has evolved into a dominant visual marketing platform distinguished by emphasis on high-quality imagery and video content. The platform offers business-oriented features including analytics, advertising capabilities, shopping integrations, and diverse content formats (Feed posts, Stories, Reels, IGTV). By 2023, Instagram reported over 2 billion monthly active users with strong penetration among 18-34 year demographics (Cordeiro et al., 2025).

The platform's algorithmic feed prioritizes content based on predicted user interest, creating both opportunities and challenges. High-quality, engaging content receives amplified reach beyond existing followers. Instagram Reels has become particularly significant, receiving preferential algorithmic distribution. Research demonstrates that short-form videos generate 38% more engagement than static images (Sun et al., 2024; Xiao et al., 2025, 2026).

Understanding Instagram's recommendation algorithm proves critical for effective marketing strategy. The platform employs sophisticated machine learning systems analyzing hundreds of signals to predict which content individual users will find most engaging, then prioritizing predicted high-interest content in feeds, Explore pages, and Reels tabs. Key algorithmic ranking factors include relationship signals (accounts users frequently interact with receive priority), interest signals (content similar to posts users previously engaged with),

timeliness (newer content preferred over older), and engagement velocity (content generating rapid initial engagement receives amplified distribution). The algorithm's emphasis on engagement metrics creates self-reinforcing dynamics where strong-performing content receives progressively wider distribution while weak-performing content becomes increasingly invisible. For businesses, this algorithmic reality necessitates focus on content quality and audience engagement rather than posting frequency alone. Content must generate genuine interest, prompting users to like, comment, save, or share, to trigger algorithmic amplification. The platform's documented preference for video content, particularly Reels format, reflects strategic competition with TikTok and user behavior patterns favoring short-form video entertainment. Businesses understanding and working with rather than against algorithmic preferences gain substantial competitive advantages in organic reach and audience growth.

2.3 Content Strategy and the AIDA Framework

The AIDA model proposes that effective marketing guides consumers through four stages: Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action. In Instagram contexts, Attention capture requires visually arresting imagery and compelling video. Interest generation involves educational content and storytelling. Desire creation leverages social proof and demonstrates benefits. Action facilitation incorporates clear calls-to-action (Parola et al., 2022).

Research identifies content authenticity, visual quality, posting consistency, and two-way engagement as critical success factors. Audiences increasingly reject overtly promotional content in favor of authentic, value-providing posts that entertain, educate, or inspire. This requires businesses to approach Instagram as a content platform rather than advertising channel.

2.4 Brand Awareness and Its Measurement

Brand awareness represents the extent to which consumers recognize and recall a brand. Vasudevan & Peter Kumar (2019) distinguishes between brand recognition and brand recall. For new or small businesses, establishing awareness constitutes a primary marketing objective. In digital environments, brand awareness manifests through social media metrics including follower count, reach, impressions, and profile visits.

Engagement metrics provide additional awareness quality indicators. Higher engagement rates suggest content resonance and active audience interest. Content saves particularly signal value perception. For businesses, improving these metrics reflects strengthened brand-consumer connections and increased likelihood of consideration during purchase decisions.

2.5 SME Marketing in Niche Markets

Niche markets are characterized by specialized offerings and specific consumer needs. Success depends on specialized knowledge, product quality, and community building (Hamlin et al., 2016). The ornamental fish industry exemplifies niche characteristics. Customers include hobbyists with purchasing decisions influenced by aesthetic preferences, technical knowledge, and community belonging.

Research on social media marketing in specialized retail identifies critical success factors: visual content quality, educational content establishing expertise, community engagement, and authentic communication (Theodoridis & Gkikas, 2025). These findings highlight the importance of knowledge-sharing and community-building in niche contexts.

2.6 Research Gap and Study Contribution

While extensive literature examines social media marketing strategies, significant gaps remain regarding practical implementation in resource-constrained niche market contexts. Case studies examining step-by-step implementation with detailed process documentation remain limited. This study addresses these gaps by providing comprehensive documentation of



Instagram marketing strategy implementation in an Indonesian SME context, contributing empirical evidence and replicable frameworks.

Research Methods

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a single case study research design with pre-post intervention comparison. Case study methodology is appropriate when investigating contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts where boundaries between phenomenon and context are unclear (de Vries, 2020). The research examines implementation and effectiveness of Instagram marketing strategy for Indo Arwana, providing in-depth analysis in authentic business environment.

The case study follows an embedded design, examining multiple units of analysis: content production processes, social media performance metrics, and business outcomes. Data collection occurred through mixed-methods combining quantitative performance metrics (Instagram Insights, sales records) and qualitative process documentation (implementation workflows, challenges, solutions).

3.2 Case Selection and Context

Indo Arwana was selected based on criteria ensuring research objectives alignment. The business represents typical SME characteristics including limited marketing budget, owner-manager structure, and absence of specialized marketing personnel. Its dormant social media presence (82 followers after two years) provided clear baseline for measuring intervention impact.

Indo Arwana operates as specialized ornamental fish retail in Pontianak, West Kalimantan. Founded November 2022, the business sells diverse ornamental fish species, aquascaping services, and aquarium equipment. Target market includes ages 18-45 years, middle to upper-middle income, with interest in aesthetic home improvements. Prior marketing relied on word-of-mouth recommendations and walk-in customers.

3.3 Intervention Design and Implementation

The intervention implemented comprehensive Instagram marketing strategy grounded in AIDA framework over two months (April-May 2025). Strategy development began with SWOT assessment, target audience profiling, content audit, and competitive benchmarking. This identified key challenges (minimal brand awareness, inactive social media) and opportunities (growing aquascaping interest, weak competitor presence).

Content strategy employed multi-format approach. Video content (22 Reels total) formed primary pillar, including cinematic fish showcases, fun entertainment videos, aesthetic aquarium tours, educational tutorials, customer testimonials, product highlights, and promotional announcements. Photo content supplemented with educational infographics and product comparisons. Supporting materials included product catalog brochure, promotional pamphlet, and blog article.

Content creation followed structured workflow. Pre-production involved content planning, script development, and equipment preparation. Production encompassed video recording and photo capture. Post-production included editing (transitions, music, text overlays), caption writing (hooks, value propositions, calls-to-action, hashtags), and platform optimization.

The content production process involved systematic workflows balancing creative quality with resource efficiency. Video production for Reels followed three-phase approach: pre-production planning identifying compelling topics, key messages, and visual concepts; production utilizing smartphone cameras (primarily iPhone and Samsung flagship models) with natural lighting supplemented by affordable LED panels, handheld stabilization, and aquarium

glass positioning to minimize reflections; and post-production using mobile applications including CapCut for editing, InShot for text overlay creation, and Canva for thumbnail design. Audio selection drew from royalty-free music libraries and trending sounds identified through Instagram's audio browse feature, recognizing that popular audio usage can boost algorithmic distribution. Each video typically required 1-2 hours for filming and 2-3 hours for editing as skills developed over intervention period.

Caption development followed strategic formula combining emotional hooks, value communication, and calls-to-action. Opening sentences employed questions, relatable statements, or intriguing facts capturing scrolling users' attention. Mid-caption content provided value through product information, care tips, interesting facts, or entertaining narratives relevant to ornamental fish enthusiasts. Closing statements incorporated clear calls-to-action directing audiences toward desired behaviors: profile link visits for inquiries, direct messages for product availability, store visits with mapped location, or simple engagement requests like 'save this post for later reference.' Hashtag strategy balanced niche-specific tags (#ikanhi aspontianak, #arwanasuper, #aquascapeindonesia) for targeted reach within ornamental fish communities and broader discovery tags (#fishkeeping, #aquarium, #petfish) for wider exposure. Caption length ranged 50-150 words, providing sufficient context without overwhelming users in mobile browsing contexts.

Posting schedule maintained 3-4 posts weekly, optimized for evening hours (18:00-21:00 WIB). Content calendar balanced educational value (60%), entertaining appeal (25%), and promotional messages (15%). Caption strategy emphasized storytelling, poetic language, clear value communication, and persuasive calls-to-action. Engagement tactics included prompt responses, proactive engagement with relevant accounts, strategic hashtag use, and Instagram Stories for behind-the-scenes content.

3.4 Data Collection and Measurement

Data collection occurred continuously throughout intervention. Instagram Insights provided analytics accessed weekly. Key metrics included follower count, reach, impressions, profile visits, content engagement, and audience demographics. Sales data documented monthly revenue, transaction counts, and customer acquisition sources. Pre-intervention data (January-March 2025) established baseline, enabling comparison with post-intervention results (April-May 2025).

Content performance analysis evaluated individual post effectiveness through engagement rates, reach performance, and audience response patterns. Production process documentation captured implementation challenges, creative decisions, resource utilization, and practical insights.

3.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis employed descriptive statistics comparing pre- and post-intervention performance. Percentage change calculations measured growth across metrics. Demographic analysis verified target audience alignment. Content performance analysis identified high-performing content types and effective messaging strategies. Qualitative analysis employed thematic coding of implementation documentation, identifying critical success factors and replicable frameworks.

3.6 Validity and Reliability Considerations

Research quality was ensured through triangulation of multiple data sources, clear measurement protocols, and comprehensive documentation. External validity limitations of single case design were acknowledged with detailed context description enabling transferability assessment. Reliability was ensured through documented research protocol and systematic procedures.

Results

4.1 Instagram Performance Metrics

The intervention produced substantial improvements across all Instagram performance indicators. Instagram follower count increased from 82 baseline (March 2025) to 159 (April, +77 followers) and 224 (May, +65 followers). Total two-month period generated 142 new followers, representing 173.2% growth from baseline and averaging 71 new followers monthly, a 24.5-fold acceleration compared to pre-intervention 2.9 monthly average.

Detailed follower growth analysis revealed interesting patterns in acquisition timing and sources. Weekly breakdown showed accelerating growth pattern: Week 1 (April) gained 15 followers, Week 2 gained 22 followers (reflecting initial content distribution), Weeks 3-4 gained 40 followers combined (as algorithmic amplification increased), Week 5 (May) gained 18 followers, Weeks 6-8 gained 47 followers combined. The acceleration through mid-intervention period followed by slight moderation suggests initial novelty effects combined with sustainable audience-building momentum. Follower source analysis available through Instagram Insights indicated 62% discovered account through Explore page and hashtag searches, 23% through profile visits from engaged content, 11% through share and direct recommendations, and 4% through Instagram advertising experiments conducted briefly. This distribution demonstrates effectiveness of organic content distribution strategies without substantial paid advertising investment.

Content reach increased dramatically by 1,274% compared to baseline. During intervention period, content consistently reached 150-400 unique accounts per post versus 10-30 accounts previously. High-performing video content achieved reach exceeding 500 accounts, representing 2.2-2.5 times follower count, indicating substantial algorithmic promotion beyond existing followers.

Profile visits measured accounts clicking through to business profile. Pre-intervention baseline averaged 123 monthly visits. Post-intervention showed 931 profile visits across April-May, representing 657.0% increase. Monthly visit rate during intervention averaged 465.5 visits, 3.8 times baseline. Engagement metrics improved with average engagement rate per post increasing from 1.2% pre-intervention to 4.8% post-intervention.

Demographic analysis verified successful targeting. Geographic distribution showed 71.9% followers from Pontianak (primary market), with additional concentrations in Singkawang (4.9%), Jakarta (2.2%), Ngabang (1.3%), and Sanggau (1.3%). Age demographics demonstrated strong alignment: 25-34 years comprised 44.1% of followers, 18-24 years accounted for 42.5%, collectively representing 86.6% of total audience. Gender distribution showed 58% male, 42% female.

4.2 Business Performance Outcomes

Sales revenue increased substantially following intervention. Pre-intervention period showed inconsistent performance: January IDR 38,586,000, February IDR 40,056,000 (+3.8%), March IDR 36,668,000 (-8.5%). Post-intervention demonstrated clear positive trend. April 2025 sales reached IDR 47,982,000 (+30.86% from March baseline). May 2025 sales climbed to IDR 51,953,000 (+41.68% from baseline, +8.3% from April).

Total pre-intervention three-month sales averaged IDR 38,437,000 monthly. Post-intervention two-month sales averaged IDR 49,968,000 monthly, 30.0% above pre-intervention. Customer inquiry channel tracking indicated approximately 40% of April-May sales involved customers discovering business through Instagram, suggesting direct causal contribution.

Revenue impact analysis provided several interesting insights beyond aggregate growth figures. Average order value increased from IDR 285,000 pre-intervention to IDR 340,000 post-intervention, suggesting social media marketing attracted customers interested in premium products rather than only bargain-seeking browsers. Product category analysis showed

particular growth in mid-to-high value ornamental fish (premium goldfish varieties, small arowana), aquascaping consultation services, and curated aquarium accessory packages. This product mix shift indicates success in brand positioning strategy emphasizing aesthetic appeal, expertise, and lifestyle aspirations rather than solely price competitiveness. Customer demographic analysis of social media-attributed sales showed 68% male customers aged 22-38 years, urban middle-income earners with disposable income for hobby spending, precisely matching target audience definition and validating precision of Instagram demographic targeting achieved.

Qualitative outcomes included 2.5-fold increase in WhatsApp inquiries, with customers referencing specific Instagram content. Walk-in customers increasingly mentioned seeing business on Instagram. Customer engagement quality improved, with inquiries demonstrating greater product knowledge and purchase intent, suggesting educational content effectively pre-qualified customers.

4.3 Content Performance Analysis

Video Reels generated highest engagement. Cinematic fish showcases achieved average reach of 420 accounts and 5.2% engagement rate. Educational tutorials produced 320 accounts reach and 4.5% engagement. Fun entertainment videos achieved 280 accounts reach and 4.8% engagement. Aesthetic aquarium tours averaged 310 accounts reach and 4.1% engagement.

Photo posts showed lower performance. Educational infographics averaged 180 accounts reach and 3.2% engagement. Product showcases reached 160 accounts with 2.8% engagement. Promotional posts generated 240 accounts reach and 3.5% engagement, higher due to value proposition and urgency factors.

Caption analysis revealed poetic, figurative language generated 35% more likes and 40% more saves than straightforward descriptions. Educational captions providing specific tips generated 50% more comments than generic descriptions. Clear calls-to-action increased profile visit rates by 60% compared to posts lacking action prompts.

4.4 Implementation Challenges and Solutions

Key challenges included: (1) Technical production limitations with smartphone cameras requiring creative problem-solving such as night filming to reduce reflections and learning mobile editing applications. (2) Time constraints balancing content production with operations, addressed through batch creation and repurposing content. (3) Maintaining fish welfare during filming through patient approaches and short sessions. (4) Sustaining content ideation through content calendar planning and audience input. (5) Measuring direct attribution through inquiry channel tracking, though perfect attribution remains challenging.

Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of Findings

The substantial improvements across Instagram metrics and business outcomes demonstrate effectiveness of structured, content-driven social media marketing for SMEs in niche markets. Follower growth acceleration by 24.5-fold, reach increase by 1,274%, and sales growth of 41.68% within two months provide compelling evidence that strategic Instagram marketing can rapidly enhance brand awareness and drive commercial results even for small businesses in specialized industries.

Several insights emerge from results analysis. First, the AIDA framework proved effective for structuring content strategy, with different content types addressing specific framework stages. Cinematic videos captured attention, educational tutorials generated interest, testimonials created desire, and clear calls-to-action facilitated conversion. This staged approach enabled systematic audience journey management from awareness to action.

The successful implementation of AIDA framework in Instagram context demonstrates adaptability of classical marketing models to contemporary digital environments when thoughtfully translated. The Attention stage, originally conceptualized for capturing prospect awareness in personal selling or advertising contexts, translates to Instagram as arresting thumb-scrolling behavior through compelling visual hooks in first seconds of video content or immediate visual impact of static images. The Interest stage, conceived as maintaining attention through relevant information, manifests as content providing genuine value through education, entertainment, or inspiration that audiences actively choose to consume rather than passively tolerate. The Desire stage, envisioned as creating emotional preference, emerges through storytelling, social proof, aspiration-building, and benefit demonstration that positions products as solutions to felt needs or enablers of desired identities. The Action stage, originally focused on closing sales in direct interactions, adapts to Instagram's non-transactional environment through clear calls-to-action directing audiences to conversion touchpoints like profile links, direct messages, or physical store visits. This successful adaptation suggests other classical marketing frameworks may similarly provide valuable structure for digital strategy when appropriately translated rather than literally applied.

The superior performance of video content merits deeper examination beyond simply acknowledging algorithmic preferences. Video format uniquely enables demonstration of product attributes difficult to communicate through static images, particularly for ornamental fish where movement patterns, color iridescence under lighting variations, behavioral characteristics, and size scale relative to aquarium environments constitute critical purchase considerations. The temporal dimension of video allows narrative development creating emotional arcs impossible in instantaneous image consumption, enabling storytelling that builds tension, surprise, or satisfaction. Audio integration through music selection creates mood and pacing affecting emotional response to visual content, while trending audio usage provides cultural relevance and discoverability benefits. The 'lean-back' viewing experience of video consumption allows passive engagement during casual browsing, reducing cognitive effort compared to text-heavy or image-caption analysis. These intrinsic format advantages compound algorithmic distribution preferences to make video particularly powerful for businesses able to invest in content creation. However, video production remains more resource-intensive than static image creation, suggesting SMEs must balance quality aspirations with sustainable production capacity.

The study's findings regarding educational content effectiveness warrant particular attention for niche market contexts. Educational positioning serves multiple strategic functions simultaneously: establishing business credibility through demonstrated expertise, providing genuine value that audiences appreciate and seek, pre-qualifying customers by building product knowledge facilitating informed purchase decisions, differentiating business from competitors relying solely on promotional messaging, and creating sharable content that audiences willingly distribute within their networks. In ornamental fish industry specifically, educational content addresses high information asymmetry where successful fishkeeping requires technical knowledge many potential customers lack. Beginners particularly value guidance on species selection, tank setup, water parameters, feeding protocols, and disease prevention. By freely providing this knowledge, businesses reduce perceived purchase risk, demonstrate commitment to customer success beyond transactional profit, and build trust that converts into brand preference and customer loyalty. The educational approach also generates long-term SEO and discoverability benefits as evergreen content continues attracting new audiences months after initial publication through search results and algorithm recommendations.

The rapid timeline to measurable results challenges common assumptions about social media marketing requiring extended timeframes before generating business impact. The two-month intervention period produced 173% follower growth and 42% revenue increase, demonstrating that well-executed strategies can manifest meaningful outcomes relatively

quickly. Several factors likely contributed to rapid impact: baseline starting point with minimal existing presence created substantial room for improvement compared to already-active accounts facing incremental growth challenges; niche market focus enabled precise targeting and high conversion relevance compared to broad-market approaches requiring larger audience volumes to generate equivalent commercial outcomes; content quality differential compared to local competitors created immediate differentiation and competitive advantage; consistent posting schedule and active engagement demonstrated commitment signaling algorithmic systems to increase distribution; and synergistic effects between increased digital visibility and physical storefront presence enabled multi-touchpoint customer journeys where social media awareness converted to in-person visits. These rapid results provide encouraging evidence for SMEs hesitant about social media marketing ROI timelines, suggesting focused execution can generate returns justifying continued investment within initial trial periods.

Second, video content demonstrated clear superiority for reach and engagement compared to static images. This reflects Instagram's algorithmic priorities but also indicates audience preferences in ornamental fish context where movement, color, and aesthetic appeal constitute core product attributes best communicated through motion. The highest-performing cinematic videos transformed functional product promotion into entertainment and emotional experience.

Third, educational content strategy established business expertise and built community trust. By providing genuine value through care tutorials and product comparisons without demanding immediate purchase, the business positioned itself as helpful resource rather than transactional seller. In specialized hobby markets where enthusiasts seek knowledge and community, educational positioning creates competitive differentiation.

Fourth, demographic targeting accuracy validated strategic audience definition and content relevance. The 86.6% concentration in target age range and 71.9% geographic concentration demonstrate successful audience attraction with high commercial relevance. This precision contrasts with common SME experience of attracting generic audiences with limited purchase potential.

Fifth, sales revenue growth substantially exceeding follower growth (41.68% versus 173.2%) suggests conversion effectiveness beyond mere awareness building. While followers tripled, revenue increased 40%, indicating new followers represented genuinely interested potential customers. This conversion effectiveness reflects integrated strategy combining awareness building, educational engagement, and clear action facilitation.

5.2 Comparison with Existing Literature

Results align with previous research while providing specific insights for SME niche market contexts. Findings support Lewis & Gui (2024) regarding importance of content authenticity, visual quality, and consistent posting. The study extends this by documenting specific production processes achievable within SME resource constraints, providing evidence that content quality can be achieved through creativity and strategic approach rather than expensive equipment.

The dramatic improvements support Karawgoda & Kavirathna (2025) findings that SMEs adopting digital marketing achieve enhanced engagement and performance. This study contributes detailed intervention documentation enabling replication beyond survey-based correlational findings. The two-month timeframe demonstrates meaningful results can manifest relatively quickly, addressing SME concerns about long payback periods.

Results regarding video content superiority align with Hu et al. (2025) research on video engagement advantages. The study extends this by examining specific video types and identifying that cinematic, emotion-evoking content outperforms straightforward product demonstrations, suggesting even functional product categories benefit from entertainment and emotional storytelling approaches.

Findings support Fernando et al. (2021) regarding critical success factors in specialized retail: visual content quality, educational positioning, and community engagement. The study contributes evidence from Indonesian emerging market context and ornamental fish industry specifically, expanding geographic and sectoral applicability of these principles.

5.3 Practical Implications for SMEs

Several actionable insights emerge for SME practitioners. First, systematic content planning using frameworks like AIDA provides structure preventing random posting and enabling strategic audience journey management. SMEs should map content types to specific marketing objectives and ensure portfolio balance across objectives rather than exclusively promotional focus.

Second, prioritizing video content, particularly short-form Reels, yields superior reach and engagement returns. SMEs should invest in basic video production skills using smartphone filming techniques, simple editing applications, and free audio resources. The study demonstrates professional results achievable without expensive equipment through creativity and patience.

Third, educational content strategy builds sustainable competitive advantage through expertise positioning and community trust. Rather than solely promoting products, SMEs should provide genuine value through tutorials, guides, and problem-solving content relevant to target audience needs. This establishes business as helpful resource and builds customer relationships preceding purchase transactions.

Fourth, consistent posting schedules and prompt engagement responses significantly impact algorithmic distribution and audience relationship quality. SMEs should establish realistic, sustainable posting frequencies and dedicate time to community management including comment responses, direct message handling, and proactive engagement.

Fifth, performance measurement and iterative optimization enable continuous improvement. SMEs should regularly review Instagram Insights analytics, identify high-performing content types, and adjust strategies based on data rather than assumptions. The study's documentation of content performance differences demonstrates importance of evidence-based optimization.

5.4 Theoretical Contributions

This research contributes to social media marketing theory in several ways. It demonstrates AIDA framework applicability in contemporary digital contexts, showing classical marketing models retain relevance when adapted to modern channels. The framework provided practical structure while accommodating platform-specific features like algorithmic distribution, diverse content formats, and interactive engagement capabilities.

The study contributes to SME digital marketing literature by providing detailed implementation documentation often absent in existing research. While many studies document that social media marketing works for SMEs, fewer provide granular process details enabling replication. This research offers step-by-step documentation of workflows, resource allocation, challenge solutions, and optimization. For niche market research, the study demonstrates how specialized retailers can leverage social media for targeted audience building despite small total market sizes. The precise demographic targeting suggests niche businesses can efficiently find and engage relevant audiences through strategic content, contradicting assumptions that small markets make social media marketing inefficient.

The research contributes methodological insights for case study research in marketing contexts. By combining quantitative performance metrics, qualitative process documentation, and detailed context description, the study enables rich understanding of not only outcomes but underlying mechanisms producing them.

5.5 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The single case study design limits statistical generalization, as results reflect one business in specific industry and geographic context. While detailed context documentation enables transferability assessment, readers must evaluate relevance to their situations. Future research should examine multiple cases across different niche industries, geographic markets, and business sizes to identify generalizable patterns versus context-specific factors.

The relatively short two-month intervention period demonstrates rapid impact but cannot assess long-term sustainability. Initial growth spurts may moderate as novelty fades and competition intensifies. Longitudinal research tracking performance over 6-12 months would provide insights into sustained effectiveness and identify factors maintaining or degrading performance over time.

Attribution of sales growth specifically to Instagram marketing remains partially ambiguous given multiple simultaneous business activities and customer touchpoints. While customer inquiry channel tracking and timeline correlation support causal relationship, more controlled research designs with comparison groups would strengthen causal inference.

The study focused on brand awareness and initial customer acquisition but did not extensively examine customer retention, lifetime value, or long-term loyalty impacts. Future research could investigate how social media-acquired customers differ from traditional channel customers in retention, repurchase, and referral behaviors.

Industry-specific factors in ornamental fish retail (visual product nature, hobby purchase motivations, community culture) likely influenced results. Future research should examine content strategy effectiveness across diverse SME contexts including service businesses, B2B companies, and products with different purchase decision characteristics to identify universal versus industry-specific success factors.

Conclusions

6.1 Summary of Key Findings

This case study investigated implementation and effectiveness of structured Instagram marketing strategy for brand awareness enhancement in small ornamental fish retail business in Indonesia. The two-month intervention employing AIDA framework, diverse content formats, consistent engagement, and strategic audience targeting produced substantial improvements across all measured dimensions. Instagram followers increased 173.2%, profile visits surged 657.0%, account reach improved 1,274%, and sales revenue grew 41.68%, exceeding initial 5% target by more than eight-fold.

Content performance analysis revealed video Reels, particularly cinematic fish showcases and educational tutorials, generated highest engagement and reach. Demographic targeting achieved high precision with 86.6% of followers in target age range and 71.9% in primary geographic market. Implementation documentation identified practical challenges including technical production limitations, time constraints, and content ideation sustainability, along with effective solutions including creative problem-solving, batch production, and data-driven optimization.

6.2 Theoretical and Practical Contributions

The research contributes theoretically by demonstrating AIDA framework's continued relevance in digital contexts, extending SME digital marketing literature with detailed implementation documentation, and providing evidence that niche market businesses can achieve efficient targeted audience building through strategic social media use. Practically, the study offers actionable frameworks and processes replicable by other SMEs, including content planning approaches, video production techniques achievable with limited resources,

educational content strategies for expertise positioning, and performance measurement protocols enabling continuous improvement.

Critical success factors identified include high-quality visual content showcasing product appeal, educational value delivery building expertise and trust, consistent posting and engagement maintaining audience relationship, strategic hashtag and caption use extending reach and driving action, and data-driven optimization adapting to performance evidence. These factors provide practical guidance for SMEs across industries seeking to establish effective digital presence.

6.3 Implications for Different Stakeholders

For SME business owners, findings demonstrate that professional, effective social media marketing is achievable without large budgets through strategic planning, consistent effort, and creative tool use. For marketing practitioners, the study provides detailed implementation frameworks and practical problem-solving approaches. For researchers, it contributes rigorous case study methodology and identifies future research directions. For policymakers, findings suggest affordable social media marketing training could significantly benefit SME sector by enabling digital market access.

6.4 Final Remarks

This research demonstrates that strategic, content-driven Instagram marketing constitutes powerful tool for SME brand awareness building and business growth, even in specialized niche markets with limited resources. Success requires moving beyond casual posting toward systematic strategy grounded in marketing frameworks, audience understanding, and continuous optimization. The dramatic results achieved within two months illustrate that meaningful impact can manifest quickly with focused effort. As digital platforms continue penetrating emerging markets and SMEs increasingly recognize online presence necessity, documented implementation frameworks and empirical evidence become invaluable for supporting SME digital transformation.

The findings from this research carry particular significance for emerging market contexts where SME digital transformation remains early-stage process. Indonesia, representative of broader Southeast Asian digital economy, presents unique characteristics including high mobile-first internet adoption, strong social media engagement culture, growing middle-class consumer spending power, but also infrastructure challenges in secondary cities, digital literacy variations, and payment system limitations. The demonstrated success of Instagram marketing in Pontianak, a secondary Indonesian city rather than major metropolitan center like Jakarta, suggests digital marketing strategies can work effectively across geographic tiers rather than remaining confined to major urban centers with mature digital ecosystems. This geographic transferability expands potential impact of documented approaches to wider SME populations. For educators and business support organizations, the research provides curriculum and training program development insights. Effective SME digital marketing education should emphasize practical implementation frameworks over abstract theoretical concepts, demonstrate achievable results using realistic resource constraints, provide hands-on skill development in content creation and platform navigation, teach performance measurement and interpretation enabling ongoing optimization, and address psychological barriers including fear of public visibility or technology inadequacy. Training programs incorporating case studies like this research, showing realistic timelines, resource investments, challenges encountered, and solutions applied, help SMEs develop accurate expectations and sustainable commitment to digital marketing initiatives. Business support organizations including chambers of commerce, SME development agencies, and entrepreneurship centers can leverage these documented approaches to develop standardized yet flexible support services scalable across multiple businesses and sectors.

References

- Cordeiro, D. F., Vállez, M., Font-Julian, C. I., & Guallar, J. (2025). Instagram Engagement and Content Strategies of US and UK Legacy Media: A Quantitative Analysis of Five Leading News Outlets. *Journalism and Media*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia6020089>
- De Vries, K. (2020). Case study methodology. In *Critical Qualitative Health Research: Exploring Philosophies, Politics and Practices* (pp. 41–52). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429432774-2>
- Fernando, E., Widjaja, H. A. E., Santoso, S. W., & Raharto Condrobimo, A. (2021). Development of Marketplace User Interface Design with Virtual Booth Based on Mobile for Ornamental Fish SMEs. *Proceedings of 2021 7th International HCI and UX Conference in Indonesia, CHLuXiD 2021*, 22–26. <https://doi.org/10.1109/CHLuXiD54398.2021.9650673>
- Hamlin, R., Knight, J., & Cuthbert, R. (2016). Niche marketing and farm diversification processes: Insights from New Zealand and Canada. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, 31(1), 86–98. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742170514000489>
- Hu, T.-L., Chao, C.-M., Hsieh, W.-K., & Lin, C.-H. (2025). The Impact Mechanism of Video Maturity and Content Empowerment on Purchase Intentions: A Case Study of Agricultural Tourism in Taiwan. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 17(7). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su17073195>
- Jaiwant, S. V, & Vazirani, K. (2024). Enhancing the digital consumer experience: The role of artificial intelligence. In *Enhancing and Predicting Digital Consumer Behavior with AI* (pp. 173–185). <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-4453-8.ch010>
- Jaya, I. G. N. M., Pahlevi, S. M., Susenna, A., Agustina, L., Kusumasari, D., Sukma, Y. A. A., Hernikawati, D., Rahmi, A. A., Pravitasari, A. A., & Kristiani, F. (2024). Framework for Monitoring the Spatiotemporal Distribution and Clustering of the Digital Society Index of Indonesia. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 16(24). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su162411258>
- Karawagoda, D. D. K., & Kavirathna, C. A. (2025). Barriers and Strategy Analysis for the Usage of Social Media by small and medium-scale enterprises: A Systematic Review. *2025 5th International Conference on Advanced Research in Computing: Converging Horizons: Uniting Disciplines in Computing Research through AI Innovation, ICARC 2025 - Proceedings*. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICARC64760.2025.10963199>
- Lewis, M. S., & Gui, A. (2024). The Influence of Social Media on the Travel Planning Process and Tourist Locations. *4th International Conference on Innovative Practices in Technology and Management 2024, ICIPTM 2024*. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICIPTM59628.2024.10563345>
- Malik, P., Khurana, M., & Tanwar, R. (2022). Digital Marketing: Transforming the Management Practices. In *Transforming Management with AI, Big-Data, and IoT* (pp. 99–125). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-86749-2_6
- Malley, M., & Westby, J. (2024). Traditional Marketing. In *Growyour Eye Care Practice: High Impact Pearls from the Marketing Experts* (pp. 67–71). <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003524410-12>
- Martinicorena-Goñi, N., & Aramendia-Muneta, M. E. (2023). Instagram’s marketing strategy of the main fast fashion brands: Best practices to improve customer engagement. In *Social Media and Online Consumer Decision Making in the Fashion Industry* (pp. 114–141). <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-8753-2.ch008>
- Parola, A., Di Fuccio, R., Somma, F., & Miglino, O. (2022). Educational Digital Storytelling: Empowering Students to Shape Their Future. *Communications in Computer and Information Science*, 1606 CCIS, 119–129. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-15845-2_8
- Sun, X., Jin, F., & Zhang, J. (2024). Influence of Danmaku Comments on User Engagement in Short-Form Videos. *45th International Conference on Information Systems, ICIS 2024*. <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-105010817954&partnerID=40&md5=6560739a7af57629606b70febf8e3fbb>
- Theodoridis, P. K., & Gkikas, D. C. (2025). Maximizing Social Media User Engagement Through Predictive Analytics in Retail Tourism: Identifying Key Performance Indicators That

- Trigger User Interactions. *Applied Sciences (Switzerland)*, 15(21).
<https://doi.org/10.3390/app152111720>
- Vasudevan, S., & Peter Kumar, F. J. (2019). Changing realty: altering paths of brand discovery for real estate websites in India. *Property Management*, 37(3), 346–366.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/PM-03-2018-0020>
- Xiao, L., Li, X., & Mou, J. (2026). Exploring user engagement behavior with short-form video advertising on short-form video platforms: a visual-audio perspective. *Internet Research*, 36(1), 154–188. <https://doi.org/10.1108/INTR-07-2023-0521>
- Xiao, L., Sun, L., Lei, Z., & Fu, B. (2025). How do features in health short-form videos impact viewer engagement: an empirical study. *Industrial Management and Data Systems*, 1–32.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/IMDS-04-2024-0385>