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Social Media Marketing Strategies of Women Entrepreneurs in Makassar's Home-Based Food Business

Original Article

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Abstract

Home-based food businesses run by women are a visible part of Indonesia's micro and small enterprise landscape, and social media has become their main route to customers. Yet existing marketing models rarely account for the constraints and advantages specific to women who run food businesses from home. This conceptual article develops a framework for understanding the social media marketing strategies of women entrepreneurs in Makassar's home-based food sector. Using a narrative review of literature on social media marketing, women's entrepreneurship, home-based business, entrepreneurial bricolage, and trust in online food transactions, the article synthesizes four strategy domains: content, community, commerce, and compliance and trust. It identifies contextual constraints (role conflict, limited capital, uneven digital skills) and enablers (culinary identity, women's networks, family support) that shape how these domains are enacted, and it proposes five testable propositions. The framework suggests that strategies in this context are better understood as resource-constrained and relationship-based than as scaled-up advertising. Because the article is conceptual, it presents no primary data, and the propositions require empirical testing. The framework provides a basis for fieldwork in Makassar and for training programs designed for women who run home-based food businesses.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Women Entrepreneurs, Home-Based Business, Food Business, Makassar

1. Introduction

Micro and small enterprises occupy a central place in the Indonesian economy, and the 2008 MSME Law defines them by net assets and annual sales rather than by sector or location (Republic of Indonesia, 2008). Among them, home-based food businesses, in which meals, snacks, and cakes are prepared in a domestic kitchen and sold to neighbors, online customers, and resellers, are commonly regarded as an accessible route into entrepreneurship for women, because they can be started with little capital and fitted around household routines. Makassar, the capital of South Sulawesi, is widely known for its regional cuisine, which gives local food entrepreneurs a recognizable cultural asset to draw on.

Social media has become the natural marketing channel for such businesses. Kietzmann et al. (2011) show that social media platforms differ in the functions they emphasize, namely identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups, so firms must choose how to engage rather than simply be present. For small firms, social media offers

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low-cost reach and direct interaction with customers. A survey of 259 Malaysian SMEs found that Facebook usage was positively related to financial and non-financial performance, and that compatibility, cost-effectiveness, and interactivity were associated with adoption (Ainin et al., 2015). Customer opinions voiced online also circulate as electronic word-of-mouth (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004), which matters for food products whose quality customers cannot inspect before buying.

However, general models of social media marketing rarely consider who the entrepreneur is and where the business operates. Brush et al. (2009) argue that women's entrepreneurship should be examined through a gender-aware framework that places the household and family context alongside markets, money, and management. Jennings and Brush (2013) likewise call for research on women entrepreneurs that engages both gender and context, and Dy et al. (2017) caution, using intersectionality theory, that digital entrepreneurship is not automatically a level playing field for women. Home-based businesses add further particularities. Mason et al. (2011) documented that such businesses are numerous yet often invisible in statistics and policy, and the work–family interface they create is a long-standing source of role conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). For food, the home is also the production site, so customers must trust a kitchen they cannot see. In Indonesia, this trust is supported, or questioned, through halal assurance (Republic of Indonesia, 2014) and home-industry food licensing.

Taken together, these literatures suggest that the social media marketing of women's home-based food businesses may differ from standard small-business marketing, but they have rarely been integrated. In the sources reviewed here, no single framework links gendered, household, and regulatory contexts to specific social media strategies. Indonesian-language studies may address parts of this problem; the present review does not claim to cover them.

This article therefore asks three questions. (RQ1) What strategy domains characterize social media marketing in women-led home-based food businesses? (RQ2) Which contextual constraints and enablers shape how these domains are enacted in Makassar? (RQ3) What propositions follow for empirical testing? The article contributes (a) a contextualized framework, (b) five testable propositions, and (c) a research agenda for fieldwork in Makassar. It is a conceptual article and presents no primary data.

2. Literature Review

This section reviews five bodies of literature that inform the framework: social media marketing in small firms; women's entrepreneurship and context; home-based business and the work–family interface; resource constraints and entrepreneurial bricolage; and trust and compliance in food transactions.

2.1. Social Media Marketing in Small Firms

Kietzmann et al. (2011) conceptualize social media through seven functional building blocks (identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups) and argue that firms need to understand which blocks a platform emphasizes before deciding how to engage. Evidence from small firms indicates why platforms are attractive: in a Malaysian SME survey, cost-effectiveness, compatibility with existing practices, and interactivity were associated with Facebook usage, and usage was linked to better performance outcomes (Ainin et al., 2015). Customer-generated content adds another layer, since opinions posted online can influence other consumers (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Two implications follow. First, strategy is a matter of selecting functions, such as conversation, sharing, and groups, rather

than maximizing the number of posts. Second, low cost and interactivity make social media especially suited to firms without marketing departments.

2.2. Women's Entrepreneurship and Context

Brush et al. (2009) propose a gender-aware framework in which the familiar 3Ms (markets, money, and management) are complemented by motherhood, the household and family context, and the meso and macro environment. Welter (2011) argues that entrepreneurship is embedded in business, social, spatial, and institutional contexts that can both enable and constrain. Jennings and Brush (2013) review research on women entrepreneurs and call for work that engages with the broader entrepreneurship literature while taking gender and context seriously. Networks are one important context: Greve and Salaff (2003) show that entrepreneurs draw on social networks, including family and friends, in building ventures. In digital settings, Dy et al. (2017) use intersectionality theory to show that the opportunities offered by digital entrepreneurship are shaped by women's social positions and are not uniformly liberating.

2.3. Home-Based Business and the Work–Family Interface

Mason et al. (2011) show that home-based businesses are numerous but often invisible in conventional statistics and policy attention. Because the business and the household share the same space and the same time budget, the work–family interface becomes central: Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) identify time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based sources of conflict between work and family roles. In home-based food businesses, kitchen, storage, and packaging overlap physically with domestic life, and production capacity is bounded by the entrepreneur's own time. These conditions are expected to shape which marketing activities are feasible and how they are scheduled.

2.4. Resource Constraints and Entrepreneurial Bricolage

Baker and Nelson (2005) describe entrepreneurial bricolage as making do by applying combinations of the resources at hand to new problems and opportunities. The concept is useful here because home-based food entrepreneurs typically operate with limited capital and no dedicated marketing staff. Bricolage points to strategies that rely on free platform features, smartphone-based content production, and existing contacts instead of paid advertising and agencies. It also implies that the same constraint may produce different outcomes depending on the entrepreneur's capability to improvise and recombine resources.

2.5. Trust and Compliance in Food Transactions

Gefen et al. (2003) show that trust is a central factor in online shopping alongside perceived usefulness and ease of use. Trust is especially demanding for home-based food, where customers cannot see the kitchen. In Indonesia, halal assurance is regulated by Law No. 33 of 2014 (Republic of Indonesia, 2014), and home-industry food production is commonly accompanied by a licensing requirement known as PIRT. At the time of writing (October 2026), government announcements indicate that mandatory halal certification for the food and beverage products of micro and small enterprises is scheduled to take effect on 17 October 2026 after an earlier postponement. Because such timelines change, readers should verify the current status with the national halal authority (BPJPH). The practical point for this article is that compliance information is both a regulatory duty and a potential trust signal in marketing.

3. Methods

This is a conceptual article. It does not collect or analyze primary data. Its purpose is theory building through the synthesis of existing literature, following the logic of conceptual article design described by Jaakkola (2020), and it assembles the literature through a narrative review approach (Snyder, 2019).

3.1. Research Design

Jaakkola (2020) distinguishes four approaches to conceptual articles: theory synthesis, theory adaptation, typology, and model. This article combines theory synthesis, which integrates insights across separate literatures, with model development, which specifies relationships among constructs in a framework. The outcome is not a finding about Makassar but a set of propositions that can be examined in later empirical work.

3.2. Literature Selection

Literature was selected purposively from the five streams listed in the Literature Review. The inclusion criteria were: (a) peer-reviewed journal articles or primary legal sources; (b) seminal or widely cited works in their stream; and (c) direct relevance to the relationship between context, social media strategy, and customer outcomes. No systematic database protocol (such as PRISMA) was applied, and the review does not claim to be exhaustive. Sources are in English, apart from Indonesian statutes; Indonesian-language empirical studies are therefore not systematically covered.

3.3. Framework Development

The framework was developed in five steps: (1) extracting key constructs from each stream; (2) identifying contextual conditions that bear on social media marketing in home-based food businesses; (3) grouping strategy activities into analytic domains by drawing on the functional logic of social media (Kietzmann et al., 2011) and the trust logic of online transactions (Gefen et al., 2003); (4) specifying the relationships among conditions, strategy domains, and outcomes, including a moderator; and (5) deriving propositions with their theoretical basis and a suggested way to test them. The framework was evaluated against three criteria: conceptual clarity, internal coherence, and testability. The strategy domains are analytic categories constructed by the authors, not empirical findings.

4. Results and Discussion

The synthesis yields three outputs: a set of contextual conditions, four strategy domains, and an integrated framework with five propositions. All are conceptual outputs derived from the literature. They do not describe observed behavior in Makassar, and the illustrative practices mentioned below are expectations to be examined, not findings.

4.1. Contextual Conditions: Constraints and Enablers

Table 1 summarizes the conditions identified in the literature and their expected implications for social media strategy. They fall into constraints, which limit time, money, and skills, and enablers, which provide cultural and relational resources. Regulatory and trust requirements are listed separately because they act in both directions: they impose a burden and, when made visible, can strengthen trust.

Table 1. Contextual conditions and their expected implications for social media strategy

Condition	Type	Expected implication for strategy	Basis
Home–business role conflict	Constraint	Fragmented time; preference for low-effort, schedulable, reusable content over real-time engagement	Greenhaus & Beutell (1985); Mason et al. (2011)
Limited capital and equipment	Constraint	Reliance on free or low-cost platform features and smartphone-based production; little paid advertising	Baker & Nelson (2005); Ainin et al. (2015)
Uneven digital skills	Constraint	Variation in platform choice and content quality; learning through peers and trial and error	Dy et al. (2017); to be examined
Small, perishable production batches	Constraint	Pre-order and stock-limited selling; content timed to production cycles	Authors' reasoning (food context)
Culinary identity	Enabler	Local or regional cuisine used as a differentiating story in content	Welter (2011); authors' reasoning
Women's networks and family support	Enabler	Community-based distribution (customer groups, referrals); shared tasks	Greve & Salaff (2003); Brush et al. (2009)
Regulatory and trust requirements (halal, home-industry licensing)	Both	Need to display compliance and hygiene cues to substitute for an inspectable premises	Republic of Indonesia (2014); Gefen et al. (2003)

Source: Authors' synthesis of the reviewed literature (2026).

4.2. Four Strategy Domains

Drawing on the functional logic of social media and the trust logic of online transactions, we group social media marketing activities in this setting into four domains, shown in Table 2. Content makes the otherwise invisible kitchen visible and builds identity and desire. Community turns customers into a relationship network that generates word-of-mouth and repeat orders. Commerce reduces friction between interest and order. Compliance and trust substitute for the inspection that a restaurant premises would allow. In shorthand, content attracts, community retains, commerce converts, and compliance and trust legitimize. The four domains are analytic categories; real practices will often span more than one.

Table 2. Strategy domains of social media marketing in women-led home-based food businesses

Domain	Core logic	Illustrative practices (hypothesized)	Main basis
Content	Make the kitchen visible; build identity and desire	Product photos and short videos; behind-the-scenes preparation; menu and price posts; stories of regional origin of recipes	Kietzmann et al. (2011); Welter (2011)
Community	Convert customers into a relationship network and word-of-mouth	Customer chat groups; reposting customer reviews; loyalty gestures; referrals through friends and family	Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004); Greve & Salaff (2003)
Commerce	Reduce friction from interest to order	Ordering via chat; pre-order cycles; payment and delivery arrangements; listing on social shops or delivery platforms	Ainin et al. (2015); Baker & Nelson (2005)
Compliance and trust	Substitute for an inspectable premises	Display of halal and home-industry licence information; kitchen hygiene cues; transparent ingredients and prices	Gefen et al. (2003); Republic of Indonesia (2014)

Note. Practices are illustrative expectations derived from the literature, not observed behavior.
Source: Authors' synthesis of the reviewed literature (2026).

4.3. The Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 integrates the elements. Contextual constraints and enablers shape not only whether women entrepreneurs use social media but how they enact the four strategy domains: how much time they can give to real-time interaction, which platform features they use, and how heavily they lean on personal networks. The domains in turn contribute to four outcomes: visibility, customer trust, repeat orders, and business sustainability. Entrepreneurial bricolage and digital capability moderate the link between constraints and strategy effectiveness, because the capacity to improvise with resources at hand determines how far constraints translate into weaker outcomes.

A central implication is that strategy in this context is better understood as resource-constrained and relationship-based than as scaled-up advertising. Effectiveness may therefore mean achieving sufficient visibility and trust with a manageable workload, rather than maximizing reach.

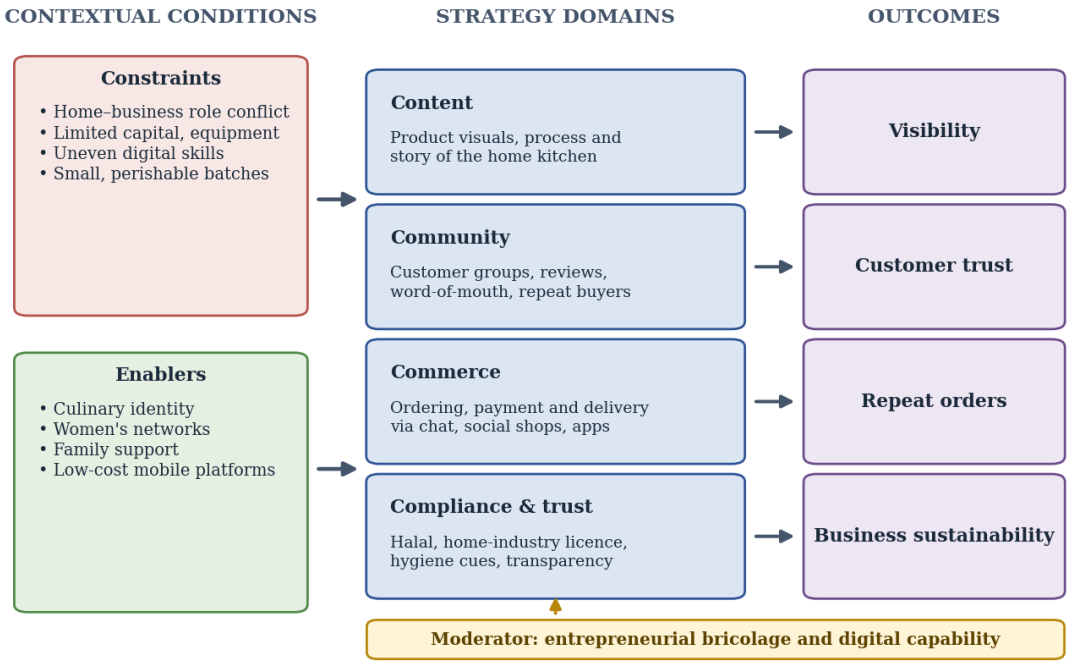


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Social Media Marketing Strategies in Women-Led Home-Based Food Businesses

4.4. Propositions

To make the framework testable, Table 3 states five propositions with their theoretical basis and a suggested way to test each. They are theoretical expectations to be examined, not results.

Table 3. Research propositions derived from the framework

Code	Proposition	Basis	Suggested design or measure
P1	The stronger the home–business role conflict, the more the entrepreneur relies on low-time-cost strategies (reusable content, scheduled posting, pre-order selling) rather than real-time engagement.	Greenhaus & Beutell (1985); Mason et al. (2011)	Interviews; time-use diaries; analysis of posting patterns
P2	Women's networks and family support increase reliance on community-based strategies (customer groups, referrals), which in turn raise repeat orders.	Greve & Salaff (2003); Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004)	Network mapping; survey with repeat-purchase indicators
P3	Entrepreneurial bricolage and digital capability moderate the relationship between resource constraints and strategy effectiveness: constraints harm outcomes less when bricolage capability is high.	Baker & Nelson (2005)	Survey with validated scales; moderated regression
P4	Visible compliance and trust cues (halal and licensing information, hygiene transparency) strengthen the effect of content and commerce activity on customer trust.	Gefen et al. (2003); Republic of Indonesia (2014)	Customer survey; experiment varying cue presence
P5	Culinary identity expressed in content, combined with community engagement, increases customer trust and repeat orders more than either alone.	Welter (2011); Kietzmann et al. (2011)	Content analysis plus customer survey; interaction effect

Source: Authors' synthesis of the reviewed literature (2026).

4.5. Discussion

The framework makes three contributions. For theory, it extends gender-aware and contextual perspectives on entrepreneurship (Brush et al., 2009; Welter, 2011) into the domain of social media marketing, showing how household, network, and regulatory conditions can shape marketing strategy rather than only entry into entrepreneurship. It also questions the implicit assumption of general social media models that more activity and more reach are always better, proposing instead that sufficiency under constraint is a legitimate standard of effectiveness (Arif & Windarsari, 2026; Riu et al., 2026). For practice, if the propositions are supported, women entrepreneurs could prioritize strategies that fit their time and resources, such as reusable content and community-based selling, and invest in visible compliance information (Windarsari & Arif, 2026). For policy and training, programs could be designed around the constraints identified here, for example flexible-schedule digital training, assistance with halal and licensing procedures, and peer networks among women entrepreneurs.

These implications should be read with caution. The framework is derived from literature that mostly originates outside Indonesia, and Makassar's specific cultural, religious, and platform conditions are not elaborated in it. They are, instead, treated as hypotheses to be explored in fieldwork.

4.6. Agenda for Empirical Research in Makassar

A sequential mixed-methods design is suggested. In the first phase, semi-structured interviews with women entrepreneurs, selected purposively for variation in business age, scale, and platform use, together with content analysis of publicly available business accounts (with consent), would examine whether the four domains and the contextual conditions are recognized and how they are enacted . In the second phase, a survey drawing on local MSME and community networks would measure constraints, bricolage and digital capability, strategy domains, and customer-related outcomes, and test the propositions with regression or structural equation modeling. Research ethics procedures, including informed consent and anonymization of participants and accounts, should apply throughout.

5. Conclusion

This article develops a conceptual framework for the social media marketing strategies of women entrepreneurs in Makassar's home-based food business. It identifies contextual constraints and enablers, synthesizes four strategy domains (content, community, commerce, and compliance and trust), links them to four outcomes, and introduces entrepreneurial bricolage and digital capability as a moderator. Five propositions are offered for empirical testing. The central argument is that strategy in this setting is resource-constrained and relationship-based, and that its effectiveness should be judged against the entrepreneur's context rather than against the standard of scaled-up advertising.

The article has limitations. It is conceptual and presents no primary data. The narrative review used purposive selection and is not exhaustive, and its English-language bias leaves Indonesian-language studies largely uncovered. The regulatory context, particularly halal certification timelines, is changing and needs to be verified at the time of use. The strategy domains are analytic constructs that must be validated with field evidence. Future research should test the propositions in Makassar and in other Indonesian cities to assess how far the framework generalizes.

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