

Social media adoption as a full mediator between entrepreneurial orientation and MSME performance



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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on MSME performance with social media adoption as a mediating variable. The research was conducted on MSMEs in the food, beverage, and fashion sectors located in seven sub-districts of Sidoarjo Regency, East Java, Indonesia. A quantitative approach was employed using a survey method with 130 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 3. The findings reveal that entrepreneurial orientation does not directly affect MSME performance but has a significant positive effect on social media adoption. Social media adoption, in turn, positively and significantly influences MSME performance. Furthermore, social media adoption fully mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and MSME performance. These results suggest that entrepreneurial orientation needs to be channeled through social media adoption to improve performance outcomes.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial Orientation; Social Media Adoption; MSME Performance; Dynamic Capability Theory; Diffusion of Innovation Theory*



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INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a strategic role in national and global economic development by contributing to wealth creation, improving citizens' living standards, and driving economic growth in developing regions, including Indonesia (Florentino & Tjakrawala, 2021). Despite their significance, MSMEs face substantial challenges in maintaining competitiveness and business sustainability amid increasingly dynamic markets and rapid technological changes (Hidayat et al., 2024). Digitalization has emerged as a critical enabler for MSMEs to overcome these challenges by enhancing operational efficiency, expanding market reach, and strengthening competitiveness in the digital economy era (Ramdanyah & Ganika, 2024).

East Java Province holds the largest concentration of micro-enterprises in Indonesia, with Sidoarjo Regency recording 151,043 registered MSMEs across 18 sub-districts (Dinas Koperasi dan UKM Kabupaten Sidoarjo, 2024). To support MSME digitalization, the local government launched TukuoYuk, a digital marketplace facilitating online product marketing, alongside the "1000 New Entrepreneurs Program" running since 2017 in seven sub-districts categorized as poverty red zones. However, digital platform participation remains remarkably low, with only 0.65% of MSMEs in these sub-districts registered on TukuoYuk, indicating a significant digital gap.

This phenomenon suggests that program availability and digital platforms alone do not guarantee digital transformation success among MSMEs. The low digital participation can be attributed to three interrelated factors: low entrepreneurial orientation among MSME owners who lack innovation and proactiveness in exploring digital market opportunities; limited social media adoption for business purposes; and weak digital marketing capabilities (Sopah et al., 2020). These observations raise an important research question regarding the mechanism through which entrepreneurial orientation influences MSME performance in the digital era.

Previous studies have demonstrated that entrepreneurial orientation positively influences MSME performance (Fan et al., 2021; Susanto et al., 2023), yet other findings suggest this relationship is not always direct and may require mediating variables (Natasha et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2021). This inconsistency represents a significant research gap that warrants further investigation. Moreover, most prior studies have relied on the Resource-Based View (RBV) framework, which shows limitations in explaining how MSMEs adapt to rapidly changing digital environments (Chrismardani et al., 2024; Orisa et al., 2020).

Despite the growing body of literature on entrepreneurial orientation and digital adoption among SMEs, empirical evidence from Indonesian MSMEs operating in consumer-oriented sectors such as food, beverage, and fashion remains limited. Most existing studies have been conducted in developed economies or larger emerging markets such as China, Pakistan, and Ghana (Anim et al., 2023; Fan et al., 2021; Qalati et al., 2021), where the institutional environments, digital infrastructure, and entrepreneurial ecosystems differ substantially from those of Indonesian micro-enterprises. This geographic and contextual gap is particularly significant given that Indonesia's MSME sector is characterized by resource constraints, limited digital literacy, and heavy reliance on informal networks conditions that may fundamentally alter the mechanism through which entrepreneurial orientation translates into business performance (Hidayat et al., 2024; Sopah et al., 2020).

To address this gap, the present study integrates Dynamic Capability Theory (DCT) by Teece, (2007) and Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI) by Rogers, (2003) as the theoretical foundation. Within the DCT framework, entrepreneurial orientation

functions as a sensing capability that enables MSMEs to detect market opportunities and technological changes. Social media adoption, explained through DOI, represents the process by which MSMEs accept and implement technological innovation for business purposes. This theoretical integration provides a more comprehensive framework for understanding the digital transformation dynamics of MSMEs in emerging economies (Anim et al., 2023; Borahima et al., 2021).

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it examines the mediating role of social media adoption in the entrepreneurial orientation–performance relationship, an area that remains underexplored in the Indonesian MSME context. While prior studies have predominantly investigated this relationship in developed economies or larger emerging markets, the present study provides empirical evidence from micro-scale enterprises in a regency-level setting, offering a more granular perspective on the digital transformation dynamics of resource-constrained MSMEs. Second, it integrates Dynamic Capability Theory and Diffusion of Innovation Theory as complementary theoretical lenses, moving beyond the predominantly Resource-Based View frameworks that have dominated the entrepreneurial orientation literature.

This dual-theory integration offers a more nuanced explanation of how entrepreneurial orientation, as a sensing capability, drives the adoption of technological innovation which in turn generates measurable performance improvements. Third, by empirically demonstrating that social media adoption fully mediates the entrepreneurial orientation–performance relationship, this study resolves a persistent inconsistency in the literature regarding the direct versus indirect pathways through which entrepreneurial orientation influences firm outcomes. Fourth, it offers actionable insights for policymakers and MSME practitioners in Sidoarjo Regency regarding the design of digitalization programs that simultaneously cultivate entrepreneurial orientation and facilitate effective social media adoption, rather than treating these as independent policy objectives.

The purpose of this study is therefore to analyze both the direct effect of entrepreneurial orientation on MSME performance and the indirect effect mediated through social media adoption, thereby advancing theoretical understanding and practical knowledge of digital-driven MSME performance in emerging economies.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Entrepreneurial Orientation

Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) refers to a set of organizational behaviors, attitudes, and strategies related to risk-taking, innovation, and proactiveness (Covin & Miller, 2014; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Miller, 1983). Within the Dynamic Capability Theory framework, EO serves as a sensing capability that enables MSMEs to detect, interpret, and evaluate opportunities and threats in the dynamic business environment (Teece, 2007). Arabeche et al., (2022) conceptualize EO as a multidimensional construct comprising three dimensions: innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking. MSMEs with strong entrepreneurial orientation are more responsive to opportunities arising from information technology developments and view technology as a means to improve efficiency, expand markets, and strengthen customer relationships.

Social Media Adoption

Social media adoption refers to the level of acceptance and use of social media by MSMEs as a communication and promotional channel, emphasizing willingness, intensity, and consistency of platform usage (Odoom et al., 2017). Based on the Diffusion of Innovation

Theory (Rogers, 2003), social media adoption represents the process through which MSMEs accept, use, and integrate social media platforms for business communication and stakeholder interaction (Ahmad et al., 2019; Maharjan et al., 2024; Prawesti & Artanti, 2026; Yacob et al., 2023). This process is influenced by five key innovation attributes: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. Research has demonstrated that strategic social media usage strengthens consumer relationships and enhances brand image (Halim et al., 2024; Qalati et al., 2021).

MSME Performance

MSME performance represents the degree of success or failure of an enterprise, encompassing the outcomes obtained from executing business functions and activities within a specific period (Purwanti et al., 2022; Vaikunthavasan, 2025). Susanto et al., (2023) expand this definition by emphasizing the enterprise's ability to maintain competitiveness in a dynamic business environment. MSME performance is defined as the results achieved by small and medium enterprises, including efficiency, growth, and profitability (Mazaheriasad & Jamali, 2022). In this study, MSME performance is operationalized through indicators of profit growth, customer growth, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency (Florentino & Tjakrawala, 2021; Zhao et al., 2025).

Hypotheses Development

Several studies have found a positive relationship between EO and MSME performance (Anim et al., 2023; Fan et al., 2021). However, some researchers argue that this relationship is not always direct, particularly for resource-constrained MSMEs that require mediating mechanisms to translate entrepreneurial intention into performance outcomes (Nguyen et al., 2021; Susanto et al., 2023). Based on these considerations, the first hypothesis is formulated:

H1: Entrepreneurial orientation has a positive effect on MSME performance among MSMEs in Sidoarjo.

MSMEs with high entrepreneurial orientation tend to adopt social media more quickly and intensively for business purposes. Innovative, proactive, and risk-taking entrepreneurs are more likely to explore digital channels as new market opportunities. Fan et al., (2021) and Maharjan et al., (2024) confirmed that EO is a key antecedent of social media adoption among MSMEs. Thus:

H2: Entrepreneurial orientation has a positive effect on social media adoption among MSMEs in Sidoarjo.

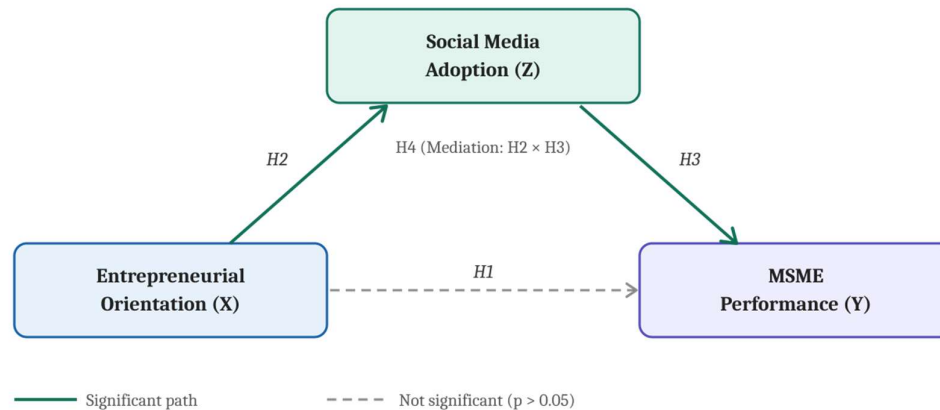
Social media adoption enables MSMEs to reach broader markets, reduce marketing costs, and build stronger customer relationships, thereby improving business performance (Halim et al., 2024; Qalati et al., 2021). Effective and consistent social media usage directly contributes to enhanced MSME performance, particularly through increased brand visibility and market expansion. Therefore:

H3: Social media adoption has a positive effect on MSME performance among MSMEs in Sidoarjo.

Given that EO may not directly translate into performance outcomes but can do so through the adoption of digital channels, social media adoption is proposed as a mediating variable. Susanto et al., (2023) and Anim et al., (2023) found that social media mediates the EO–performance relationship. Thus:

H4: Social media adoption mediates the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on MSME performance among MSMEs in Sidoarjo.

Based on the theoretical review and hypotheses development, the conceptual framework of this study is presented in Figure 1.



Source: Constructed by the researcher, 2026

Figure 1
Research Conceptual Model

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach with a causal research design using a survey method (Creswell, 2013). The population comprises 258 MSMEs in the food, beverage, and fashion sectors that have participated in the TukuoYuk digital platform or the 1000 New Entrepreneurs Program in seven sub-districts of Sidoarjo Regency, namely Tarik, Prambon, Krembung, Tulangan, Taman, Krian, and Balongbendo. The sample was determined using non-probability purposive sampling (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016) with criteria: (1) business owner, (2) minimum one year of business operation, and (3) operating in the food, beverage, or fashion sector. Following Hair et al. (2017) recommendation of 5–10 times the number of indicators for PLS-SEM, the minimum sample was 120 respondents (24 indicators × 5), and 130 valid responses were collected.

The research instrument was a questionnaire using a 5-point Agree–Disagree scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), distributed both online via Google Forms and offline through direct visits. The independent variable, Entrepreneurial Orientation (X), was measured using six indicators adapted from Arabeche et al., (2022) covering three dimensions: innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking. The mediating variable, Social Media Adoption (Z), was measured using six indicators adapted from Odoom et al., (2017), Tajudeen et al., (2018), and Solomon et al., (2024). The dependent variable, MSME Performance (Y), was measured using four indicators adapted from Florentino & Tjakrawala, (2021) and Zhao et al., (2025).

Data were analyzed using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS 3, following the two-stage evaluation approach recommended by Hair. et al., (2017), comprising outer model assessment (convergent validity, discriminant validity, reliability) and inner model assessment (R^2 , Q^2 , bootstrapping for hypothesis testing).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

Of the 130 respondents, the majority were female (72.3%), reflecting the dominance of women entrepreneurs in the food, beverage, and fashion sectors. The largest age group was 32–37 years (29.2%), indicating productive-age entrepreneurs who are generally more adaptive to digital technology. Most respondents held a senior high school diploma (56.9%), followed by bachelor's/diploma holders (28.5%). The food sector dominated (43.1%), followed by beverages (29.2%) and fashion (27.7%). The majority were micro-scale enterprises with fewer than five employees (62.3%). WhatsApp Business was the most widely used platform (86.2%), followed by Instagram (75.4%) and TikTok (66.9%). Most respondents had adopted social media for business purposes for approximately four years (22.3%). These demographic characteristics suggest that the respondent profile is predominantly composed of young adult women entrepreneurs operating micro-scale businesses in consumer-oriented sectors, a pattern consistent with the broader landscape of Indonesian MSMEs where women represent a significant portion of the informal and semi-formal entrepreneurial workforce (Ramdansyah & Ganika, 2024).

The relatively high educational attainment, with over 85% of respondents holding at minimum a senior high school diploma, indicates a baseline level of digital literacy that may facilitate social media adoption for business purposes. Furthermore, the widespread use of multi-platform social media, particularly the simultaneous adoption of WhatsApp Business, Instagram, and TikTok, reflects an emerging pattern of platform diversification among MSMEs seeking to maximize market reach and customer engagement across distinct audience demographics. The four-year average duration of social media usage for business purposes suggests that respondents possess sufficient experiential familiarity with digital platforms to meaningfully evaluate the relationship between social media adoption and business performance outcomes.

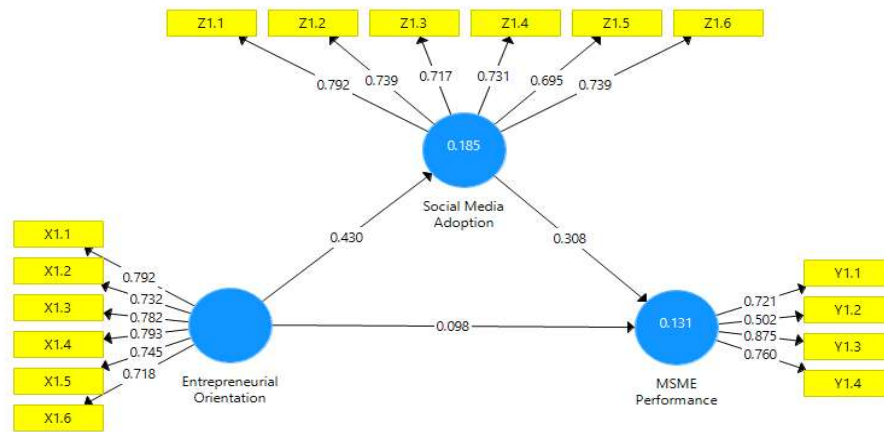
Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analysis using the three-box method (Low: 1.00–2.33; Medium: 2.34–3.67; High: 3.68–5.00) revealed that all three variables scored in the high category. Entrepreneurial Orientation had a mean of 3.85, with the highest scores on product/service introduction and risk-taking courage (both 3.91). Social Media Adoption scored a mean of 3.87, with platform compatibility receiving the highest score (3.98). MSME Performance had a mean of 3.78, with customer satisfaction and positive response scoring highest (3.91), while customer growth scored lowest (3.67, medium category), indicating that expanding the customer base remains a challenge.

Outer Model Evaluation

According to Hair, et al., (2017), convergent validity was assessed through outer loading values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All indicators of Entrepreneurial Orientation (0.716–0.798), Social Media Adoption (0.703–0.790), and most MSME Performance indicators met the threshold of 0.70, except Y1.2 (0.495). However, Y1.2 was retained because the construct-level AVE (0.527) exceeded the 0.50 minimum (Hair et al., 2014).

Discriminant validity was confirmed through the Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT ratios, all below 0.90. Reliability was established with Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values exceeding 0.70 for all constructs. The results of the PLS algorithm are visualized in Figure 2, and construct reliability and validity are summarized in Table 1.



Source: SmartPLS Output, 2026

Figure 2
PLS Algorithm Results

Table 1
Construct Reliability and Validity

Variable	Cronbach's α	rho_A	CR	AVE	Status
Entrepreneurial Orientation	0.860	0.890	0.893	0.582	Reliable
Social Media Adoption	0.834	0.852	0.877	0.543	Reliable
MSME Performance	0.741	0.747	0.811	0.527	Reliable

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2026

Inner Model Evaluation

The R^2 value for Social Media Adoption was 0.172, indicating that 17.2% of its variance is explained by Entrepreneurial Orientation. The R^2 for MSME Performance was 0.133, suggesting that the model explains 13.3% of performance variance, classified as weak (Hair et al., 2014). This indicates that additional factors beyond the model significantly influence MSME performance. All endogenous variables had Q^2 values above zero, confirming acceptable predictive relevance.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses were tested using the bootstrapping method with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ (t-statistic > 1.96; p-value < 0.05). The results of direct and indirect effect testing are presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2
Direct Effect Hypothesis Testing Results

Hip.	Path	Coeff.	Std.Dev	T Stat.	P Value	Decision
H1	EO → MSME Performance	0.117	0.128	0.918	0.359	Rejected
H2	EO → Social Media Adoption	0.414	0.060	6.918	0.000	Accepted
H3	SM Adoption → MSME Performance	0.319	0.085	3.757	0.000	Accepted

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2026

Table 3
Indirect Effect (Mediation) Testing Results

Hip.	Mediation Path	Coeff.	T Stat.	P Value	Decision
H4	EO → SM Adoption → MSME Perf.	0.132	3.285	0.001	Accepted

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2026

Discussion

The findings of hypothesis testing yield important insights into the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, social media adoption, and MSME performance. The first hypothesis (H1) is rejected, indicating that entrepreneurial orientation does not directly influence MSME performance ($\beta = 0.117$; $T = 0.918$; $p = 0.359$). This result implies that entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors alone are insufficient to directly improve business performance without appropriate intermediary mechanisms.

This finding aligns with Nguyen et al., (2021), who found that entrepreneurial orientation did not directly affect the business performance of IT SMEs in Vietnam, and with Susanto et al., (2023), who demonstrated that the EO–performance relationship depends on the roles of social media and marketing capabilities. In the context of micro-scale MSMEs in Sidoarjo Regency, limited human resources, capital, and digital infrastructure may weaken the direct EO–performance link, necessitating the translation of entrepreneurial potential through digital channels.

The second hypothesis (H2) is accepted, confirming that entrepreneurial orientation has a significant positive effect on social media adoption ($\beta = 0.414$; $T = 6.918$; $p = 0.000$). This is the strongest direct path in the model, demonstrating that MSME owners with high innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking propensity are more inclined to adopt social media platforms for their businesses.

This finding is consistent with Fan et al., (2021) and Maharjan et al., (2024). Within the DCT framework, entrepreneurial orientation functions as a sensing capability that drives MSMEs to identify and exploit digital opportunities through social media adoption, while from the DOI perspective, entrepreneurially oriented individuals exhibit greater openness to technological innovation.

The third hypothesis (H3) is accepted, confirming that social media adoption positively and significantly influences MSME performance ($\beta = 0.319$; $T = 3.757$; $p = 0.000$). This indicates that effective and consistent social media usage directly contributes to enhanced business performance. This result supports the findings of Qalati et al., (2021) and Halim et al., (2024), who demonstrated that social media adoption positively impacts MSME sustainability and performance, particularly through enhanced brand visibility and broader market reach. For MSMEs in the food, beverage, and fashion sectors of Sidoarjo, WhatsApp Business, Instagram, and TikTok enable them to access wider markets with substantially lower promotional costs compared to conventional media.

The fourth hypothesis (H4) is accepted, demonstrating that social media adoption significantly mediates the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on MSME performance ($\beta = 0.132$; $T = 3.285$; $p = 0.001$). Given that the direct effect (H1) is not significant while the indirect effect through social media adoption is significant, the mediation type is full mediation. This is the most critical finding of this study: entrepreneurial orientation can only improve MSME performance through the pathway of social media adoption. Without adequate social media adoption, high entrepreneurial orientation does not automatically

produce better business performance. Social media adoption serves as a crucial bridge that converts entrepreneurial potential into measurable performance outcomes.

This finding aligns with Susanto et al., (2023), Fang et al., (2022), and Anim et al., (2023), who consistently found that social media mediates the EO–performance relationship. The existence of local platforms such as TukuoYuk further reinforces this mediation pathway by providing a structured digital ecosystem for MSMEs in Sidoarjo.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study provides empirical evidence regarding the mechanism through which entrepreneurial orientation affects MSME performance in the digital era context. The analysis of 130 MSMEs in the food, beverage, and fashion sectors across seven sub-districts in Sidoarjo Regency reveals that entrepreneurial orientation does not directly improve MSME performance. However, when channeled through social media adoption, entrepreneurial orientation significantly enhances business outcomes. Social media adoption serves as a full mediator in this relationship, functioning as the critical bridge that translates entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors into tangible performance improvements. These findings underscore that possessing an entrepreneurial mindset characterized by innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking is a necessary but insufficient condition for performance improvement. MSMEs must actively adopt and leverage social media platforms to realize the performance benefits of their entrepreneurial orientation.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in the integration of Dynamic Capability Theory and Diffusion of Innovation Theory, demonstrating that entrepreneurial orientation as a sensing capability requires the adoption of technological innovation, specifically social media, to produce measurable performance outcomes. Practically, these findings suggest that government programs aimed at improving MSME performance should not merely provide digital platforms or infrastructure but should also develop entrepreneurial orientation while simultaneously facilitating effective social media adoption. Training programs should integrate entrepreneurship development with hands-on digital marketing and social media skills.

This study has several limitations that provide directions for future research. First, the R^2 of MSME performance (13.3%) indicates that many factors beyond this model significantly influence performance, suggesting the inclusion of additional variables such as digital marketing capability, market orientation, or government support in future models. Second, the cross-sectional design limits causal inference; a longitudinal approach would better capture the dynamic nature of social media adoption and its performance impact over time. Third, the study focuses on MSMEs in specific sectors within Sidoarjo Regency; future research could expand to other regions and sectors to enhance generalizability. Finally, future studies might explore the role of specific social media platforms, distinguishing their unique contributions to MSME performance.

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