

# The Role of Digital Platforms in Increasing MSME's Sales

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## ABSTRACT

*This study aims to find out why MSMEs use Digital Platforms in marketing their products and identify what factors influence the sales of MSME products. The location in this study is in the city of Makassar, precisely in the MSME sector. Criteria for selecting informants in phenomenological research include that the informant must directly experience situations or events related to the research topic. This study uses descriptive qualitative research methodology and SWOT analysis techniques. The result showed that MSMEs in Makassar City have carried out the four stages of marketing strategy well and experienced an increase in consumer interest. Based on the SWOT analysis, it can be concluded that the opportunity to use social media for selling MSME products can have an effect if it is done optimally in terms of the length of time for promotion and the development of marketing strategies such as increasing product creativity so that the products offered are more varied. In terms of marketing, optimizing social media to improve marketing relationship networks and allocating funds to improve information technology to facilitate product marketing, for example, placing paid digital advertisements on social media, which can expand market share. Digital advertising is more effective and cheaper than traditional advertising.*

## ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui mengapa UMKM menggunakan Platform Digital dalam memasarkan produknya dan mengidentifikasi faktor apa saja yang mempengaruhi penjualan produk UMKM. Lokasi dalam penelitian ini berada di kota Makassar tepatnya pada sektor UMKM. Kriteria pemilihan informan dalam penelitian fenomenologi antara lain informan harus mengalami langsung situasi atau peristiwa yang berkaitan dengan topik penelitian. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi penelitian kualitatif deskriptif dan teknik analisis SWOT. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa UMKM di Kota Makassar telah melakukan empat tahapan strategi pemasaran dengan baik dan berpengalaman serta peningkatan minat konsumen. Berdasarkan analisis SWOT dapat disimpulkan bahwa peluang pemanfaatan media sosial untuk menjual produk UMKM dapat berpengaruh apabila dilakukan secara optimal baik dari segi lamanya waktu promosi maupun pengembangan strategi pemasaran seperti peningkatan kreativitas produk. sehingga produk yang ditawarkan lebih bervariasi. Dari sisi pemasaran, mengoptimalkan media sosial untuk meningkatkan jaringan relasi pemasaran dan mengalokasikan dana untuk meningkatkan teknologi informasi guna memudahkan pemasaran produk, misalnya memasang iklan digital berbayar di media sosial, yang dapat memperluas pangsa pasar. Iklan digital lebih efektif dan lebih murah daripada iklan tradisional.*



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## INTRODUCTION

Many theories say that needs are fundamental in meeting survival and must be met immediately. Meeting the needs of living things, especially humans, is a fundamental factor in doing business. In the economic world, there is a level of fulfillment of the needs for goods and services. These levels are wants and needs. Desire is the need for more goods or services. Every human wants to fulfill something considered lacking. Desires are not binding and have no necessity to be fulfilled immediately.

Additionally, when basic needs have been met, needs are all goods or services humans

need to support all activities in daily life. Needs will not be separated from everyday life. Needs Based on Nature are divided into 2, including physical and spiritual (Samsul, 2019).

Differences in needs and desires in the economic and business world also have a crucial role—for example, an entrepreneur who wants to expand his business. It is very positive for business progress and employee welfare when viewed in terms of desire. However, this positive desire must be supported by meeting needs that must be met before, such as performance effectiveness, additional employees, and improving product quality.

An online financial or accounting system such as this Journal is a must-have if you want to develop your business and answer the challenges of financial progress in the digital era. By having Jurnal online accounting software, you not only solve financial recording problems but also have access to several payment systems, bill issuance, and automatic reporting of the remaining stock of goods. Internet is a computer network formed by the United States Department of Defense in 1969 through the ARPA Institute project, which developed a network called ARPANET (Advanced Research Project Agency Network) (Fidler & Russell, 2018). The development of the world's digital era has contributed to economic development in Indonesia. Technological advances that began after World War 2 turned out to have a tremendous impact on changing the lifestyle of most humans.

Most humans began to depend on the instantaneousness offered by technology. Nowadays, one no longer needs to move from his seat to see what is happening on the other side of the world. The information is easily found on the internet. The development of the manufacturing sector with a digital platform is essential in line with the latest technological advances and the passage of the industrial era 4.0 (Tavares et al., 2022). Moreover, the government targets Indonesia to become the country with the most prominent digital economy in ASEAN by 2020. Data in 2019 released by Wearesocial.com American media companies explained that of the total population of Indonesia of 268.2 million, it is known that the public uses around 355.5 million or 133% of mobile phones. Other results say the use of mobile phones or smartphones reaches around 90%, while the use of computers or laptops is only about 20%. The same thing was also conveyed regarding the use of digital platforms, especially for E-commerce activities, namely online buying and selling transactions carried out 76% more with mobile phones than computers which were only 37% (Andriani et al., 2019).

It is an opportunity for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to be taken advantage Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are trading businesses managed by individuals or entities. This case is also included as business criteria in the small or microscope (Maizir et al., 2020). The increasing number of competitors is a consideration for business actors to innovate to win the competition. The right marketing communication strategy is used to be able to grab the intended market share so that it can increase sales (Pradiani, 2017). Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) must be able to compete in the international market so as not to be oppressed.

Moreover, in this era of competition, MSME players should be literate in information technology (IT) to make it easier to market products abroad. It is recorded that the number of MSMEs in Indonesia is quite large, with around 50 million MSME players (Ariprabowo et al., 2023). MSME players need information technology to grow and compete in today's digital era. MSME players find it challenging to get the right information technology solution because MSME players do not have exceptional staff who are experts in the field of dynamic information technology (Rachmawati et al., 2021). Another obstacle, namely the large variety of technology products, makes MSME players confused about choosing the right solution (Imaduddin &

Jufriadi, 2022). Therefore, MSME actors need guidance in choosing the right information technology according to their type of business and needs. Digital platforms provide various conveniences that conventional marketing does not have (Redjeki & Affandi, 2021). Only with internet quota can we access various goods and services we like anytime and anywhere.

Digital platforms that present various information technology-based marketing media for products specifically produced by MSMEs have been designed and developed (Fauzi et al., 2023). Several previous studies conducted by Andriani et al. (2019), Usman et al. (2022), and Dwijayanti et al. (2023) proposed the design of a digital platform for marketing website-based MSME products and social media. In addition, there is also research that designs digital platforms for MSMEs by administrative regions (Andriani et al., 2019; Liu & Sukmariningsih, 2021; Joseph et al., 2023). The research examines the scope of collaboration in strengthening the position of small and medium enterprises in facing the industrial revolution 4.

MSME owners can take hope in understanding that the internet has expanded the market and created many possibilities to engage directly with customers. As for the pre-research conducted based on the results of an interview with one of the MSMEs visited by the researcher, the owner of Robocoffee, he said, "Since making sales through social media, Robocoffe is increasingly known and usually invited to events as a tenant in various activities." This research aims to help MSMEs in Makassar City navigate their business and share how business owners can successfully sustain it. Virtual business channels provide a unique opportunity to revive the search for products through new business models and maintain a thriving business in the digital world effectively and efficiently. Then learn more about the classification of product marketing by creating a digital e-commerce platform in product marketing, buying and selling sites, and social media, especially Instagram. To fill the research gap that is still open. This research will discuss more deeply through a qualitative approach about.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The approach used in this study is phenomenology. Phenomenology is a research strategy in which researchers identify the nature of human life experience about a particular phenomenon (Sari et al., 2022). The location of this study is in the city of Makassar, precisely in the MSME sector, with a three-month research time from December 2020 to February 2021. The criteria for selecting informants in phenomenological research include that the Informants must experience firsthand situations or events related to the research topic. a) The goal is to get a description from the point of view of the primary person; b) The informant can redescribe the phenomenon that has been experienced, especially in its nature and meaning; c) Willing to engage in research activities that may take a long time, d) Willing to be interviewed and recorded activities during the interview or the research and e) Give consent to publish the results of the research.

Research focuses on the role of platforms in increasing sales, especially for SME entrepreneurs in Makassar City. The primary data source of this study is direct data collected by researchers from the source (directly from informants) who have the information or data (Goldkuhl, 2019). In contrast, the secondary data source of this research is the result of a literature search of data related to consumption theories. The type of data used in this study is field data. Field data is data taken directly in the field (Larini & Barthes, 2018). In addition, of course, with library data. Data collection techniques in this study include interviews, observation, and documentation techniques.

Qualitative data analysis techniques, according to Creswell (2013), include a) Processing

and preparing data for analysis, initial steps such as: preparing transactions and field data; b) Reading the entire data, c) Analyzing in more detail by coding data, coding is the process of processing material/information into segments before understanding it d) Apply coding to describe settings, category people, and related themes, e) Show descriptions and themes are restated in qualitative reports and f) Interpret or interpret data. Qualitative reliability indicates that the approach researchers use is consistent when applied by other researchers and for different projects. At the same time, data validity in qualitative research is an effort to check the accuracy of research results by carrying out specific procedures (Creswell, 2013).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Why MSMEs use Digital Platforms in marketing their products*

In a discussion of Chapter V, it is explained the shared experience of informants when using digital platforms to market their products. Some subdiscussions will be explained below. Based on the in-depth interview questions asked.

#### 1. Experience of informants when using digital platforms to market their products.

- Muh Irdan Adi Putra (Robbocoffe) "By using digital platforms, I can introduce my products through social media, one of which is Instagram."
- Irsyad Adi Putra (Fatea) "Digital Platform is beneficial for me because there are only those who order my products online through direct or through Ojol (online motorcycle taxi)."
- Arfan (Black White Coffee) "Of course, it is even wider in scope to get to know my products because even though people do not come here, they can still get to know my products through digital platforms."
- Iswanda (HAN) "Very effective in marketing products through the digital platform itself because of the GAP obtained by business actors."
- Ilham Maulana (Brother Foodie) "At first, I introduced my social media to close friends and asked for help to help market my products on social media."
- Sukri (Kam-sia Boba Pajaiang) "It is amazing, getting many different results than before I used the digital platform."
- Muhammad Akbar Mubarak (Wokulawesi) "I think all who use social media feel the positive impact because we only need to post product images, and it is easier to reach the target market."

Based on the interviews and discussions of each informant, it can be concluded that each informant, as described above, has their own experience in using the Digital Platform to market their products. Digital Platform has the potential to help MSME players in marketing their products. Digital Platforms are also available ranging from instant messaging to social networking sites that offer users the to interact, relate, and communicate with each other. This Digital Platform intends to initiate and circulate online information about user experience with consumer products or brands, aiming to engage the public through social networks (Arfan & Hasan, 2022).

#### 2. Informant experience regarding the ease of identifying markets when using digital platforms

- Muh Irdan Adi Putra (Robbocoffe) "To cooperate myself, I have collaborated a lot through this media platform with external agencies such as banks and other institutions."
- Irsyad Adi Putra (Fatea) "Of course, it makes it easier because even though we do not meet in person, we can also collaborate through the digital platforms that exist today" •

Arfan (Black White Coffee) "Yes, because more partners can get to know our shop through digital platforms such as Instagram."

- Iswanda (HAN) "So, again, using a digital platform to market our products is very easy in collaboration with other parties because it is easy to reach a wider market."
- Ilham Maulana (Brother Foodie) "Yes, it is easier. Until now, I have collaborated with GrabFood to market my products."
- Sukri (Kam-sia Boba Pajaiang) "To cooperate with others is easy because of the faster connection."
- Muhammad Akbar Mubarak (Wokulawesi) "Comparatively, but the majority are easier to get relationships because of the professional form of the businessman to build partners for product promos by appealing to how to access my social media accounts."

Based on the results of interviews and discussions of each informant above, it can be concluded that in using the Digital Platform, entrepreneurs get the convenience to collaborate with partners on the Digital Platform itself because of the breadth of coverage and fast connection, then also the availability of images and videos that can visualize products or display supporting presentations.

### 3. Informant experience on advantages before and after using digital platforms

- Muh Irdan Adi Putra (Robbocoffe) "It is very functional because I can market my products through digital advertising platforms and develop them."
- Irsyad Adi Putra (Fatea) "The benefits are huge, and I can say almost 20% of my buyers come from the benefits of digital platforms."
- Arfan (Black White Coffee) "If we use a digital platform, more people know and reach the difference. If we do not use a digital platform, it will be difficult to be known more widely."
- Iswanda (HAN) "Obviously, those who did not know my product knew because they had seen my business social media account profile."
- Ilham Maulana (Brother Foodie) "Of course, it is superior if we use a digital platform because what was only a takeaway is now easier for buyers and sellers to enjoy the current digital platform."
- Sukri (Kam-sia Boba Pajaiang) "It is more worth it because in using a digital platform to market the product, we can manage the age and preferences of consumers more efficiently than still using traditional methods such as banners."
- Muhammad Akbar Mubarak (Wokulawesi) "It is very different. Almost all millennial children use smartphones for their social activities. The attraction now is that people, when they browse on social media, who initially had no interest in eating when they saw food advertisements, suddenly had an interest or appetite."

Based on the interviews and discussions of each of the informants above, it can be concluded that the informants, when using the Digital Platforms experienced an increase in turnover and the products they marketed so that the public better knew them because many people accessed social media. They can access the network anytime and anywhere via a computer or mobile phone and be an effective and efficient marketing medium.

### 4. The informant's experience after conducting a trial resulting from a new idea for the progress of his business

- Muh Irdan Adi Putra (Robbocoffe) "Yes, that is right, I have made new efforts and ideas such as collaborating with Grab and Gojek and then submitting proposals to the Faculties



at the Indonesian Muslim University."

- Irsyad Adi Putra (Fatea) "Often, my new products are usually shared through grab-food and go-food."
- Arfan (Black White Coffee) "Definitely, for example, like creating new menus to attract new customers" • Iswanda (HAN) "Obviously, because every time there is a new product that we make, we will review whether it is effective or not."
- Ilham Maulana (Brother Foodie) "Strategy, when I reduce turnover, create a new menu to attract consumer buying interest by conducting quizzes on digital platforms, especially on social media, for example, giving bonus drinks to consumers when they can answer the quiz displayed."
- Sukri (Kam-sia Boba Pajaiang) "It must have been like adding a new menu and variety in my shop."
- Muhammad Akbar Mubarak (Wokulawesi) "Meanwhile, I made innovations by doing a 6-month trial training period, and now it is still at that stage."

Based on the interviews and discussions of each informant above, it can be concluded that each informant has made new ideas to advance their business, one of which is by adding new menus to their sales products. In addition, through digital platforms, they make sales strategies by utilizing social media, one of which is Instagram, by displaying advertising that provides promos and giveaways to consumers.

#### 5. Informant Classification

- Irdan Adi Putra (Robbocoffe) "Entering the Lower Middle Class with the classification of Livelihood Activities to meet daily needs and only make sales among students."
- Irsyad Adi Putra (Fatea) "If I enter the lower middle-class MSMEs because the income, I can say, is still minimal."
- Arfan (Black White Coffee) "This shop is in the upper middle class because our target market is among working people, and the menu we serve is also among the upper middle class."
- Iswanda (HAN) "If my business is in the lower middle class."
- Ilham Maulana (Brother Foodie) "My business is a middle to lower type of business because the price of my products displays friendly prices."
- Sukri (Kam-sia Boba Pajaiang) "I belong to the lower middle class because it is still a small shop."
- Muhammad Akbar Mubarak (Wokulawesi) "My market segment is more upper middle class because the preparations in my business include premium, and my focus is upper middle class."

Based on the results of interviews and discussions of each informant above, it can be concluded that the 7 MSME informants in Makassar City are included in the Livelihood Activities classification, are Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) which are used as job opportunities to make a living, which are more commonly called the informal sector.

### ***Identify SWOT Analysis of Strategic Factors Systematically Based on Internal Evaluation and External Evaluation***

#### ***Strength-Opportunities Strategy***

An MSME usually expects this condition because the advantages or strengths possessed by an MSME are used to take advantage of all current opportunities so that an MSME can have

a tremendous competitive advantage when compared to similar MSMEs. As for some of the average strengths of MSMEs in Makassar city in taking advantage of existing opportunities: a) Increase Innovation and Marketing Creativity, in this case, increasing innovation and marketing creativity is carried out by MSMEs in the city of Makassar so that later the business can meet consumer needs and customers do not switch to similar MSMEs, b) Expanding market share, based on the operational location of MSMEs in Makassar, there are several business competitors, even though the business scope is still below average. Thus, establishing a new business becomes essential but must be carefully planned to create a different business, c) Affordable Price, the application of price strategy is one of the strategies the owner or manager applies. The creation of competitive prices for MSMEs in Makassar City applies lower prices, usually attracting consumers to come so that they eventually have more customers. In addition, MSMEs in Makassar City also provide discounts to customers who buy or order in large quantities, and this is also one of the business strategies carried out by MSMEs in Makassar City to maintain consumer trust.

#### *Strategy Weaknesses-Opportunities*

This strategy is determined based on utilizing existing opportunities by minimizing existing weaknesses. a) Improve Cost Efficiency, capital owners use capital derived from their funds, which is very limited. For this reason, in this case, business owners must make cost efficiency so that business actors will continue to meet the needs in their business operations, b) Apply for Credit to the Bank for Additional Business Capital, the opportunity to get big profits in running a business is indeed significant, but this business also requires considerable capital. In this case, MSMEs also increase capital to several non-bank fund providers in the Makassar City area to help increase their business capital.

#### *Strengths-Threat Strategy*

This strategy uses the strengths that the company has to address existing threats. As for some of these strengths, they are as follows: a) Developing competitiveness, competitiveness is essential for the success of a business. Companies have competitiveness when their customers get the impression that their products or services are better than competitors' products or services. Paradise Sekampung printing creates this impression by providing various services according to various designs and sizes so that customers have satisfaction with the desired print, b) Improving Service, service to MSMEs is good, but this does not guarantee that customers do not move to competitors. Therefore, in this case, MSMEs must continue improving good service to satisfy customers. One thing that is done is maintaining customer loyalty and comfort while at the business location.

#### *Strategy Weaknesses-Threats*

This strategy seeks to minimize existing weaknesses and avoid threats. In this condition, MSMEs are required to immediately improve themselves because only in that way can an MSME survive in the face of increasingly competitive competition. a) Selection of Transportation Services Used, Using incorrect transportation services can cause losses to this business, such as the vacancy of goods or damage to the goods ordered due to unprofessional workings and existing transportation services. This selection can deliver processed goods quickly, but the cost factor is still considered and communicated with the supplier for the best transportation price, b) Pay attention to convenience, Environmental Comfort needs to be considered, which is

necessary to satisfy customers when shopping c) Employee Quality Selection, To get the best workforce is necessary to carry out a labor selection process because skilled labor is good, but looking for skilled labor coupled with other advantages such as appearance and friendliness is much better and d) Establish Good Relationships With Customers, The customer is the most critical asset of an MSME, both upper-middle-class and lower-middle-class MSMEs. Therefore, every MSME will provide the best service for all its customers. The increasingly fierce competition in the business world must be able to provide good service for its customers so that its customers remain loyal. For MSMEs not to lose customers, they must establish good relationships with customers by getting to know the names of customers, greeting them when they visit, and trying to make visitors feel comfortable.

**Table 1. SWOT Matrix in MSMEs in Makassar City**

<div>IFE</div> <div>EFE</div>	<b>Strength(s)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Strategic Location</li> <li>b. Competitive Price</li> <li>c. Friendly HR</li> <li>d. Product Quality</li> <li>e. Service Flexibility</li> </ul>	<b>Weakness (w)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Large capital in the business establishment.</li> <li>b. Work management is less than optimal.</li> <li>c. The condition of the village road is damaged.</li> <li>d. Maintenance of production equipment.</li> <li>e. Transportation</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunity (o)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Breadth of Market Share</li> <li>b. Competitors.</li> <li>c. Expanding the Place of Business.</li> <li>d. Products that are constantly evolving</li> <li>e. The pattern of behavior and needs of the community are growing</li> </ul>	<b>SO Strategy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Increase the number of product variations offered.</li> <li>b. We are expanding our market share.</li> <li>c. Make the price affordable</li> <li>d. Give special discounts on specific purchase amounts, especially for permanent subscriptions</li> </ul>	<b>WO Strategy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Improve cost efficiency.</li> <li>b. Apply for credit to the bank to increase business capital. Cooperate with production equipment technicians.</li> <li>c. Need to create a business focus by owning increasingly innovative product innovations</li> </ul>
<b>Threat (T)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Technology Development.</li> <li>b. New competitors emerge.</li> <li>c. High raw material costs.</li> <li>d. The existence of AEC.</li> <li>e. Mesh Conditions</li> </ul>	<b>ST Strategy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop competitiveness.</li> <li>b. Improve service to customers.</li> </ul>	<b>WT Strategy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Selection of transportation services used.</li> <li>b. Attention to comfort.</li> <li>c. They are looking for qualified employees to increase competition.</li> <li>d. Establish good relationships with customers.</li> </ul>

Source: Data Processing Results, 2022

## CONCLUSION

The study results concluded that MSMEs in Makassar City have carried out the four stages



of marketing strategy well and experienced an increase in consumer interest. Based on the SWOT analysis, it can be concluded that the opportunity to use social media for selling MSME products can have an effect if it is done optimally in terms of the length of time for promotion and the development of marketing strategies such as increasing product creativity so that the products offered are more varied. In terms of marketing, optimizing social media to improve marketing relationship networks and allocating funds to improve information technology to facilitate product marketing, for example, placing paid digital advertisements on social media, which can expand market share. Digital advertising is more effective and cheaper than traditional advertising, such as sales, brochures, or catalogs, which can cost more.

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