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The Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing on Tudung Saji MSME Products in Maholo Village

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Historis:</i> Submit 18 June 2024 Review 27 July 2024 Revision 28 August 2024 Accepted 21 September 2024 Publish 29 October 2024</p> <hr/> <p><i>Keywords:</i> MSMEs, social media, WhatsApp Business, digital marketing, Maholo Village</p> <hr/> <p><i>Corresponding Author:</i> Moh. Rezky Saputra Email: muhrizkysaputra69@gmail.com</p>	<p>Tudung Saji MSME is a micro business that was established in 2018 in Maholo Village, East Lore District, Poso Regency. This activity aims to improve the skills, understanding, and capacity of MSME actors in utilizing social media as a means of product promotion. The focus of the training is directed at increasing digital competence and online marketing, in response to changes in consumer behavior that are increasingly dependent on digital platforms.</p> <p>The method used is a descriptive qualitative approach, with direct implementation at MSME locations. The results of the activity show that MSME players are able to create and manage WhatsApp Business accounts as promotional media, as well as understand the basics of digital marketing strategies. This activity is expected to be the first step in developing the digital ecosystem of MSMEs in rural areas, while increasing the competitiveness of local products in a wider market.</p>

INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology in recent years has brought significant changes to the world of marketing. One of the main impacts is the emergence of social media as a new means of communication and information distribution. Social media allows consumers to share information in the form of text, images, video, and audio, both between individuals and with companies (Bagaskara & Anasrulloh, 2023). This phenomenon creates a great opportunity for businesses, including Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), to expand their market reach and introduce their products to consumers in a more interactive and efficient way. Therefore, the ability to utilize social media as part of a marketing strategy is a necessity that cannot be ignored by MSMEs in this digital era.

MSMEs that are connected online, active on social media, and have e-commerce capabilities will generally enjoy various benefits. These benefits can be in the form of increased income, opening new jobs, creating product innovations, and increasing business competitiveness.

Unfortunately, there are still many MSMEs that have not adopted information technology to the fullest, especially in the utilization of digital media. Some businesses do not even understand how big the benefits and role of social media in strengthening marketing and expanding customer networks. In fact, marketing through social media has been proven to increase productivity, business performance, and recognition of MSME products (Suariedewi et al., 2022).

A technology-based marketing approach is becoming an increasingly important strategy in driving the growth of MSMEs. Digital marketing is part of a modern promotional strategy that relies on information technology to introduce and sell products more effectively (Mulyono et al., 2021). The main advantage of digital marketing is its ability to reach consumers widely and across regions without geographical boundaries. In this context, social media is the main tool in the digital marketing strategy used by many businesses (Hasin et al., 2021). Social media platforms continue to evolve and provide a variety of innovative features designed to make it easier for users to market products and establish closer interactions with customers.

One platform that has great potential in digital marketing is WhatsApp Business. This application was developed by Facebook Inc. and is specifically designed to support small and medium business activities. Unlike the regular WhatsApp application, WhatsApp Business has additional features such as business profiles, automatic replies, and a product catalog feature that allows businesses to systematically display product images, names, descriptions, and prices (Jamil et al., 2021). This feature is very helpful for businesses in compiling digital product catalogs that are attractive and easily accessible to potential customers. In the context of MSMEs in villages, such as the Tudung Saji MSMEs in Maholo Village, WhatsApp Business can be a practical and inexpensive solution in increasing digital product promotion and sales.

Based on the results of observations during one month of the Tudung Saji MSME, it was found that the marketing process carried out was still very conventional. Product promotion is still limited to the village environment, and sales transactions are generally carried out directly through word of mouth. The lack of understanding about the use of social media as a marketing tool causes the product not to be widely recognized and demand does not increase. Realizing these problems, the author carried out community service activities in the form of training on creating WhatsApp Business accounts. The purpose of this activity is to increase the digital literacy of MSME players in marketing products online, so as to expand the market, increase competitiveness, and ultimately increase business income in a sustainable manner.

RESEARCH METHOD

The initial step in this activity began with an observation process conducted directly in Maholo Village. Observations were conducted using a field approach, where researchers and the team went directly to interview the community, especially MSME players, and observed their conditions and activities factually. Through these observations, it was found that Tudung Saji MSME business owners have difficulties in marketing their products more widely and still rely on conventional methods of word of mouth. The observation results showed an urgent need for practical and applicable assistance in the field of digital marketing. Based on these findings, the solution offered is assistance in using and optimizing the WhatsApp Business platform as a means of promoting and selling Tudung Saji products digitally.

This research uses a qualitative approach method, which aims to understand social phenomena in depth and describe them in a natural context. The qualitative method is considered

appropriate to the problem under study, because it allows researchers to explore in detail the experiences, understandings, and perceptions of MSME actors towards digital marketing strategies. According to Bagaskara & Anasrulloh (2023), a qualitative approach provides flexibility in exploring the meaning and dynamics that occur in the field, so as to develop more contextual solutions. The focus of this research is directed at efforts to increase the understanding and skills of MSME actors in marketing products through the internet and social media. With this approach, researchers can capture aspects that cannot be measured quantitatively but are very important in community empowerment.

The data collection technique was conducted through interviews with the main informants, namely the owners of Tudung Saji MSMEs who had participated in the training activities. Interviews were conducted directly and semi-structured to allow informants to express their opinions and experiences openly. In addition to interviews, direct observations were also made during the training process to assess participants' participation and understanding. Empowerment activities are carried out by directly visiting the homes of MSME actors in Maholo Village, so the approach taken is personal and contextual. This approach began after the initial observation process, with the hope of building a closer relationship between the implementation team and MSME partners and ensuring that the training provided really suits their needs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the context of running a business, there needs to be a strategy, especially in marketing, so that the business can last for a longer period of time. Many businesses fail due to a lack of innovation in marketing, as experienced by the Tudung Saji MSMEs in Maholo Village. The initial stage is to analyze the needs or problems of Tudung Saji MSMEs, where MSMEs have problems related to marketing business products so far, which are still conventional. To overcome this problem, the author and MBKM students initiated the creation of a WhatsApp Business account. Marketing through social media makes it easier to find consumers and provide interesting information for consumers so that consumers will be interested in buying the products offered. Marketing has various meanings. In everyday language, the market is described as a place where sellers (producers) and buyers (consumers) meet to conduct buying and selling transactions for goods and services (Bachri et al., 2023).

One of the efforts that can be made by the author and students of Merdeka Learning Campus, Faculty of Economics and Business, Tadulako University and Tudung Saji MSME business actors to implement and maximize marketing through *WhatsApp Bussines* social media with the aim of expanding market reach and increasing sales of Tudung Saji in Maholo Village. By providing assistance and training on how to do marketing and sales using the right *WhatsApp Bussines* social media.

Assistance and training to increase sales through *WhatsApp Bussines* social media has a good impact. With the training and assistance that has been carried out, the demand for Tudung Saji has increased. This can be seen through interviews with Tudung Saji MSME business actors who have received assistance and training on marketing using WhatsApp Bussines social media.

"At first I was not sure that Facebook social media could help increase my income in selling my goats. after I received training and was accompanied by student siblings, then I tried to market the products I had using WhatsApp Bussines social media and it turned out that I

got more requests than before" (Interview with Tudung Saji MSME business actors, February 8, 2024).

From the results of interviews with Tudung Saji MSME business actors in Maholo Village, it can be concluded that with the training and assistance on how to utilize WhatsApp Bussines social media as an effective way to market a product in order to increase income for Tudung Saji MSME business actors in Maholo Village, East Lore Sub-district, Poso Regency.

The results of the interview above can be concluded that marketing through *WhatsApp Bussines* social media is one of the effective ways to increase sales in order to get good results. Based on the results of the interviews conducted, good results were found where the role of WhatsApp Bussines social media influenced the sales level of Tudung Saji in Maholo Village. To facilitate and increase the effectiveness of Tudung Saji sales, business actors must have knowledge and skills in terms of utilizing *WhatsApp Bussines* social media, in addition to the training and mentoring that has been carried out, it also requires the seriousness of the Tudung Saji business actors in an effort to increase income through their business.

Effective training is carried out using tutorial and visualization methods, the material provided includes effective marketing, *online* promotion strategies, and how to create attractive social media content and generate consumer buying interest (Permatasari & Endriastuti 2020) . The purpose of this training is to help Tudung Saji MSME business actors in Maholo Village to make it easier to market and be able to increase sales of Tudung Saji, hone *skills*, and provide encouragement and motivation for business actors to be able to independently run a business, in accordance with what has been discussed above and Tudung Saji business actors can develop their business potential, know the entrepreneurial process and foster creative *skills*. The following is documentation of activities can be seen in pictures 1, 2, 3 and 4.



Figure 1. Observation Activities



WhatsApp Business Account Creation and Training Activities

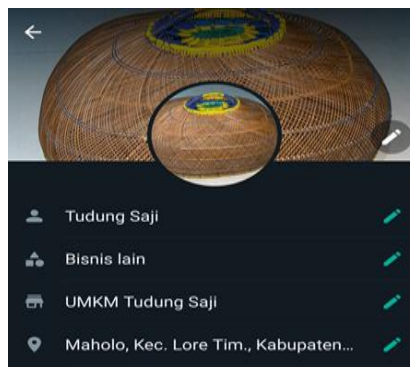


Figure 3. Output Results of WhatsApp Bussines Social Media Profiles

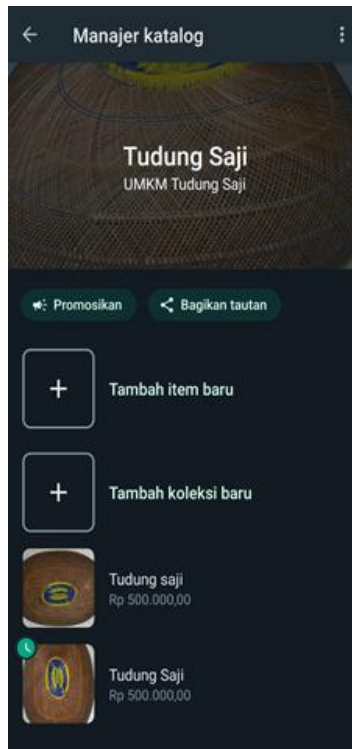


Figure 4: Output results of the MSME Catalog of Serving Hoods

CONCLUSION

In today's digital era, the utilization of social media as a marketing tool is a very important need for MSME players. MSMEs have a strategic role in supporting Indonesia's economic growth, but many still do not understand and adopt information technology, especially in terms of digital marketing. Ignorance of the benefits and role of digital media causes many MSMEs to experience limitations in reaching a wider market. Therefore, there is a need for assistance and applicable training so that MSMEs are able to keep up with technological developments and compete in a competitive market.

Through training activities to create and utilize WhatsApp Business accounts, Tudung Saji MSME players in Maholo Village have been given basic knowledge and skills in marketing products digitally. WhatsApp Business was chosen because it has simple yet effective features, such as product catalogs and business information, which can help expand marketing reach. This activity not only provides technical solutions, but also provides motivation and encouragement to business actors to be more independent, creative, and adaptive in managing their businesses. It is hoped that this training will be a good start for the development of the Tudung Saji business in a more modern direction, as well as an inspiring example for other MSMEs in rural areas to transform digitally and increase their competitiveness.

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