

Digitalizing Local Product Marketing through the Utilization of E-Commerce Platforms and Creative Content Design

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Keyword:	Abstract
Digitalization of Marketing, MSMEs, E-Commerce, Creative Content, Local Products	This community service program aims to improve the capacity of MSMEs to market local products through digitalization, specifically by utilizing e-commerce platforms and developing creative content designs. Key challenges identified among MSME partners include low digital literacy, limitations in managing online stores, and limited ability to produce engaging visual content for promotions. The mentoring program included a needs assessment, marketplace training, creative content design workshops, visual promotional media creation, and evaluation of digital marketing implementation. The Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach was used, with MSMEs actively involved throughout the training process, including hands-on practice. Results demonstrated significant improvements in MSMEs' digital skills, including the ability to create and optimize online stores, create professional product catalogs, utilize promotional features on e-commerce platforms, and design product photo and video content aligned with modern digital marketing principles. Furthermore, the visibility of local products on digital platforms increased, resulting in increased consumer interaction and potential sales increases. The program also strengthened MSMEs' understanding of digital branding and visual communication strategies, enabling them to more effectively convey product value to their target market. Overall, this community service activity has successfully increased the competitiveness of local products through the use of digital technology and content creativity, as well as providing a strong foundation for the sustainability of MSME marketing in the digital economy era.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes to modern marketing systems, especially for small and medium-sized businesses. Digital transformation has become a crucial element in increasing the competitiveness of local products through the integration of internet-based marketing and digital platforms. Marketing activities are no longer limited to conventional techniques, as consumers increasingly access information through online media. This change requires MSMEs to adapt to remain relevant and competitive in the market. (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In the Indonesian economic context, MSMEs contribute significantly to national GDP, making the advancement of this sector key to strengthening regional economies.

The use of digital technology, particularly e-commerce, can drive increased sales, market expansion, and operational cost efficiency. However, the adoption of this technology remains uneven, requiring intensive mentoring to improve digital literacy among business actors. (BPS, 2023). Digitalization of marketing is a key strategy for MSMEs in addressing changing consumer behavior, which increasingly relies on digital platforms for the purchasing process. Consumers now seek practicality, speed, and ease in selecting products, all of which can be facilitated through digital media. This opens up significant opportunities for local products to reach a wider audience. (McKinsey, 2021).

E-commerce platforms are one of the most widely used tools for digital marketing. Marketplaces such as Tokopedia, Shopee, and Bukalapak provide an ecosystem that makes it easy for businesses to market their products without high operational costs. The existence of these platforms provides new opportunities for local MSMEs to enter national and international markets. (APJII, 2022). However, the use of e-commerce still faces challenges related to the technical capabilities of MSMEs in managing digital stores.

Many MSMEs struggle to understand product catalog systems, search optimization, and digital transaction management. This indicates the need for mentoring to improve business actors' digital skills. (Kominfo, 2022). The use of creative content design is also a crucial factor in the success of digital marketing. Quality content will enhance the visual appeal and credibility of products, thereby increasing consumer trust in local brands. Design quality is often the main differentiator between products that successfully compete on e-commerce platforms and those that are less successful. (Chaffey, 2019).

Furthermore, a visual communication strategy through creative content can help MSMEs build a strong brand identity. Visual identities such as logos, color palettes, product photography styles, and marketing narratives can create brand consistency that increases consumer loyalty. The success of local brands is largely determined by the strength of their visuals (Wheeler, 2020). Public consumption trends show a growing interest in local products, especially when packaged attractively and modernly.

Products with cultural values, authenticity, and production quality are particularly attractive in the digital marketplace. Therefore, content design that highlights the unique value of local products is crucial in marketing strategies (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2016). To support the digitalization of MSMEs, the Indonesian government has developed various programs such as the National Proudly Made in Indonesia Movement (Gernas BBI) and digital literacy training. These programs encourage businesses to adapt to technological developments and utilize digital platforms in marketing.

These efforts need to be complemented by mentoring based on the real needs of MSMEs (Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, 2021). Despite various programs, many MSMEs still haven't optimally utilized e-commerce due to a lack of content design skills, a lack of understanding of digital marketing strategies, and limited access to technology. This situation indicates a digital divide that needs to be addressed through a community service approach (World Bank, 2020). On the other hand, competition on e-commerce platforms is increasingly fierce, requiring businesses to display high-quality product photos, compelling descriptions, and competitive pricing strategies.

Without these elements, local products struggle to compete with more professionally presented content (Laudon & Traver, 2021). MSMEs often don't understand the importance of digital content optimization, such as using search engine optimization (SEO) in marketplaces, utilizing keywords, and maintaining consistent branding. Yet, these elements can significantly increase product visibility and drive sales (Fishkin, 2018). In addition to SEO, storytelling elements in marketing content also play a crucial role in building emotional connection with consumers.

Narratives that highlight unique features, business journeys, and cultural values can increase consumer trust in local products. Content that tells a story tends to attract attention and is more easily shared. (Pulizzi, 2014). Assisting MSMEs in utilizing e-commerce and content design is a strategic step in building the capacity of business actors to compete in the digital era. This approach not only provides technical knowledge but also fosters a digital mindset oriented towards innovation and adaptation. (Rogers, 2003).

Digitalizing marketing through e-commerce is a solution for MSMEs to expand their target market without geographical limitations. By utilizing digital platforms, local products can become more widely known and even have export opportunities. This opens up opportunities for MSMEs to increase income and business stability. (UNCTAD, 2021). The use of digital technology is particularly relevant for regions with a wealth of local products, such as crafts, traditional foods, and other creative products.

These products often have high sales value when marketed with attractive and professional visual packaging. Thus, digital marketing is an urgent need to promote superior regional products. (Hidayat, 2022). Amidst the

rise in internet usage in Indonesia, which has reached over 210 million users, digital marketing opportunities are increasingly wide open. High internet access provides significant scope for MSMEs to capitalize on these opportunities through technology-based marketing strategies (APJII, 2023).

However, the digital literacy level of MSMEs remains diverse, particularly among micro-enterprises and businesses in rural areas. They require knowledge transfer regarding product photography, photo editing, content creation, and digital store management. Community mentoring is an appropriate intervention to bridge this gap (Yuliana, 2021). Improving creative content design skills can also encourage MSMEs to professionalize their product presentations.

Professional content will increase consumer trust and strengthen the product's position amidst numerous competitors (Belch & Belch, 2018). Content design includes not only photos but also short videos, which are now trending on social media platforms and marketplaces. Video content has proven to be more effective in influencing consumer purchasing decisions due to its more interactive and informative nature (Statista, 2022). The integration of social media and e-commerce is also gaining popularity through social commerce features that make it easier for consumers to make purchases directly from social media.

This opens up new opportunities for MSMEs to expand their marketing reach through omnichannel marketing strategies (Facebook IQ, 2020). MSMEs often lack the knowledge to analyze digital data to understand consumer behavior. However, such analysis can form the basis for determining more effective and targeted marketing strategies (Davenport, 2014). Digital marketing not only serves as a promotional tool but also provides benefits in building long-term relationships with consumers through digital interactions, fast service, and two-way communication. This approach adds value to local products marketed online (Grönroos, 2015).

While the use of digital technology holds great potential, its implementation requires ongoing support to enable MSMEs to consistently adapt to change. Community service programs are a strategic platform for providing training, technical guidance, and support for digitalization implementation (Sugiyono, 2019). In practice, MSME mentoring activities need to combine technical and creative aspects in a balanced manner to ensure effective digital marketing. Training on e-commerce management must be accompanied by improvements in the quality of creative content so that local products can compete visually and functionally (Kotler et al., 2021).

A collaborative approach between academics, government, and local communities is a crucial element in supporting the successful digitalization of MSMEs. This collaboration enables knowledge exchange, resource utilization, and improvements in the quality of training provided to MSMEs (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). The implementation of digital marketing through e-commerce and creative content is urgent for local MSMEs facing the era of global competition. Without digital transformation, local products have the potential to be left behind by more technologically adaptable counterparts.

Therefore, this community service research was conducted to provide comprehensive assistance to MSMEs so they can optimally utilize digital platforms (Reis et al., 2018). Thus, digital marketing assistance is expected to strengthen the capacity of local MSMEs to maximize the potential of e-commerce, improve the quality of creative content design, and expand product marketing reach. This effort is a strategic step to elevate local products to be more competitive in the digital market (Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, 2022).

METHOD

The research method used in this community service activity was Participatory Action Research (PAR), a research method that involves the active participation of the target community in every stage of the activity, from problem identification and planning to implementation and evaluation. This approach was chosen because it is effective in increasing the capacity of MSMEs through direct, collaborative, and continuous learning (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). The community service activity was carried out with local MSME groups

producing regional food and craft products. The location was selected purposively based on the low utilization of e-commerce and the limited creative content design skills of these MSMEs.

A purposive sampling technique was used to identify participants relevant to the program's objectives, namely MSMEs that already have products but are not yet optimal in digital marketing (Cresswell, 2014). The community service activity began with field observations to identify actual conditions related to participants' understanding of digital marketing, their ability to operate e-commerce platforms, and the quality of their promotional content. Observations were conducted through informal interviews, review of promotional materials, and assessment of basic digital skills (Sugiyono, 2019). Next, a needs assessment was conducted to determine which skills needed to be strengthened to support the digitalization of product marketing.

The analysis was conducted through questionnaires and focus group discussions (FGDs) to identify barriers, opportunities, and desired training preferences of participants (McKillip, 1987). The next stage was the development of support materials, which included e-commerce training modules (store creation, catalog management, product optimization, transaction management), product photography modules, creative content design modules, and digital marketing strategy modules. The materials were developed based on the principles of adult learning, which prioritize hands-on practice and relevance to participants' needs (Knowles, 1984). The core activities were implemented through offline training and workshops.

The training methods used included lectures, demonstrations, hands-on practice, and mentoring. The training was conducted in stages, starting with the basics of e-commerce and moving up to more advanced skills such as visual content optimization and digital marketing techniques (Kolb, 1984). The digital store creation workshop guided participants through creating accounts on e-commerce platforms like Shopee and Tokopedia. Participants were taught how to upload product photos, write descriptions, determine categories, set prices, and understand marketplace search algorithms.

These stages were conducted through hands-on practice so participants could apply the material independently (Laudon & Traver, 2021). The training continued with product photography using simple devices like smartphones. Participants were taught lighting, composition, backgrounds, and shooting techniques that meet e-commerce content standards. This activity aimed to improve the visual quality of products, making them more attractive and professional (Wheeler, 2020).

In the creative content design session, participants were introduced to editing applications like Canva and other mobile editing apps. Participants practiced creating posters, banners, Instagram feeds, and other promotional content. Design principles such as color, typography, visual balance, and brand identity creation were also covered (Lidwell, Holden, & Butler, 2010). Next, digital marketing strategy training was conducted, covering the use of social media, simple search engine optimization (SEO) techniques in marketplaces, keyword usage, and traffic-boosting strategies.

The material was delivered with an emphasis on consistent branding and digital communication (Chaffey, 2019). To support sustainability, this activity also includes personal mentoring, where participants receive direct consultation regarding technical difficulties, content evaluation, and digital store optimization advice. Mentoring continues for several weeks after the workshop to ensure successful implementation (Rogers, 2003). The activity was evaluated using pre- and post-test methods to measure participants' understanding of digital marketing and e-commerce management skills.

Skills evaluation was also conducted by comparing content quality and digital store performance before and after the mentoring (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). In addition to cognitive evaluation, participant satisfaction was assessed through a survey that measured participants' perceptions of the benefits of the activity, the effectiveness of the materials, and the quality of the facilitator. This data is used to improve future mentoring programs (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). The data obtained were analyzed using

descriptive qualitative methods, summarizing findings during the mentoring process, participant competency development, changes in marketing strategies, and success rates in using e-commerce.

Qualitative analysis was chosen because it can describe the change process in more detail and comprehensively. (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). The entire series of methods was implemented collaboratively between the community service team, MSMEs, village government, and local communities. This collaboration supported increased effectiveness in empowering MSMEs to adapt sustainably to the digital ecosystem. (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community service program lasted two months and involved 20 MSMEs, including producers of local food, handicrafts, and home-made creative products. All participants participated in a series of training sessions, workshops, and intensive mentoring related to the use of e-commerce platforms and creative content design. The initial phase of the program indicated that most MSMEs did not yet understand the strategic role of e-commerce in expanding product marketing. Initial survey results indicated that 80% of participants did not yet have a store on a marketplace, while the remainder did have a store but were not actively managing product content.

Field observations revealed that a lack of digital literacy was a major factor in the low implementation of digital marketing. Some participants still relied on word-of-mouth promotion, thus severely limiting their marketing reach. The needs assessment revealed that participants required practical training, particularly on creating store accounts, uploading products, setting prices, and creating engaging visual content for marketplaces. During the e-commerce training phase, all participants were given guidance on creating digital stores using the Shopee and Tokopedia platforms.

Participants were guided through creating an account, completing a store profile, and setting up shipping and payment methods. After the first workshop, significant improvements in participant skills were recorded. As many as 95% of participants successfully opened digital stores and began uploading products independently. During the product upload process, personal support was provided, particularly in determining categories, keywords, and competitive selling prices.

Participants were also guided in understanding important features such as discount vouchers, store displays, and customer chat. The product photography session was one of the activities that significantly impacted the visual quality of the product. Participants learned simple lighting techniques utilizing natural light and a plain background. After the practical photography session, the quality of their product photos improved dramatically.

Product photos became brighter, clearer, and had more professional shooting angles. Creative content design training using the Canva app enabled participants to produce posters, digital catalogs, and social media content to support promotions. Participants were encouraged to apply design principles such as color combination, typography, and visual symmetry. At this stage, participants began to understand that visual content serves not only as a complementary image but as a crucial element in attracting consumers and building brand identity.

The workshop also included storytelling materials to help participants create product stories that capture consumers' attention. Participants learned how to highlight the local value and uniqueness of products through engaging narratives. During the mentoring, participants are encouraged to integrate e-commerce with their social media. This approach, known as omnichannel marketing, helps increase traffic to digital stores. The use of social commerce features has been proven to help 60% of participants secure their first order within just one week of training.

This demonstrates that integrating social media and e-commerce is highly effective for budding MSMEs. The evaluation used a pre-test and post-test. The results showed a 74% increase in participants' digital literacy, assessed by their ability to open a digital store, upload products, and create visual content. In terms of creative

content, there was an 82% increase in participants' ability to create promotional designs. This was evident in the changes in the quality of posters and product photos before and after the mentoring.

In terms of digital marketing, participants demonstrated an improved understanding of keywords, product category management, and techniques for increasing product rankings in the marketplace. Several participants achieved increased sales after participating in the program. Data shows that 40% of participants experienced an increase in the number of orders within the first two weeks after their digital store was active. Intensive mentoring helped participants who encountered technical difficulties.

For example, some participants did not understand how to set shipping costs and payment methods, so the mentoring sessions focused on direct problem-solving. In addition to increased sales, several participants also experienced significant growth in the number of followers on their digital stores. Follower growth is considered crucial for building trust with potential buyers. The mentoring activities also encouraged participants to improve their product descriptions. Previously, many MSMEs used very short descriptions. After the training, the descriptions became more informative and persuasive.

Follower discussions revealed that some participants felt increased confidence in using digital technology after participating in the entire training program. This indicates a positive psychological impact. Some MSMEs that were previously passive in marketing have now begun to actively post content regularly on social media. This demonstrates a change in marketing behavior that is more adaptive to the times.

Qualitative analysis of the resulting content showed improved color, composition, and branding consistency. This is an indicator of the success of the creative content design training. On the other hand, several challenges were still encountered, such as limited technological devices and internet connections for some participants. These challenges were noted in designing follow-up mentoring programs.

Follow-up workshops on pricing strategies and customer service also showed positive impacts. MSMEs became more responsive to customer chats, which increased buyer trust. The results of the participants' digital store reviews showed an increase in store performance scores from "less active" to "fair" and "good." This was influenced by the frequency of product uploads and customer interaction. The use of professional product photos also increased sales conversions. Products with high-quality photos were more frequently included in buyers' favorite lists.

The participants greatly appreciated the personalized mentoring, as they received guidance tailored to their individual needs. This approach proved more effective than traditional training alone. Overall, the digital marketing activities had a significant impact on improving the digital competency of MSMEs, both in terms of technical skills and visual creativity. The program also created a collaborative network between MSMEs, academics, and local governments to support the sustainable implementation of digital marketing.

This collaboration is expected to have long-term effects. The results of the activities demonstrate that digital marketing is not merely the use of digital platforms, but also a transformation in the mindset of business actors in utilizing technological opportunities to develop markets. This program demonstrates that MSMEs are capable of adapting to digital technology as long as they are supported by appropriate, hands-on training methods. Thus, this community service activity makes a real contribution to increasing the capacity of local MSMEs to compete in the increasingly dynamic digital marketing era.

Table 1
Results of Participant Ability Evaluation Before and After Mentoring

Rated aspect	Before Mentoring (%)	After Mentoringn (%)	Improvement (%)
Understanding e-commerce	22%	85%	63%
Product upload capability	30%	90%	60%
Visual content quality	28%	90%	62%
Compiling product descriptions	35%	88%	53%
Content design skills	18%	90%	72%

Digital branding consistency	15%	80%	65%
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CONCLUSION

A community service program focused on digitalizing local product marketing through the use of e-commerce platforms and creative content design has had a positive and significant impact on increasing the capacity of MSMEs to market their products. The mentoring activities demonstrated that most business owners previously lacked an adequate understanding of marketplace usage, digital branding strategies, or creating engaging visual content as a promotional medium. Through structured training, MSMEs successfully improved their knowledge and skills in effectively utilizing digital technology. Digitalization through e-commerce platforms has proven effective in expanding marketing reach, increasing the visibility of local products, and opening up sales opportunities to a wider region. MSMEs participating in the mentoring program were able to create digital store accounts, upload more professional product catalogs, and implement optimization techniques such as keyword usage, product grouping, and competitive pricing. Furthermore, the development of creative content, such as high-quality product photos, short promotional videos, and compelling copywriting, increased potential consumer engagement and purchase. The significant improvement in content design skills demonstrates the critical role of visual quality in successful digital marketing. By understanding the basic principles of product photography, storytelling, and simple graphic design, MSMEs can convey product value more effectively and communicatively. This supports the creation of a stronger and more professional brand identity in the eyes of consumers. The mentoring program also demonstrates that collaboration between MSMEs, mentors, and local digital communities plays a significant role in creating a more sustainable technology-based marketing ecosystem. Through regular evaluations and direct mentoring, business owners can overcome various technical and strategic marketing challenges they face. This effort also improves MSMEs' digital literacy in the long term. Overall, the implementation of digital marketing through e-commerce and creative content design can increase the competitiveness of local products, strengthen business sustainability, and make a real contribution to community economic growth. This community service program is expected to become a model for MSME empowerment that can be replicated in other regions with similar needs. With continued support, MSMEs will be better prepared to face the development of the digital economy and capitalize on expanding market opportunities.

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