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Synthesis Analysis of the Utilization of E-Commerce for the Development of Micro MSMEs

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of digital marketing strategies by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Kendari City and its impact on increasing sales in the digital economy era. The research method used is a descriptive quantitative approach involving 40 MSMEs from various business sectors, namely culinary, fashion, handicrafts, and services. Data was collected through questionnaires, interviews, and field observations. The results of the study show that most of Kendari MSMEs have utilized social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok as the main platforms for digital marketing, followed by the use of marketplaces. Digital marketing strategies have proven to be effective in increasing turnover, where the majority of MSMEs have experienced an increase in sales by 21–30%. The obstacles faced by MSMEs include limited digital literacy, a lack of trained human resources, fairly high advertising costs, and difficulties in creating interesting content. This finding confirms that digital marketing has an important role in expanding the market, increasing brand awareness, and strengthening the competitiveness of Kendari MSMEs in the digital economy era.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, MSMEs, Sales, Digital Economy.

ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penerapan strategi digital marketing oleh Usaha Mikro, Kecil, dan Menengah (UMKM) di Kota Kendari serta dampaknya terhadap peningkatan penjualan di era ekonomi digital. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kuantitatif deskriptif dengan melibatkan 40 UMKM dari berbagai sektor usaha, yaitu kuliner, fashion, kerajinan, dan jasa. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner, wawancara, serta observasi lapangan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar UMKM Kendari telah memanfaatkan media sosial seperti Instagram, Facebook, dan TikTok sebagai platform utama pemasaran digital, diikuti oleh pemanfaatan marketplace. Strategi digital marketing terbukti efektif meningkatkan omzet, di mana mayoritas UMKM mengalami peningkatan penjualan sebesar 21–30%. Kendala yang dihadapi UMKM antara lain keterbatasan literasi digital, kurangnya sumber daya manusia terlatih, biaya iklan yang cukup tinggi, serta kesulitan membuat konten yang menarik. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa digital marketing memiliki peran penting dalam memperluas pasar, meningkatkan brand awareness, dan memperkuat daya saing UMKM Kendari di era ekonomi digital.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, UMKM, Penjualan, Ekonomi Digital.

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INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a strategic role in supporting Indonesia's national economy. They contribute significantly to economic growth, job creation, and income distribution (C.L.S. et al., 2024; Nurjannah & Muslihat, 2024). According to Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2008, MSMEs are classified based on asset ownership and annual turnover into micro, small, and medium categories. In practice, MSMEs dominate Indonesia's economic structure, contributing more than 60% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorbing approximately 97% of the national workforce (BPS, 2024). These figures demonstrate that MSMEs are a fundamental pillar of economic resilience and social welfare.

Traditionally, MSMEs have relied on direct selling and local markets, which limit their market reach and growth potential. However, rapid advancements in information and communication technology (ICT), particularly the internet, have transformed business practices and introduced new opportunities for expansion. E-commerce, defined as the process of buying and selling goods or services through digital networks, has reshaped the global business landscape by enabling transactions beyond geographical and temporal boundaries (Koeswandi & Primaskara, 2020). The growth of internet penetration in Indonesia further strengthens this transformation. Data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) indicates that in 2023, internet users reached 221,563,479 people out of a total population of 278,696,200, representing approximately 79% of the population. This increasing reliance on digital technology has significantly influenced consumer behavior and business models across sectors.

The digitalization of MSMEs has shown considerable progress in recent years. The Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs reported that by February 2022, around 17.25 million MSMEs had entered the digital ecosystem, with 16.4 million connected to digital platforms (CNN Indonesia, 2021). Additionally, findings from the Katadata Insight Center (2022) reveal that MSMEs in the food and beverage sector demonstrate the highest level of digital adoption compared to other sectors (Natania, 2024). Despite these achievements, many micro-enterprises still face substantial barriers, including limited digital literacy, lack of understanding of online marketing strategies, insufficient technological skills, and weak digital management systems (Ika & Kusumawati, 2025). These structural challenges hinder the optimal utilization of e-commerce platforms for sustainable growth.

E-commerce has become an integral component of digital transformation and plays a crucial role in enhancing MSME competitiveness. It provides opportunities to expand market reach, improve operational efficiency, strengthen brand awareness, and offer greater convenience to consumers (Sugiharto, 2024; Farhan, 2025). The rapid growth of online transactions in Indonesia, especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, illustrates the increasing dependence on digital platforms. Bank Indonesia reported that the total value of e-commerce transactions exceeded IDR 400 trillion in 2022, largely driven by retail and daily necessity sectors. Online transactions are characterized by ease of access, flexible purchasing time, diverse product availability, and digital payment systems such as mobile banking and electronic wallets.

However, the expansion of e-commerce also presents challenges, including data security risks, consumer protection issues, and trust concerns toward digital platforms (Ardhianty, 2025). Previous studies indicate that perceived ease of use, trust, and information quality significantly influence consumer intention to engage in online transactions (Utami, 2020). The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) are commonly used to explain behavioral intention in adopting digital systems (Tumarta Arif & Listyorini, 2020). These frameworks emphasize that user perceptions and attitudes toward technology strongly affect adoption behavior.

In this context, the digital transformation of MSMEs is not merely a shift in marketing channels but represents a broader structural change in the digital economy. MSMEs must adapt by improving digital capabilities, managerial competencies, and technological literacy. At the same time, support from government policies, digital platforms, and capacity-building programs is essential to create a sustainable and inclusive digital ecosystem. Therefore, examining the development of MSMEs through e-commerce adoption is highly relevant to understanding both the opportunities and challenges faced in the digital era and to formulate comprehensive strategies for strengthening MSME competitiveness.

METHODS

This study uses a synthesis analysis method with a qualitative approach, namely, collecting and integrating various relevant study results to gain an in-depth understanding of the use of e-commerce in the development of micro MSMEs. This approach aims to compile thematic synthesis from various

academic sources to produce conceptual and practical conclusions that can be applied by MSME actors, policy makers, and other stakeholders.

The data sources used in this study are secondary, including national and international journal articles published in the last 10 years, reports from government institutions such as BPS and the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, the results of academic studies related to MSMEs and e-commerce, and reports from international organizations such as the World Bank. The criteria for inclusion of literature include: (1) topics that discuss micro MSMEs and digitalization, (2) direct relevance to e-commerce practices or digital platforms, and (3) methodologies and research results that can be systematically reviewed.

Data collection techniques are carried out through documentation studies and systematic literature review. The literature search uses keywords such as *micro MSMEs*, *e-commerce*, *digital transformation*, *digital platforms*, and *small business development*. The databases used include Google Scholar, DOAJ, Garuda Ristek-BRIN, and university journal portals.

Data analysis was carried out with a qualitative synthesis analysis approach through several stages, namely: (1) identification of relevant literature according to the criteria; (2) categorization of findings based on themes, such as the benefits of e-commerce, obstacles faced by micro MSMEs, and factors for the success of digitalization; (3) thematic synthesis to integrate various findings to find patterns, relationships, and implications; and (4) concluding and preparing recommendations for policies and practices for MSME development through e-commerce.

To maintain the validity and reliability of the research, sources were triangulated by comparing various credible references and informal peer review of the initial findings to academic colleagues or experts in the field of digital MSMEs. In addition, all data used comes from sources that have gone through an editorial or peer-review process to ensure the quality and accuracy of information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the thematic synthesis of selected literature, several key findings emerge regarding the utilization of e-commerce in the development of micro MSMEs.

1. Expanded Market Reach Through E-Commerce Platforms

The synthesis of previous studies (Nazar & Salsabila, 2024; Ardiansyah, 2021) indicates that e-commerce platforms such as Tokopedia, Shopee, and Bukalapak significantly enhance the ability of micro MSMEs to expand their market reach beyond their immediate geographical locations. Traditionally, micro enterprises depended heavily on local consumers and offline transactions, which limited their growth due to geographical constraints and high distribution costs. The emergence of digital marketplaces has transformed this limitation into an opportunity by providing access to a broader and more diverse consumer base.

Through e-commerce platforms, micro MSMEs can showcase their products to customers across different regions without the need to establish physical branches. The relatively low cost of digital promotion—through features such as sponsored ads, product recommendations, and search optimization allows micro businesses to compete with larger enterprises in a more level playing field. In addition, integrated logistics systems and partnerships with shipping providers simplify the distribution process, enabling efficient nationwide delivery. This reduces operational barriers that previously restricted small-scale businesses from expanding outside their local markets.

Furthermore, several platforms offer cross-border trade features that allow selected MSMEs to participate in international markets. This creates new opportunities for export-oriented growth, especially for locally distinctive products such as handicrafts, fashion items, and processed food. By leveraging these digital ecosystems, micro enterprises can increase visibility, strengthen brand recognition, and gradually build customer loyalty beyond their original communities.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that digitalization through e-commerce does not merely broaden market access but also restructures the competitive landscape for micro MSMEs. For enterprises constrained by limited physical infrastructure and capital, e-commerce serves as a strategic tool to scale operations, enhance competitiveness, and increase market share in both domestic and global contexts.

2. Improved Operational Efficiency and Access to Digital Payments

Several studies (Rezkia, 2024; Ain et al., 2024) emphasize that the adoption of e-commerce significantly improves the operational efficiency of micro MSMEs. Digital platforms provide automated transaction systems that record sales in real time, generate financial summaries, and store transaction histories systematically. This automation reduces the risk of manual recording errors and

enables business owners to monitor performance more accurately. In addition, integrated shipment tracking systems allow both sellers and customers to monitor delivery status, increasing transparency and customer satisfaction.

Another important aspect of operational efficiency is inventory management. Many e-commerce platforms offer built-in features that automatically update stock levels after each transaction. This helps MSME actors manage product availability more effectively and avoid overstocking or stockouts. As a result, business processes become more structured and data-driven, supporting better decision-making in pricing, promotions, and production planning.

The integration of digital payment systems also plays a crucial role in enhancing efficiency. Payment methods such as e-wallets (OVO, Dana, GoPay), virtual accounts, and mobile banking facilitate faster and more secure transactions. Digital payments reduce dependence on cash, minimize the risk of fraud or loss, and simplify financial reconciliation processes. For consumers, the availability of diverse payment options increases convenience and trust, which can positively influence purchasing decisions.

However, despite these advantages, research by Susilowati et al. (2022) indicates that not all micro MSME actors are able to utilize these digital systems optimally. Limited digital literacy, lack of familiarity with financial technology applications, and cybersecurity concerns often hinder effective adoption. This finding suggests that the mere availability of technology does not automatically translate into improved performance. Without adequate training, guidance, and digital skills development, micro enterprises may struggle to maximize the benefits of e-commerce and digital payment integration.

Overall, while e-commerce offers substantial improvements in operational efficiency and financial management, its effectiveness depends largely on the readiness and capability of MSME actors to adapt to digital systems.

3. Digital Literacy Challenges and Inconsistent Utilization

The synthesis of literature (Anggi Pranata et al., 2024; Anabuni et al., 2025) indicates that digital literacy remains a significant barrier to the effective adoption of e-commerce among micro MSMEs. Although many micro enterprises now have access to digital platforms, the ability to use these tools efficiently is still limited. Digital literacy in this context does not only refer to the ability to operate devices, but also includes understanding how to manage online stores, analyze consumer behavior, and apply digital marketing strategies. This

gap in knowledge often results in suboptimal use of e-commerce features and missed opportunities for business growth.

One of the main challenges is the lack of skills in managing online store operations, such as inventory tracking, product listing optimization, customer service, and content creation. Many MSME owners are unfamiliar with the technical aspects of digital marketing, including how to create attractive product descriptions, optimize keywords, and utilize promotional tools offered by platforms. Consequently, their online stores may appear less competitive compared to those run by more digitally literate sellers. In addition, the inability to update product information consistently can lead to inaccurate stock availability, delayed responses to customer inquiries, and a decline in consumer trust.

Another factor contributing to inconsistent utilization is limited human resources. Micro MSMEs often operate with minimal staff, and owners must manage both offline and online activities simultaneously. This dual responsibility creates time constraints and operational fatigue, making it difficult to maintain regular updates and effective management of digital platforms. As a result, e-commerce activities may only be conducted sporadically, which undermines the potential benefits of digital presence.

These findings suggest that although access to technology has expanded, capacity and readiness remain critical barriers to sustainable adoption. Sustainable digitalization requires not only infrastructure and access but also continuous capacity-building programs that focus on practical skills and business application. Without adequate training and support, micro MSMEs may struggle to transform digital access into meaningful business performance improvements. Therefore, enhancing digital literacy and providing long-term mentoring are essential to ensure that micro MSMEs can fully leverage e-commerce for sustainable growth.

4. The Role of External Support from Government and Platforms

External support is a key determinant in accelerating the digitalization of micro MSMEs. The adoption of e-commerce is not only a matter of technological availability but also depends on the presence of enabling environments, such as supportive policies, capacity-building programs, and accessible digital infrastructure. In this context, government institutions and platform providers play a strategic role in facilitating MSME digital transformation.

Government agencies, especially the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, have implemented various programs aimed at strengthening the digital capabilities of MSME actors. These initiatives include training workshops, mentoring, and assistance in developing online business models. Such programs are designed to improve digital literacy, encourage the adoption of online marketing strategies, and enhance the overall competitiveness of MSMEs in the digital economy. Additionally, government support often includes access to funding schemes and subsidies that reduce the cost burden of transitioning to digital platforms.

Platform providers such as Tokopedia and Shopee also contribute significantly to MSME digitalization through ecosystem-based support. They offer practical training modules, promotional tools, and logistical assistance that help sellers manage online stores more effectively. For example, shipping subsidy schemes and streamlined logistics partnerships reduce operational barriers and make it easier for micro enterprises to participate in national-level markets. This ecosystem approach not only simplifies the process of selling online but also provides incentives for MSMEs to adopt e-commerce more rapidly.

Evidence from Amali et al. (2025) indicates that MSME actors who participate in digital capacity-building programs demonstrate higher readiness and better adaptability in managing online businesses compared to those who do not. This suggests that external support not only increases knowledge but also builds confidence and motivation to sustain digital transformation. However, despite these positive impacts, the distribution of support remains uneven. Many micro enterprises, especially those in disadvantaged, frontier, and outermost (3T) regions, still face difficulties accessing training programs and digital infrastructure. This uneven distribution highlights the need for more targeted and inclusive support strategies.

In summary, external support from the government and digital platforms is essential for enabling MSMEs to overcome barriers in adopting e-commerce. However, to achieve equitable digital transformation, support programs must be more systematic, consistent, and accessible across regions. Strengthening collaboration between stakeholders and expanding outreach to remote areas will be crucial in ensuring that all micro MSMEs can benefit from the opportunities offered by e-commerce.

Discussion

The findings indicate that e-commerce utilization has substantial potential to foster the growth and sustainability of micro MSMEs. E-commerce functions not only as a sales channel but also as an integrated business ecosystem that supports marketing, payment systems, logistics management, and customer communication. Through digital platforms, micro enterprises gain greater market access and operational efficiency, which contribute to improved competitiveness.

However, the effectiveness of e-commerce adoption is highly dependent on digital literacy, managerial consistency, and structured external support. These findings align with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which posits that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use influence attitudes toward technology adoption (Tumarta Arif & Listyorini, 2020). In the context of micro MSMEs, although the benefits of e-commerce are widely recognized, perceptions of complexity and limited digital competence hinder optimal adoption.

Therefore, strengthening digital transformation among micro MSMEs requires comprehensive and sustainable strategies. These include enhancing practical digital training programs, developing more user-friendly platform interfaces, providing continuous mentoring, and fostering collaboration among government agencies, digital platforms, financial institutions, and local communities. Without systematic support and capacity building, the potential of e-commerce to empower micro MSMEs may not be fully realized.

CONCLUSION

The use of e-commerce platforms has made a positive contribution to MSME players, especially in expanding market reach, improving operational efficiency, and providing access to digital payment systems. However, its implementation still faces various challenges, especially in terms of digital literacy, consistency in online store management, and limited external support that is not consistent across regions. Although support from the government and digital platforms has been proven to help increase the readiness of MSMEs to adapt to technology, the implementation is still not systematic, structured, and comprehensive. Therefore, it is necessary to improve digital literacy programs that are not only theoretical, but also applicable and contextual in accordance with the needs of micro MSME actors. In addition to training, a sustainable

business assistance system is important so that business actors are able to implement and maintain the use of e-commerce consistently.

On the other hand, digital platforms need to simplify interfaces and features to be more user-friendly to users with low digital literacy levels and provide guidance in local languages. In terms of policy, the government needs to develop a national roadmap for the digitalization of MSMEs that is structured and inclusive, especially for business actors in the 3T area, accompanied by the provision of digital infrastructure and adequate incentives. Multi-stakeholder collaboration between governments, platform providers, educational institutions, and local communities also needs to be strengthened to create a sustainable digital ecosystem. In addition, periodic evaluation and monitoring of digital training programs need to be carried out to ensure their effectiveness and impact on improving the performance of MSME businesses.

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