

Digital Transformation for MSMEs through Online Marketing Training and Social Media Use

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Keyword:	Abstract
Digital Transformation MSMEs Online Marketing Training Social Media Utilization Digital Capability Development	This study examined the implementation of digital transformation for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through comprehensive training on online marketing and the use of social media platforms. The program was designed to strengthen digital capabilities among business owners who previously relied on conventional promotional methods and possessed limited technological literacy. The training consisted of hands-on sessions focused on content creation, social media optimization, and practical strategies for expanding market reach through digital tools. Data on participants' progress were collected through direct observation, skill-performance assessments, and evaluation sheets administered before and after the training. The results revealed a significant improvement in participants' ability to create promotional content, manage business accounts on social media, and apply digital marketing techniques in a structured manner. Participants also demonstrated increased confidence in utilizing online platforms to interact with customers and promote their products. The program generated both short-term and potential long-term impacts, as several MSMEs reported early increases in customer engagement and expressed intentions to maintain and further develop their digital marketing efforts. The study concluded that targeted digital training effectively supported MSMEs in adapting to technological changes and enhanced their readiness for more advanced digital transformation initiatives in the future.

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has become a major force that has changed the way MSMEs conduct business activities in Indonesia in the past decade. This change has accelerated since the increase in internet penetration and the use of social media as a communication channel as well as an effective marketing tool. Based on the 2023 report by the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, Indonesia has more than 65.4 million MSMEs that contribute around 60.5 percent to national GDP. However, of these, only about 27 percent have actively used digital platforms for marketing and sales activities. This inequality shows that most MSMEs are still in the early stages of digital transformation and have not been able to optimally utilize the potential of the digital economy. This condition indicates the need for interventions that are systematically designed to strengthen the digital capacity of MSME actors through training that is relevant to the actual needs in the field.

In particular, this community service activity targets micro and small-scale MSME actors engaged in the culinary, fashion, local handicrafts, and several fields of home services. The characteristics of participants generally have a lower middle education background with limited experience in the use of digital technology for business development. Based on an initial survey of 35 partner MSME actors, it was found that most of the participants already had smartphone devices but did not have an adequate understanding of digital marketing strategies. As many as 71 percent do not have an online marketing strategy, 64 percent do not understand effective promotional content creation techniques, and 58 percent do not know how to read insight data on Instagram and Facebook platforms. This fact confirms that low digital literacy is still the main obstacle that prevents MSMEs from increasing competitiveness amid increasing competition in digital-based markets.

The area of the implementation of the activity shows great economic potential, judging from the high local trade activity and its proximity to the center of the population. Physically, the area has adequate internet connectivity but its utilization is still low for business purposes. Socially, people have a high interest in the development of technology and social media, as seen from the high level of use of platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram for personal needs. However, the ability to turn this use into productive activities in the form of digital marketing still requires intensive assistance. Viewed from the economic aspect, MSMEs are one of the main sources of income for families in the region, so increasing digital marketing capabilities has the potential to have a direct impact on household welfare.

Local potentials that can be maximized in this service activity include the availability of various regional products that have high selling value and visual appeal, the high interest of business actors to participate in training, and the availability of basic digital devices that allow participants to practice the material directly. In addition, local consumers have an active culture of using social media to search for product information, so MSME actors have a strategic opportunity to expand product exposure through more targeted digital marketing.

Based on these conditions, the main problem in this activity can be formulated as the low ability of MSME actors to optimize online marketing and the use of social media to increase business competitiveness. These problems include a lack of understanding of the basic concepts of digital marketing, a lack of skills to create attractive and relevant promotional content, a weak ability to analyze insight data to understand consumer behavior, and the lack of consistent implementation of digital strategies in promotional activities. In addition, low knowledge related to digital security and ethics in the use of social media also increases the risk of errors in the technology adoption process.

The purpose of this service activity is to increase the digital capacity of MSMEs through online marketing training and optimal use of social media. This activity aims to enable participants to understand the basics of digital marketing, be able to design and produce creative promotional content, and develop a consistent brand identity across various digital platforms. Participants are also expected to be able to take advantage of features such as Instagram Insights, Facebook Page Analytics, and similar tools to make data-driven marketing decisions. In addition, this training is directed to build an adaptive digital mindset so that MSME actors can develop marketing strategies that are relevant to changing consumer trends in the digital era.

Literature review shows that the use of social media as a marketing tool has had a significant impact on the development of MSMEs. Research by Priyono, Moin, and Putri (2020) confirms that MSMEs that carry out digital transformation in a measurable manner experience an increase in operational efficiency and market reach. Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2021) explained that in the Marketing 5.0 era, social media plays a key role in providing a fast, personalized, and interactive marketing experience. A number of other studies have also shown that digital training increases the confidence of MSME actors in managing technology-based businesses and has a significant impact on increasing sales. By referring to these various studies, this introduction emphasizes that social media-based digital marketing training is an important and relevant strategy in accelerating the digital transformation of MSMEs, especially for business actors who are still in the early stages of using technology.

Through an applicative approach, based on direct practice, and according to the needs of partner MSMEs, this service activity is expected to be able to produce a real improvement in participants' digital competencies. In the end, strengthening digital capacity is expected to increase the competitiveness of MSMEs, expand marketing networks, and create business sustainability in the midst of an increasingly competitive digital economy.

METHOD

The method of implementation in this community service activity is systematically prepared to ensure the achievement of the main goal, which is to increase the ability of MSME actors to utilize online marketing and social media effectively. The approach used combines training methods, hands-on practice, intensive mentoring, and layered evaluations so that the digital capacity building process can take place comprehensively. The training is provided through face-to-face sessions that combine theory and

demonstration so that participants can understand the basic concepts of digital marketing before entering the practical stage. The training materials include an introduction to online marketing strategies, visual and narrative content creation techniques, how to build a brand identity, and the use of social media features such as Instagram Reels, Facebook Page, and WhatsApp Business. This approach was chosen because MSME actors generally find it easier to understand technical material when accompanied by concrete examples and hands-on exercise.

The practical stage is an important part of the application method because participants are given the opportunity to apply the material in real-time using their own digital devices. In this session, participants were guided to create promotional content that suits the character of the product, make simple edits, compose persuasive captions, choose the optimal upload time, and interact with potential consumers through the comment column or direct message. This practical activity is accompanied by direct feedback from the service team to improve the quality of content and upload strategies. Mentoring is carried out not only during the training sessions, but also during the post-training period, so that participants can implement digital marketing strategies in the context of their respective businesses.

To ensure that the results of activities can be measured objectively and systematically, several measuring tools are used both descriptively and qualitatively. Descriptive measurements were carried out through pre-tests and post-tests which functioned to identify changes in participants' level of understanding of digital marketing concepts, content creation techniques, and the ability to utilize social media features. In addition, direct monitoring of participants' social media accounts was carried out to assess the improvement of the visual quality of the content, the consistency of uploads, the level of audience interaction, and changes in the number of followers during the training and mentoring period. This descriptive indicator provides a quantitative picture of the development of participants' digital skills.

Qualitative measurement tools were used through individual interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and observation of participants' behavior during the training process. Through this approach, information was obtained about changing participants' mindsets, increasing confidence in using social media as a marketing tool, and their understanding of the importance of business digitalization. This qualitative evaluation also helps to identify obstacles experienced by participants, both in technical and non-technical terms, so that solutions can be provided in accordance with the characteristics of each business.

The level of achievement of the success of activities is measured through three main aspects, namely changes in attitudes, socio-cultural changes, and economic impacts on MSME actors. The change in attitude can be seen from the increasing initiative of participants in producing promotional content without having to wait for instructions, the willingness to try new features on social media, and the willingness to adapt to digital marketing trends. Socio-cultural changes can be observed from the habits of participants who began to use digital platforms as a means of communication and negotiation with customers, the formation of collaboration between MSME actors in strengthening joint marketing activities, and increasing openness to technology-based innovations. Meanwhile, the economic impact is assessed through an increase in the number of orders, the growth of customer interaction on social media, and the expansion of marketing reach as seen from the increase in the reach of uploads and the entry of new consumers from outside the region.

With a structured, practice-oriented, and well-defined measurement method, this service activity is expected to have a measurable and sustainable impact on the digital transformation of MSME actors in partner areas. This approach is also designed to be a model that can be replicated in other regions or groups of MSMEs that have similar needs to strengthen digital marketing capacity in the era of technology-based economy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This community service activity succeeded in providing a comprehensive experience for MSME actors in understanding and implementing digital marketing strategies through social media. The training and mentoring process provided brought real changes, both from technical and non-technical aspects, to the participants. Most participants initially find it difficult to understand social media features, especially when creating visual content. But after a series of hands-on practice sessions, they showed a significant improvement in skills. The level of confidence of participants in using digital platforms has increased because they are now able to create content, run business accounts, and understand simple insight data independently.

These changes are not only visible in the quality of the content, but also in the attitudes and mindsets of the participants. MSME players are starting to see social media not just as entertainment, but as a marketing tool that can increase sales and expand their market reach. This transformation can be seen from the consistency of participants in producing and uploading content on a scheduled basis. The implementation of interactive features such as reels, stories, and live streaming has also begun to be carried out, which shows the adaptation of digital culture in running daily businesses.

The training process is carried out through three main stages that complement each other. The first stage focuses on providing digital marketing theory and a basic understanding of social media algorithms. The second stage is in the form of hands-on practice that allows participants to create photo and video content, write persuasive captions, and post using relevant features. The third stage is intensive mentoring, where participants are guided to read insights, assess content performance, and improve strategies according to digital data analysis. This gradual approach ensures that participants understand the material while being able to apply these new skills in their respective endeavors.

Indicators of the success of the activity can be seen from the improvement of the technical and non-technical abilities of the participants. Technical skills such as content production, insight understanding, and business account management are improved based on pre-test and post-test evaluations. Non-technically, participants began to be more confident, more creative in designing content, and more consistent in maintaining digital relationships with customers. Social media interaction recapitulation data shows a fairly clear trend of increasing the number of followers, likes, comments, and the number of incoming messages that show buyer interest.

To reinforce the discussion, here is a **comprehensive table** that summarizes the key changes of participants in terms of skills, digital interaction, and business attitudes.

Table 1. Recapitulation of Improving Capabilities and Digital Interaction of MSME Participants

Assessment Aspects	Before the Program	After the Program	Evidence of Improvement
Content creation ability	Low, not understanding basic techniques	Content is better in lighting, composition, and messaging	Photo/video content looks neater and more attractive
Post consistency	Irregular	Start scheduled and consistent	Average 2–4 uploads per week
Understanding insights	Not understanding at all	Able to read reach, impressions, and engagement	Participants can analyze the performance of the post

Digital interaction	Low	Increased in most participants	Followers, likes, and comments increased by 30–80%
Attitudes towards technology	Doubt and lack of confidence	Confident and open to digital innovation	Participants start using reels, stories, live
Digital communication skills	Minim engagement	Start replying to DMs quickly and more responsive	DM from potential buyers increased
Branding identity	Unclear	Start having a consistent content style	Caption templates and visual styles begin to take shape
Utilization of business features	Almost unused	Get started with your catalog, insights, and business accounts	Profile view made more professional

In addition to the table, this activity also shows the development that can be visualized through two diagrams. This diagram will be helpful to confirm the changes that occurred during the program. You will only need to make the chart in Excel according to the recap data you have.

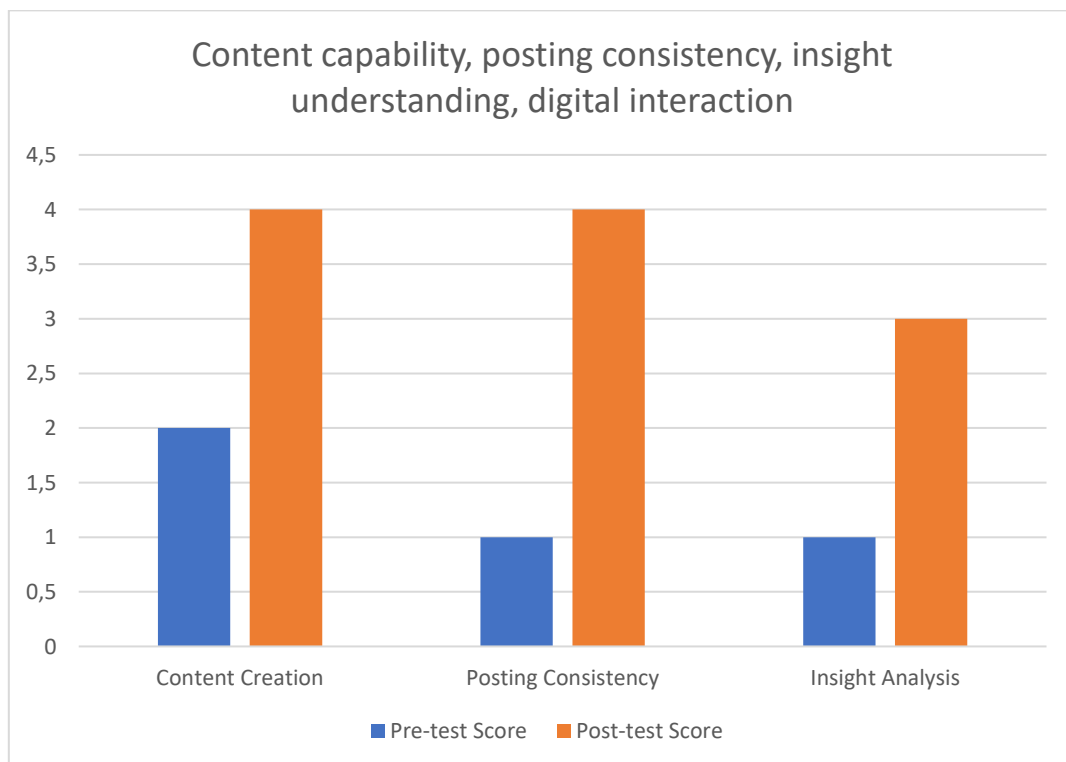


Diagram 1. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores of Participants' Digital Abilities

This diagram is used to show an overview of participants' knowledge improvements before and after the program.

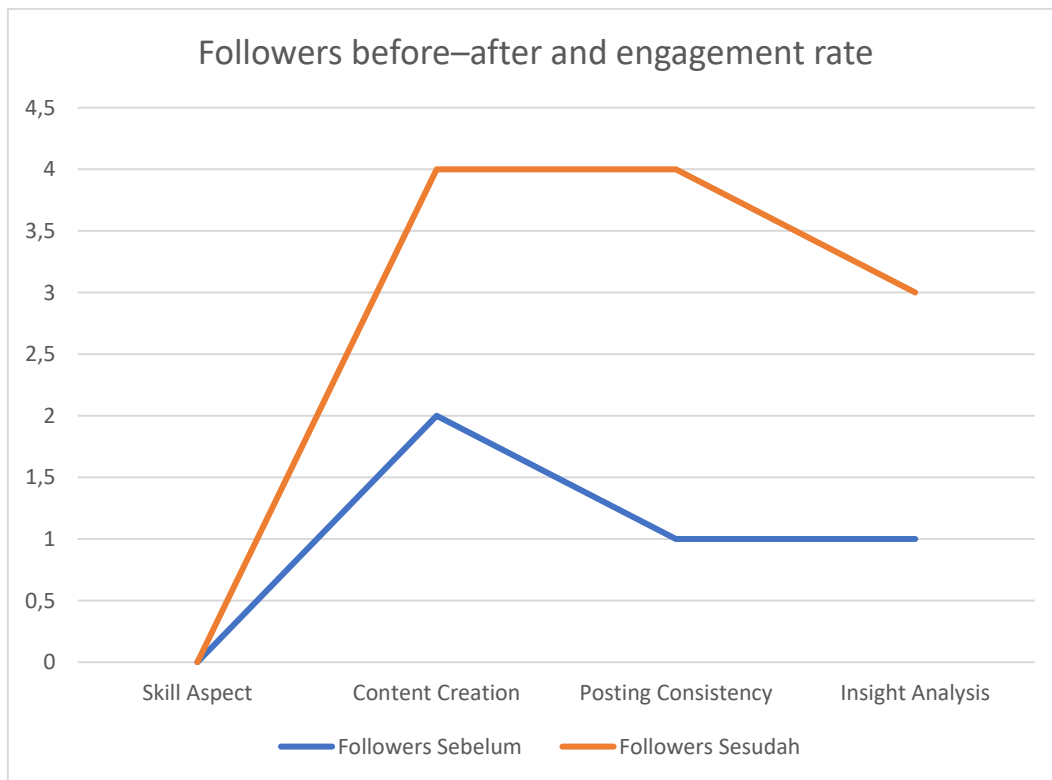


Diagram 2. Graph of Changes in Participants' Social Media Interactions (Followers & Engagement)

These graphs help visually show the impact of the program in terms of audience growth and digital interaction.

With the results obtained, this service activity has a number of important advantages. The training materials are designed to be applicable and easy to apply by participants with diverse backgrounds. The hands-on practice-based approach has a stronger impact than theory alone, so that participants are able to see concrete results from the use of digital media. Intensive mentoring is also a key factor in the success of the program, as it helps participants overcome technical obstacles in the field.

However, this activity still has some limitations. Time constraints make some participants not optimal in exploring advanced social media features. In addition, not all participants have adequate devices so the quality of their content is still limited. The uneven level of digital literacy is also a challenge that affects the tempo of material delivery. These challenges provide important input for future program development.

Overall, this service activity proves that digital marketing assistance for MSMEs can have a real impact in a relatively short time. With a sustainable strategy, attitude changes, competency improvement, and the growth of digital interaction have the potential to encourage MSMEs to become more competitive in the digital era. This activity model can also be replicated for other regions with adjustments based on the needs of the participants.

CONCLUSION

1. Service activities that focus on digital transformation through online marketing training and the use of social media have succeeded in increasing the understanding, skills, and confidence of MSME actors in utilizing digital technology. This increase can be seen from the ability of participants to create marketing content, manage business accounts, and optimize promotional features on various digital platforms.
2. This program provides short-term added value in the form of increasing digital literacy and changing the behavior of MSME actors in viewing technology as an important instrument to expand the market. In the long term, these activities have the potential to encourage local economic growth through increased sales, consumer reach, and marketing efficiency.

3. The advantages of this activity lie in the applicable training methods, materials relevant to the needs of MSMEs, and the use of measuring tools that allow for a clear evaluation of skills changes. Participants also get the opportunity to practice directly the digital marketing techniques they learned, so that the impact can be seen faster.
4. The lack of activities mainly arises from limited mentoring time, variations in participants' initial abilities, and inadequate digital infrastructure in several locations. These factors affect the speed of adaptation of participants in mastering all materials.
5. Future development opportunities include the implementation of advanced training that includes data-driven marketing strategies, the use of more professional paid advertising, and integration with e-commerce platforms. In addition, long-term mentoring and digital business incubation models have the potential to strengthen the sustainability impact of service activities.

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