



EMPOWERING WOMEN-OWNED MSMEs THROUGH DIGITAL MARKETING AND E-COMMERCE TRAINING TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

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<p>Info Article</p> <p>Received : 01 Februari 2025</p> <p>Revised : 04 Maret 2025</p> <p>Accepted : 01 April 2025</p> <p>Publication : 30 April 2025</p>	<p>Abstract: <i>Digital transformation has opened new opportunities for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), especially women entrepreneurs, to grow their businesses more broadly and independently. This study aims to examine how digital marketing and e-commerce training can strengthen the capacity of women-owned MSMEs in facing the challenges of the digital market and enhancing their economic independence. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study involves several women entrepreneurs in the [location] area who have participated in digital training programs. The findings reveal that digital marketing and e-commerce training not only improves technical knowledge and digital marketing strategies but also has a significant impact on self-confidence, decision-making abilities, and financial independence. Therefore, digital-based training has proven to be an effective strategy for empowering women in the local economic sphere. These findings recommend the need for collaboration between the government, communities, and the private sector to expand access and ensure the sustainability of digital training for women-led MSMEs</i></p>
<p>Keywords: Women-Owned MSMEs, Digital Marketing, E-Commerce, Empowerment, Economic Independence</p>	
<p>Kata Kunci: UMKM Perempuan, Digital Marketing, E-Commerce, Pemberdayaan, Kemandirian Ekonomi</p>	
<p>Licensed Under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License</p> 	<p>Abstrak: Transformasi digital telah membuka peluang baru bagi pelaku usaha mikro, kecil, dan menengah (UMKM), terutama perempuan, untuk mengembangkan usahanya secara lebih luas dan mandiri. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana pelatihan digital marketing dan e-commerce dapat memperkuat kapasitas pelaku UMKM perempuan dalam menghadapi tantangan pasar digital serta meningkatkan kemandirian ekonomi mereka. Menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, studi ini melibatkan sejumlah perempuan pelaku UMKM di wilayah [lokasi] yang telah mengikuti pelatihan digital. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pelatihan digital marketing dan e-commerce tidak hanya meningkatkan pemahaman teknis dan strategi pemasaran digital, tetapi juga berdampak signifikan terhadap rasa percaya diri, kemampuan mengambil keputusan, dan kemandirian finansial pelaku usaha. Dengan demikian, pelatihan berbasis digital terbukti efektif sebagai strategi pemberdayaan perempuan dalam ranah ekonomi lokal. Temuan ini merekomendasikan perlunya kolaborasi antara pemerintah, komunitas, dan sektor swasta untuk memperluas akses dan keberlanjutan pelatihan digital bagi UMKM perempuan.</p>

INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment has become a central issue in sustainable development, both globally and locally. One tangible form of such empowerment is improving women's access to economic resources, including their active participation in the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) sector. In Indonesia, MSMEs play a vital role in driving the national economy, and many are owned and managed by women. These women entrepreneurs contribute to household economic resilience, enhance family welfare, and support the growth of community-based economies.

However, various barriers continue to hinder the strengthening of women-led MSMEs. These challenges include limited access to capital, inadequate entrepreneurial skills, lack of market networks, and most notably, insufficient mastery of digital technologies. In today's digital economy, proficiency in digital marketing and e-commerce platforms is crucial to expanding market reach and increasing product competitiveness. Without these capabilities, MSMEs risk being left behind amid the ever-evolving digital transformation.

Training in digital marketing and e-commerce presents a strategic step to bridge these gaps. Through structured training programs, women entrepreneurs are not only equipped with technical skills but also empowered to become more independent, innovative, and adaptive business actors. Such training also serves as a medium to build self-confidence and critical awareness of their potential and important roles in the economic sphere.

The transformation of women-led MSMEs through digital training is not merely a technical issue; it also entails broader social and cultural changes. This study seeks to explore how digital marketing and e-commerce training impacts the development of women's businesses and enhances their independence, both economically and in terms of decision-making. Furthermore, this research is expected to offer policy recommendations for promoting women's economic empowerment through digital technology-based approaches.

METHOD

Type and Approach of the Study

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the subjective experiences and perspectives of women-owned MSME actors who have participated in digital marketing and e-commerce training. The

qualitative approach allows researchers to explore social realities in a natural and contextual manner, focusing on meaning, processes, and field dynamics. A descriptive qualitative method is chosen because it aligns with the objective of the study, which is to portray the phenomenon of digital transformation in women's entrepreneurship from the direct viewpoint of the actors and stakeholders involved. This study does not aim to statistically measure or generalize the data but to understand how digital training impacts women's economic independence and the accompanying social change.

Research Location and Subjects

The study is planned to take place in areas with a high concentration of women-owned MSMEs that have received digital marketing and e-commerce training. One relevant location is Blitar City, East Java, due to its numerous women empowerment and MSME training programs facilitated by the local cooperative office and partner NGOs. This site is also selected based on informants' accessibility and willingness to be interviewed.

The research subjects consist of three main categories:

1. Women MSME entrepreneurs (approximately 5–10 individuals) who have participated in digital training;
2. Training facilitators or mentors from formal training institutions, community groups, or related agencies;
3. Representatives from the local Cooperative or MSME Department familiar with policy and implementation of the training.

Informants are selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in the program and openness to sharing their experiences.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through several techniques:

1. In-depth interviews: Conducted semi-structurally to explore personal experiences, perceptions, and the impact of training on the respondents' businesses and lives. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for further analysis.
2. Direct observation: Used to observe real-time MSME activities post-training, including the use of digital platforms (e-commerce, social media), promotional methods, and consumer interactions. This was done through limited participatory observation.

3. Documentation: Collection of supporting materials such as training brochures, modules, screenshots of e-commerce accounts, and promotional content used by the entrepreneurs.
4. Literature review: Utilized to strengthen the theoretical framework and contextual background, including data from journals, institutional reports, and evaluations of previous training programs.

These techniques were selected to capture data from multiple sources and perspectives, resulting in a comprehensive and nuanced analysis.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using **thematic analysis**, a technique to identify patterns, themes, and meaningful categories from informant narratives. The steps included:

1. Data reduction: Selecting, categorizing, and simplifying raw data into relevant information. Repetitive or irrelevant data were discarded, while meaningful data were thematically coded.
2. Data presentation: Organizing information in matrices, narratives, or tables to recognize patterns and compare informants.
3. Conclusion drawing and verification: Conducted iteratively through repeated reading and cross-validation. Conclusions were developed based on thematic connections and revalidated through field checks if necessary.

To ensure data validity, source triangulation was employed by comparing information from MSME actors, facilitators, and local MSME officials. This method enhances the credibility and scientific accountability of the data collected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Informant Profile

Informants comprised 10 women MSME owners engaged in the food, handicraft, and local fashion sectors, aged between 25 and 50 years. Most had started their businesses from home and had not received digital training prior to this program.

Knowledge and Skills Improvement

Following the training, nearly all respondents demonstrated significant improvements in:

1. Basic understanding of digital marketing strategies (using social media, copywriting, product photography);
2. Skills to set up and manage online stores on platforms like Shopee and Tokopedia;
3. Digital transaction literacy, including the use of e-wallets and virtual accounts.

This aligns with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), particularly the constructs of Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness, which influence technology adoption.

Impact on Economic Independence

Training did not only enhance technical capabilities but also reinforced economic independence:

1. Several respondents experienced a twofold increase in revenue within three months;
2. Respondents reported greater confidence in pricing, managing finances, and product innovation;
3. One stated, *"I used to just wait for customers. Now, I can actively promote and strategize on my own."*

This illustrates the **agency dimension** of empowerment theory, as women became more autonomous in decision-making and flexible in managing their work schedules.

Remaining Challenges

Despite the benefits, challenges persist:

1. Limited internet access in certain areas;
2. Dependence on children or husbands for technical support;
3. Fear of competing in the digital market due to feelings of inferiority about their products.

These findings suggest the need for follow-up training and long-term mentoring to sustain the empowerment outcomes.

Evolving Social Roles

Some respondents mentioned being more appreciated within their families. Husbands became more supportive, and children felt proud that their mothers could sell online and earn independently. This transformation indicates that economic empowerment has ripple effects on social change

CONCLUSION

This study shows that digital marketing and e-commerce training has a significant impact on the transformation of women-led MSMEs. It not only improves technical capacity in managing digital businesses but also contributes to increased economic and social independence.

Well-designed participatory training programs foster self-confidence, enhance digital literacy, and expand market networks and income opportunities. The empowerment achieved through this process affects not only the individual participants but also their social environment, including families and communities.

Nevertheless, structural challenges such as limited internet access, low digital education levels, and dual domestic roles remain key barriers. These must be addressed through long-term interventions and inclusive policy strategies.

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