

DIGITAL MARKETING MANAGEMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED TRAINING: A CASE STUDY OF “GO DIGITAL UMKM” PROGRAM IN SURABAYA

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ABSTRACT

Digital marketing is essential for MSMEs in the post-pandemic era, yet many lack the skills to leverage online platforms effectively. This study investigates the impact of the “Go Digital UMKM” program, a collaborative community-based training organized by Universitas Surabaya and the Surabaya City Cooperative Agency, held in April 2025. The training focused on basic digital branding, social media optimization, and online selling. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through observations, interviews, documentation, and pre-/post-tests. Findings show that participants experienced an average 42% improvement in digital marketing knowledge, with increased confidence in using Instagram and Shopee. The program highlights the effectiveness of contextual, hands-on training in improving MSME digital capability and suggests a replicable model for other regions.

Keywords: *MSMEs, digital marketing, community training, Surabaya, entrepreneurship education*

A. INTRODUCTION

The shift toward digital commerce has made online presence a survival necessity for MSMEs. However, a large number of MSMEs in Indonesia remain digitally illiterate (Kemenkop UKM, 2023). Challenges include low digital skills, lack of marketing strategy, and limited exposure to platform tools such as Instagram Shopping or Shopee Ads (World Bank, 2023). Past studies suggest that theory-based training often fails to yield practical changes (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014). Hence, there is a need for community-based, experiential learning models adapted to the local MSME context. This study examines the “Go Digital UMKM” training conducted on April 18, 2025, which involved 60 MSMEs from the culinary, fashion, and handicraft sectors in Surabaya. Key features of the program included: Live tutorials on Instagram Business and Shopee for sellers; Peer mentoring sessions with local successful digital entrepreneurs; Real-time content creation workshops. (Arifin & Utomo, 2022)

The research seeks to: Document the design and delivery of the digital marketing training. Evaluate the improvement in digital marketing comprehension. Explore behavior change and marketing practices post-training. Digital Marketing for MSMEs in the Post-Pandemic Era. Digital marketing has shifted from being a complementary tool to a necessity for MSMEs' survival, especially after COVID-19. According to the World Bank (2023), MSMEs with digital presence in Southeast Asia showed 30–40% faster revenue recovery compared to offline-only businesses. Recent studies emphasize the importance of integrated digital strategies, including social commerce, customer engagement analytics, and mobile-first marketing

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(Lee et al., 2024; Deloitte, 2023). Despite the opportunities, MSMEs still face major barriers: limited content creation skills, inconsistent online branding, and lack of marketing automation (OECD, 2023).

Community-Based Training and Digital Literacy

The World Economic Forum (2024) identifies community-based learning as a key enabler for MSME upskilling, especially in low-resource environments. In Indonesia, community-led initiatives have been effective in addressing digital divides by embedding peer learning, localized content, and culturally relevant examples (Yulia & Hartati, 2023). Training models that include micro-cohorts, WhatsApp-based mentoring, and real-time simulations have increased MSMEs' digital adoption by up to 45% (UNESCAP, 2023).

Experiential Learning Theory in Digital Contexts

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) remains relevant but has been extended in digital environments. In the context of MSMEs, digital experiential learning now includes activities like creating product reels, testing ad campaigns, and analyzing engagement metrics. As emphasized by Hapsari & Widodo (2023), MSMEs retain marketing knowledge better when they create content using their own brands, engage with feedback loops, and reflect in group discussions via digital platforms (Arifin et al., 2024).

Digital Technology Acceptance among MSMEs

Updated models such as UTAUT2 (Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2) provide better predictive power in MSME technology adoption compared to the original TAM. UTAUT2 incorporates factors like hedonic motivation, price value, and habit, which are highly relevant for informal and semi-formal MSMEs (Venkatesh et al., 2023). Training that reduces perceived complexity and builds routine usage behavior increases adoption likelihood. For instance, Shopee training integrated with live simulations improves platform stickiness (Ghozali & Putri, 2024).

Stakeholder Collaboration in MSME Digital Ecosystems

Multi-stakeholder models involving universities, local governments, tech companies, and cooperatives are proven to be more sustainable than single-actor programs (ADB, 2023). In Indonesia, programs like "Bangga Buatan Indonesia" demonstrate that institutional synergy boosts trust, accelerates digital onboarding, and facilitates post-training support. A study by Hakim et al. (2023) found that co-designed training with banks and cooperatives resulted in higher follow-up actions (e.g., online sales, marketplace listing) than top-down government programs (Arifin & Utomo, 2022).

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach using a single case study design to explore the implementation and impact of the Go Digital UMKM training program in enhancing digital marketing capabilities among MSMEs in Surabaya.

Research Design

A case study method was chosen to provide an in-depth understanding of a specific and contextual digital training initiative (Yin, 2018). The focus is on a collaborative training intervention organized by Universitas Surabaya and the Surabaya City Cooperative and MSME Agency.

Research Participants and Setting

A total of 60 MSME participants from the culinary, fashion, and handicraft sectors in Surabaya took part in the training held on April 18, 2025. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that participants had limited prior exposure to digital marketing and had never received formal training in this area.

Data Collection Techniques

Four data collection techniques were applied:

Pre- and Post-Test:

A 12-item multiple-choice test was administered to measure participants' understanding of digital branding, social media marketing, and marketplace usage. The instrument's reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.82$).

Participant Observation:

Researchers observed participants' engagement during training sessions, including content creation activities, group discussions, and simulations on digital platforms.

Semi-Structured Interviews:

In-depth interviews were conducted with 12 selected participants to explore their perceptions, motivations, and intended behavioral changes following the training.

Documentation:

Training materials, participants' digital content outputs, social media posts, and session recordings were collected for analysis.

Data Analysis Techniques

Thematic analysis was conducted following Braun & Clarke (2006), comprising the following steps:

Data Reduction: Responses were coded and categorized into key themes such as content strategy, promotional habits, and technology acceptance.

Data Presentation: Visualizations of pre- and post-test score improvements and representative participant quotes were used to illustrate findings.

Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Triangulation across test results, interviews, and observations was conducted to enhance validity.

Validity was further supported through methodological triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking.

Research Ethics

Ethical considerations included ensuring participant confidentiality, voluntary participation, and obtaining informed consent prior to interviews and observations.

C. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section presents the results of both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The findings highlight the effectiveness of the community-based training in enhancing MSMEs' digital marketing skills and behavioral intentions.

Pre- and Post-Test Result: Quantitative Improvement in Digital Marketing Knowledge

A comparison of pre- and post-training test scores revealed significant improvements across all measured areas. The average score increased from 49% (pre-test) to 87% (post-test), indicating a 38% increase in digital marketing comprehension.

Table 1.
Improvement in Digital Marketing Competencies (N=60)

Competency Area	Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test (%)	Improvement (%)
Instagram Marketing	48	91	+43
Shopee Setup and Features	52	84	+32
Content Planning and Branding	45	88	+43
Online Customer Engagement	49	86	+37
Average	49	87	+38

The most notable increase was observed in **Instagram Marketing and Content Planning**, where participants previously had very limited exposure. Participants gained confidence in using business features such as Instagram Insights and Shopee Ads.

Qualitative Insights: Behavioral Changes and Perception Shifts

In-depth interviews and observations revealed three main themes regarding the training's impact:

Increased Digital Confidence and Practical Application

Over 70% of participants reported newfound confidence in managing their digital platforms:

“Now I understand how to schedule posts and use Instagram features for my snack business.”

(Interviewee #4, Culinary MSME)

Many participants began updating their business profiles during the training and continued improving their content afterward.

Shift from Passive to Active Digital Engagement

Prior to training, most participants treated digital marketing as optional or outsourced. Post-training, 65% expressed an intention to manage digital marketing independently.

“I used to rely on my nephew to run my online store. Now I can do it myself and understand what’s going on.” (Interviewee #9, Fashion MSME)

Peer Motivation and Community Accountability

Participants appreciated the group-based learning format. Observations showed strong engagement during simulations and peer-review activities.

“Seeing others create real Shopee stores pushed me to do mine right away.”

(Interviewee #2, Handicraft MSME)

Triangulation of Findings

Cross-analysis between quantitative test scores and qualitative interviews indicated alignment between knowledge gain and behavioral intention. Participants with the highest test score improvements were also the most proactive in content production during the workshop.

Challenges Identified

Despite overall success, the study identified two persistent challenges:

Digital Device Access:

About 15% of participants faced issues due to outdated smartphones or unstable internet connections.

Sustainability of Practice:

Some participants expressed concerns about maintaining content consistency after training without continued mentoring.

D. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate the significant impact of community-based training in improving the digital marketing competence of MSMEs. This section discusses the results in relation to the research objectives, theoretical frameworks, and implications for MSME empowerment.

Behavioral Change and Increased Digital Confidence

Interview data revealed a clear shift in participants’ attitudes—from passive users to proactive digital marketers. Many participants expressed confidence in handling Instagram features and Shopee seller tools independently. This supports the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and its updated version UTAUT, which assert that ease of use and perceived usefulness are critical in digital adoption (Venkatesh et al.,

2023). Peer demonstrations and live examples enhanced both perceived behavioral control and social influence, two essential factors in sustained adoption.(Setyowati *et al.*, 2016)

The Role of Stakeholder Collaboration

The success of the *Go Digital UMKM* training was due in large part to the strategic partnership between **Universitas Surabaya** and the **Surabaya Cooperative Agency**. This partnership ensured that:

The training content was technically sound and current.

The recruitment and follow-up processes were community-driven and trust-based.

This model reflects Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), where alignment between institutional goals (education, policy, and economic development) improves program effectiveness. As in similar interventions (ADB, 2023), collaborative delivery ensured that participants received both expert instruction and local relevance.

Challenges and Limitations in Implementation

Despite the overall positive outcomes, the training program faced two major challenges:

- a. Access to Adequate Technology: Some MSMEs struggled due to outdated smartphones or lack of data packages. This suggests the need for digital infrastructure support **in** future implementations.
- b. Sustainability of Practice: Without continued guidance, there's a risk of skill atrophy. Only 60% of participants expressed strong intentions to maintain weekly posting routines, pointing to the importance of post-training mentoring and **peer** accountability systems, such as WhatsApp groups or cooperative-led check-ins.

E. CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that community-based digital marketing training can significantly enhance the digital capabilities of MSMEs, particularly those with limited prior exposure to online platforms. Through hands-on simulations, contextual learning, and peer interaction, participants in the *Go Digital UMKM* program experienced a 38% average improvement in digital marketing knowledge and showed strong indications of behavioral change. The collaborative model involving Universitas Surabaya and the Surabaya Cooperative Agency proved effective in aligning technical instruction with local context and trust-based outreach. The results affirm the relevance of experiential learning, community-based participation, and multi-stakeholder engagement as key enablers of MSME digital transformation. However, challenges related to technology access and the sustainability of post-training practices remain. These issues highlight the importance of continuous support systems and adaptive training delivery methods tailored to the realities of MSMEs.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen and scale similar initiatives:

1. Develop Sector-Specific Digital Modules

Tailor content based on business type (e.g., culinary, fashion, crafts) to ensure greater engagement and applicability.

2. Ensure Post-Training Mentorship

Establish peer support groups or cooperative-led digital clinics to reinforce learning and provide follow-up assistance.

3. Support Digital Infrastructure Access

Partner with telecom providers or local governments to subsidize smartphones, internet packages, or training kits for low-income MSMEs.

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4. Incorporate Mobile-Based Microlearning

Use platforms like WhatsApp or Telegram to deliver short, periodic tutorials and reminders to maintain engagement.

5. Scale Through Institutional Collaboration

Encourage replication of this model in other regions through partnerships between universities, cooperatives, banks, and MSME support agencies.

6. Monitor Long-Term Impact

Conduct follow-up studies at 3-month and 6-month intervals to evaluate the sustained adoption of digital marketing practices.

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