Education & Community PaDi UMKM Program as a Digital Literacy Effort for MSME Players

Rizka Puspita Cahyanto[1], Vilya Dwi Agustini[1], Wininda Qusnul Khotimah[1], Agung Kusuma Wardana[2]

[1]Program Studi Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. Hamka, Indonesia

[2]Program Studi Magister Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Pelita Harapan, Indonesia
*Correspondence: rizkapuspitacahyanto@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Digital literacy is a crucial issue for MSME players, lack of understanding in utilizing digital media hampers the ability to compete in the digital era. The focus of this research is to analyze the marketing communication strategy that PaDi UMKM has initiated in increasing digital literacy among MSME players. This research uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, literature studies and observation of marketing activities at PaDi Talks activities. The results found that PaDi UMKM succeeded in increasing the digital literacy of MSME players. The Padi Talks activity directly contributes to improving the digital literacy of MSME players. The concept of digitalization elements from JISC directly contributes to the improvement of digital literacy of MSME players. This program creates an ecosystem among MSME players in the form of access to digital resources needed to optimize their marketing and business operations.

1. Introduction

The lack of digital literacy among Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the global economy is crucial to the progress of MSMEs in Indonesia, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many MSME players are not proficient in the use of digital technology, making them vulnerable to harmful online scams. This situation is exacerbated by various challenges, such as lack of capital, reduced customer numbers due to social distancing, and bottlenecks in distribution and production. As a result, many MSMEs struggle to adapt to market changes and maintain their business viability (Mustika et al., 2021; Rahman, 2017; Suma et al., 2023; Nahdhiyah et al., 2022). Despite their significant contribution to the Indonesian economy, contributing more than 60% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employing around 96% of the workforce, many MSME players face various challenges in growing their business, especially in today's digital era (KEMENKO PMK, 2023). The impact of a lack of understanding about digitalization not only limits their market reach but also makes MSMEs vulnerable to competition from larger companies that are better equipped to adapt to market changes. According to a report by the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises of the Republic of Indonesia, around 70.2% of MSMEs experience difficulties when trying to transform through the utilization of digital technology. One of the main factors is the lack of digital literacy skills and capabilities (Media Indonesia, 2023).

Data from the Ministry of Communication and Information shows that the level of digital literacy of MSMEs in Indonesia is still low, at only 38.7%, reflecting a gap in the understanding and application of digital technology (Saragih et al., 2024). The importance of digital literacy cannot be underestimated. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), improving digital literacy among MSMEs can open up access to new business opportunities and increase overall productivity. The use of digital platforms also provides many benefits for the development of MSMEs, such as increased sales, number of customers, broader market access, and transaction speed (Institute for Development of Economics and Finance (INDEF), 2024).
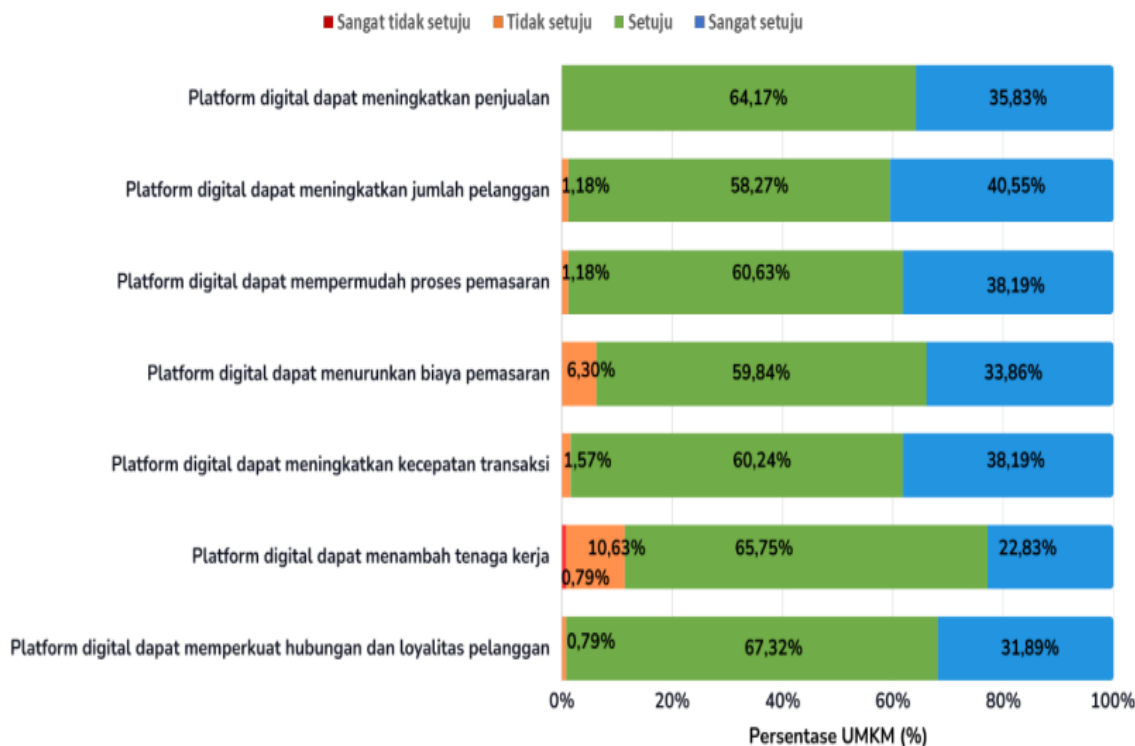
Figure 1. Final Report "The Role of Digital Platforms in the Development of MSMEs in Indonesia" (Institute for Development of Economics and Finance (INDEF), 2024)

In facing this challenge, effective marketing communication strategies and a better understanding of digitalization are needed to improve the competitiveness of MSMEs (Hardilawati, 2020). According to Rogers, a communication strategy is a series of ways created to change human behavior through a variety of new ideas. He argues that communication strategies not only function in conveying information but also to change human behavior. Thus, a good communication strategy involves various communication elements to achieve maximum communication goals (Azkia et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2019; Jumriati et al., 2021).

Therefore, it is important for all parties including the government, educational institutions, and the private sector to provide support in the form of training and guidance for MSME players. By improving digital literacy and providing access to technology, MSMEs can be better prepared to compete in an increasingly competitive market. Digital transformation is not only an option but also a necessity for MSMEs to keep up with the times.

As a concrete step in supporting MSME players, PaDi UMKM comes as a corporate procurement digital platform designed to provide training on the use of digital technology (PaDi UMKM, 2024). Through an integrated marketing communication strategy, PaDi UMKM is expected to help increase business owners' awareness and understanding of the importance of digital literacy. PaDi UMKM is also committed to supporting local businesses to stand out from other marketplaces. One of the main obstacles faced by MSMEs is capital, especially since they are often seen as high-risk borrowers. To overcome this, PaDi UMKM offers one of the leading features such as Invoice Financing, which allows MSME players to get funding assistance to meet their business capital needs (PaDi UMKM, 2023).

Against the background of these problems, this study aims to fill the knowledge gap regarding marketing communication strategies as digital literacy efforts for MSME players. The results of previous studies show that although there are efforts to improve digital literacy, they do not deeply analyze specific marketing communication strategies and their impact on digital literacy (Rachmawati et al., 2021). In addition, although digital literacy training has been provided, the results are still not optimal because many of the MSME players do not fully understand how to use technology to create attractive and effective marketing content (Hidayat et al., 2021; Rahman & Weda, 2018; Abbas et al., 2023). There are also some studies that do not consider external factors that can influence the success of training. Such as optimal support from the government or access to technology for MSME players (Gede et al., 2023; Muslimat et al., 2023; Junaid et al., 2024).

This research uses a qualitative approach with in-depth interviews with MSME players and analysis of marketing communication strategies that have been implemented by PaDi UMKM. It is expected that the results of this research can make a new contribution to the development of science in the field of digital marketing communication and MSME empowerment. Theoretically, this research is used to increase understanding of the digitalization of MSMEs, while practically it can be used as a guide for MSME players to improve digital literacy.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Marketing communication strategy

In the book "Digital Marketing Excellence: Planning, Optimizing, and Integrating Online Marketing" written by Dave Chaffey and PR Smith, marketing communication strategies are explained through the SOSTAC model. This model consists of six key elements that help in planning and executing a digital marketing strategy effectively (Dave Chaffey & PR Smith, 2017).

a. Situation Analysis

The first element of SOSTAC is situation analysis, which answers the question "where are we now?". At this stage, the company needs to conduct a thorough evaluation of internal and external conditions. This includes a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the organization as well as the opportunities and threats in the market. In addition, situation analysis also involves understanding the changes in consumer behavior and digital trends affecting the industry.

b. Objectives

After conducting a situation analysis, the next step is to set clear goals, i.e. "Where do we want to be?". These goals should be specific, measurable, achievable and relevant. In the context of digital marketing, goals may include increasing sales through online channels or strengthening relationships with customers. Chaffey and Smith also introduced the 5S model (Sell, Serve, Speak, Save, Sizzle) which can be used to define the key objectives of an online presence.

c. Strategy

Strategy answers the question "How do we get there?" It includes developing online value propositions (OVPs) and positioning the product in the market. Strategy should include market segmentation and selection of the right target audience. In this book, the author uses the Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP) model to help formulate an effective strategy.

d. Tactics

The tactics element describes the specific methods that will be used to execute the strategy. This includes the selection of appropriate marketing communication channels such as social media, email marketing, SEO, and content marketing. At this stage, companies need to detail the tools and techniques that will be used to achieve the set goals.

e. Action

Action focuses on the concrete action plan that will be taken to execute the formulated strategies and tactics. It includes scheduling marketing activities and assigning responsibilities to team members. The action plan should be well-structured so that all steps can be implemented efficiently.

f. Control

The final stage is control, where companies must establish metrics to measure the success of their marketing efforts. This involves using web analytics to monitor performance against set goals. By conducting periodic evaluations, companies can know if they are on the right track to achieving their goals or need to make adjustments.

Marketing communication strategy is a crucial element in business development, especially for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that operate in a competitive and dynamic environment. In this context, marketing communication strategies serve not only to promote products, but also to build strong relationships with customers, increase brand awareness, and encourage customer loyalty.

2.2 Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, assess, utilize, create and deliver content or information. It involves thinking skills, ethics, social and emotional abilities, and an understanding of the technical aspects of technology. The term literacy can be defined as the mastery of basic and practical skills that enrich and transform human thinking (Indriani & Agustini, 2023; Rahman, 2014; Abbas et al., 2024). *"The term literacy can be defined as the mastery of simple and practical skills which bring a profound enrichment and transformation of human thinking capabilities" (Reddy et al., 2020).* Digital literacy has become a key factor in the development of MSMEs in today's digital era. With the increasing development of the internet and the use of information technology, MSMEs are required to adapt in order to compete in an increasingly competitive market. Results in a study show that good digital literacy enables MSME players to leverage technology to improve operational efficiency, expand market reach, and optimize their marketing strategies (Saragih et al., 2024; Dalyan et al., 2024). According to research by a UK non-profit organization focused on technology, data and digital for higher education, research and innovation, there are 7 essential elements of digital literacy (JISC, 2014) including:

a. Media Literacy

Media literacy refers to the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media content. It is important because individuals need to understand how the media functions and how information is conveyed through various channels. With good media literacy, one can distinguish between valid and invalid information and avoid fake news.

b. Information Literacy

Information literacy is the ability to search, find, evaluate and use information effectively. In the digital age, where information is available in large quantities, this ability is crucial to help individuals make informed decisions based on accurate data.

c. Communication and Collaboration

The ability to communicate and collaborate with others through digital platforms is a key element of digital literacy. This includes using communication tools such as email, instant messaging apps and collaborative platforms to share ideas and work in teams. These skills support productive interactions in work and academic environments.

d. Digital Scholarship

Digital scholarship refers to the application of digital skills in an academic or research context. It includes the ability to use technology in research, data analysis, as well as the effective presentation of research results. Individuals with digital scholarship can utilize online resources to support their studies.

e. Career and Identity Management

This element covers the ability to manage one's digital identity and career in the online world. Individuals need to understand how to build and maintain their reputation on social media and how to utilize digital platforms for career development, such as seeking job opportunities or building professional networks.

f. Learning Skills

Learning skills include the ability to learn independently using digital resources. This includes the use of online courses, video tutorials and other learning materials available on the internet. Individuals should be able to evaluate these resources and select those that best suit their learning needs.

g. ICT Literacy

ICT literacy is the ability to use information and communication technology tools effectively. It includes an understanding of hardware and software as well as skills in using digital applications for a variety of purposes, from communication to data analysis.

3. Methodology

The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand social phenomena and human behavior more deeply and holistically. With a qualitative approach, researchers can analyze a problem from various perspectives or views(Adiwijaya et al., 2024). This is very

important to understand the context and dynamics that occur within Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), as well as how marketing communication strategies can be implemented to increase digital literacy (Wardana et al., 2024) .

This research uses a case study analysis method. This method was chosen because it is effective for investigating and understanding certain phenomena in a real-life context. According to (Yin, 2018) in his book entitled "The Sixth Edition: Case Study Research and Applications Special to This Sixth Edition," the case study method is a very effective tool for exploring in-depth information about an event, individual, or group that has unique characteristics. This method is described as a very effective tool for exploring in-depth information about an event, individual, or group that has unique characteristics. The data collection techniques carried out are through in-depth interviews, and observations with MSME players and PaDi MSME employees who carry out the marketing communication strategy. The purpose of this data collection is to explore information about their experiences, challenges faced, and marketing communication strategies implemented.

4. Result

4.1 PaDi UMKM as a digital literacy effort for MSME players

PaDi UMKM, through its education and community programs, launched various initiatives to improve digital literacy among MSME players. These programs include PaDi Talks, Kelas Pemahaman, and Inkubasi Berdaya PaDi UMKM. PaDi Talks is a regular program held online, presenting experienced practitioner resource persons. The purpose of this program is to improve MSME literacy and expand the network between sellers in PaDi UMKM. Through these interactive discussion sessions, participants can gain insights and inspiration from experts who share their experiences in managing and developing businesses. Furthermore, Kelas Pemahaman is intended for all sellers in PaDi UMKM. This program helps sellers understand the features available on the platform and provides guidance on how to grow their business. There is also an OnBoarding class for prospective sellers in PaDi UMKM. Lastly, the Inkubasi Berdaya PaDi UMKM program is an initiative for selected sellers to improve their business capabilities and capacity. The program lasts for 3 to 6 months with a phased approach, equipped with learning modules designed to support overall business development.

Of the three programs, researchers chose to understand more about the PaDi Talks program, because this program offers a variety of important information that is needed by MSME players, especially in improving their digital knowledge. By joining this program, MSME players are expected to expand their insights and skills needed to compete in an increasingly digital market.

4.2 Components of PaDi Talks Marketing Communication Strategy

The researcher conducted an interview with MTA, who serves as Head of SME Growth at PaDi UMKM. In the interview, MTA emphasized the importance of improving digital literacy among MSME players through several Education and community programs, one of which is PaDi Talks. According to the book Digital Marketing Excellence: Planning, Optimizing and Integrating Online Marketing (Dave Chaffey & PR Smith, 2017), there are 6 elements of SOSTAC theory in analyzing the marketing communication strategy of a company, in this case PaDi UMKM, namely:

    a. **Situation Analysis**

In the interview, MTA explained about the PaDi Talks program that is held regularly and online. She stated that this program aims to add insight to MSME players, especially those registered in PaDi, but it is also open to the public. *"PaDi Talks is held regularly online because this program aims to broaden the horizons of MSMEs in PaDi in particular, but we are also open to the public,"* she said. MTA added that in each session, they invite various experienced practitioners, sellers, and internal PaDi members to share knowledge and experience.

    b. **Objective**

In the interview, MTA explained that the PaDi Talks program has several main objectives that are very important for MSME players. First, the program aims to increase insight and digital literacy, so that MSME players can better understand and utilize technology in their business. *"The purpose of PaDi Talks is not only to add insight, but also to understand that B2B (Business to Business) business is not as easy or simple as B2C (Business to Consumer) business,"* said MTA. She added that in the B2B context, procurement usually involves larger volumes, so MSME players need to understand how to process orders on that scale. MTA emphasized the importance of educational programs such as PaDi Talks to improve sellers' knowledge. In addition, this program also serves as a media for promoting products in PaDi UMKM, with an approach that is not hard selling, but starts from basic education and literacy.

c. Strategy

In the interview, MTA explained that the PaDi Talks program targets MSME players who want to improve their quality and value through certified programs. The program is designed to provide relevant training and education, so that MSME players can understand market dynamics and develop the skills needed to compete in the digital era. *"To improve the quality of sellers, we need programs that can support them,"* said MTA. She emphasized that improving seller quality is not only related to transactions, but also involves several other important aspects. For example, when sellers register in PaDi UMKM, those who previously did not have a Business Identification Number (NIB) finally get an NIB, which is one of the requirements to join. In addition, sellers who do not have an individual Taxpayer Identification Number (NPWP) can transform into a business entity and get a business entity NPWP. MTA also explained that to get transactions from B2B buyers, such as SOEs, private companies, and the government, sellers in PaDi are required to have certain certifications. These certifications are very important to improve their quality as sellers on the PaDi platform. Thus, these programs contribute to the development and improvement of seller competencies in PaDi MSMEs.

d. Tactics

In the interview, MTA explained that PaDi Talks utilizes various marketing tools to increase the visibility and effectiveness of its program in supporting MSME players and reaching a wider audience. *"PaDi Talks is promoted through various channels,"* said MTA. She added that this promotion is done through sending messages to seller groups, Ocha channels, WhatsApp blasts, as well as PaDi UMKM official social media and seller dashboards.

e. Action

In the interview, MTA explained that the PaDi Talks program is held twice a week or every week depending on the need. Each session presents experienced practitioner resource persons, so that participants can gain insights directly from those who have been successful in their fields. *"PaDi Talks is held every two weeks, but sometimes it can take place every week, depending on the needs and requests of the participants,"* said MTA. She added that to date, the program has been held 52 times and will continue to grow with unique and inspiring themes.

f. Control

In the interview, MTA explained that PaDi Talks conducts regular evaluations to assess the performance and satisfaction of MSME players with the program. This evaluation is very important to ensure that the program remains relevant and effective in meeting participants' needs. *"First, in measuring the success of the program, we usually use insight research surveys to get the right topics, approximately what topics are suitable or needed by MSME players,"* said MTA. She added that they also conduct feedback surveys from each program held. In addition, MTA explained that personal testimonials from beneficiaries who have participated in the PaDi Talks program are also collected to get a clearer picture of the program's impact.

4.3 Components of Digital Literacy of PaDi UMKM

Researchers conducted an interview with one of the MSME players with the initials Y, who has joined as a seller in PaDi UMKM and actively participates in the PaDi Talks program. Y is one of the MSME players, whose business is engaged in board flower arrangements, table flowers, baby born hampers, and fruit hampers. In this interview, the researcher aims to dig deeper into the experiences and benefits Y has gained from the program. The results and discussion of this interview refer to the seven important elements of digital literacy identified by (JISC, 2014), Each of these elements contributes to the development of Y's competence as an adaptive and innovative MSME players.
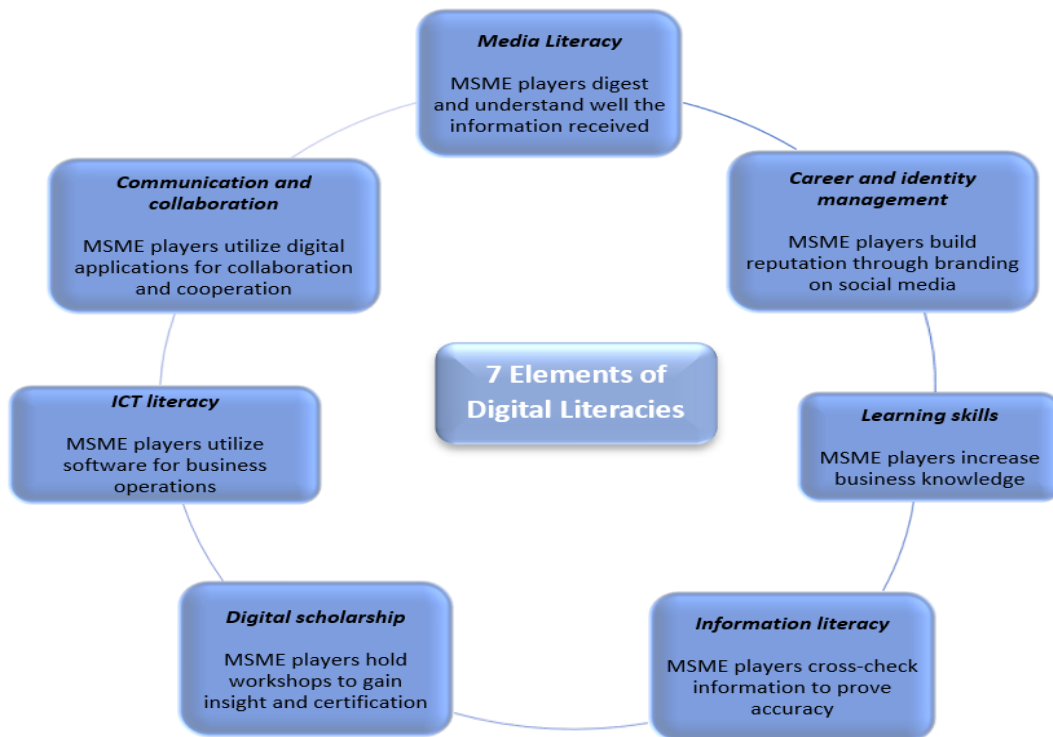
Figure 2. Personal documents

a. Media literacy

In the interview, Y. explained the first step taken by MSME players in receiving information, namely by digesting and understanding the content of the information. She emphasized the importance of ensuring the truth of information before making a decision. *"Since I participated in the PaDi Talks program, I feel more careful in receiving information,"* said Y. She added that currently there is a lot of information that seems valid but actually is not. For example, when she wanted to join PaDi UMKM, Y. had done an information search and made sure that everything she received was correct and accountable.

b. Communication and collaboration

In running a business, informant Y utilizes various digital applications, such as WhatsApp to collaborate and work together. The main purpose of using these applications is to exchange information related to the smooth operation of the business, including discussing the delivery of goods, product requests, and feedback from customers effectively.

c. Career and identity management

In the interview, Y explained that he is currently very active in building product branding through social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. *"We are currently actively building branding through Instagram and TikTok,"* he said. He emphasized that nowadays, social media is very influential for the progress of any business. *"Apart from serving as a free advertising medium, these social media also make it easier for customers to find out about the products we sell,"* said Y. Thus, MSME players can improve their online reputation and make it easier for customers to find information about the business and products offered.

d. ICT literacy

In the interview, Y. explained how she manages her business bookkeeping by using Microsoft Excel to record sales journals. She also utilizes the digital application E-Invoice, which makes it easy to print invoices digitally without having to send physical copies. In this way, Y. feels an increase in efficiency in the process of recording and sending invoices, which is very helpful amid the challenges faced by MSMEs today. The use of E-Invoicing not only speeds up the administrative process, but also reduces the risk of errors and improves accuracy in the financial management of her business.

e. Learning skills

In the interview, Y. revealed that MSME players increasingly realize the importance of improving their knowledge and understanding of their business. For this reason, they regularly seek references and update information through various platforms, including YouTube. Y. explained, *"I always ask my team to monitor and see updates about new products that appear on social media or YouTube. From the inspiration we find, we will usually develop the idea into a new piece or model."* He emphasized that although they look for inspiration, their efforts are always focused on creating something unique and not plagiarizing the work of others.

f. Digital scholarship

In the interview, Y. explained that MSME players are now not just taking courses to increase their knowledge, but have also taken it a step further by organizing workshops and learning together. This activity aims to obtain additional certifications that can increase the credibility of their business. Y. stated, *"To gain experience, we usually organize workshops for other MSME players to learn and discuss together."*

g. Information literacy

In the interview, Y. explained the importance for MSME players to ensure the validity of the information they receive. She stated that this process involves checking the source of the information and cross-referencing it with other data so that decisions made can be justified. *"Searching for the truth of news on the internet, especially using Google, is an important step in today's information age,"* said Y. She emphasized that with so much information circulating, they often encounter inaccurate news or even hoaxes. Therefore, Y. emphasized that fact-checking before believing the information is crucial to maintain the integrity and sustainability of their business.

The results show that some of the marketing communication strategies implemented by PaDi UMKM as a digital literacy effort for MSME players do not only focus on developing digital insights and capabilities, but also on product promotion. Through the PaDi Talks program, MSME players feel significant benefits from the presence of this program. Based on the results of interviews with MSME players with the initials Y, he revealed that he had felt a real difference in his knowledge after participating in the program. *"This program has not only broadened my digital horizons, but also expanded my business relationships,"* he said. Y added, *"Besides gaining experience, I also made new friends in the business world."* This shows that PaDi Talks not only serves as an educational platform, but also as a bridge to build a wider network among MSME players. Furthermore, PaDi UMKM's marketing communication strategy prioritizes a holistic approach, where each session is designed to meet the specific needs of MSME players in facing challenges in the digital era. Thus, PaDi Talks plays an important role in improving digital literacy and equipping MSME players with the necessary skills to compete in an increasingly competitive market. This program proves that digital literacy is not just about understanding technology, but also about how to leverage that knowledge to build strong and sustainable business relationships.

5. Conclusion

Digital literacy has become a crucial foundation in developing Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), opening access to new opportunities, and increasing their competitiveness in an increasingly digitally connected market. In this context, the implementation of effective marketing communication strategies through educational programs is necessary to empower MSME players. PaDi UMKM, through its Education and Community division, designs and implements various initiatives, including the PaDi Talks program, which aims to improve the digital literacy of MSME players.

With the tagline 'One Stop Solution B2B Marketplace', PaDi UMKM not only provides comprehensive B2B marketplace solutions, but also serves as a key driver in digital literacy for MSME players. The programs offered not only focus on product development, but also on the ability of businesses to adapt to changing times. Through PaDi Talks, MSME players gain new insights and knowledge that are indispensable to compete in the digital era.

An analysis of PaDi UMKM marketing communication strategy components and important elements of digital literacy shows that the PaDi Talks program has had a significant positive impact on the development of digital skills and business networks of MSME players. Thus, PaDi UMKM plays an important role in creating an ecosystem that supports the growth and sustainability of MSMEs in Indonesia.

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