

SOCIAL NETWORK-BASED EMPOWERMENT IN THE DIGITAL ERA A STUDY IN THE UMKM NAIK KELAS COMMUNITY

Imam Mahmud^{1*}, Erna Rochana², Usman Raidar³, Teuku Fahmi⁴, Azis Ahmad⁵

¹Department of Social and Political Science, University of Lampung, Indonesia

²Department of Social and Political Science, University of Lampung, Indonesia

³Departement of Social and Political Science, University of Lampung, Indonesia

⁴Departement of Social and Political Science, University of Lampung, Indonesia

⁵Departement of Social and Political Science, University of Lampung, Indonesia

*imam.mahmud@fisip.unila.ac.id

Abstract

Writing a Challenges in the business management process with the adoption of the use of digital technology, and limited social networks are still the main obstacles in the process of empowering MSMEs in each region. This research was conducted to analyse the contribution of social networks in the digital era to the empowerment of MSMEs. The research aims to map the forms of social networks that contribute to the empowerment process of each member who is a member of the community, especially in identifying various forms of digital innovation that have been successfully carried out by MSME actors and also clarifying the factors that encourage and hinder their implementation. The research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach through interviews, observation, and documentation. The results showed that social networking in the digital era in several social media groups created by the community provides unlimited space in providing business management processes including business licensing run by MSMEs in Lampung.

Keywords: MSMEs, social networks, community empowerment, social media, digital marketing

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have an important role in increasing people's income (Ilmi, 2021) . The role and realization of viable MSMEs has a great opportunity to gain legitimacy to contribute to state revenue as well as the sturdiness of the businesses being run (Pahrijal et al., 2024) . This concept is of course born because decent MSMEs will contribute to the workforce, the production process from raw goods to finished goods, and various other things related to economic improvement. This is also confirmed by (Al Farisi & Fasa, 2022) , which explains that MSMEs are a sector that has an important role in Indonesia's economic system.

The ideal condition for the existence of viable MSMEs, of course, requires a community that builds between one MSME and another. This community can provide encouragement to related parties to be able to carry out the community empowerment process which is a shared responsibility (Ulum & Anggaini, 2020) . Even based on data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, the role of MSMEs contributes more than 60% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorbs around 97% of the total workforce (Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs, 2025) then the success of this data will be further encouraged by the existence of the MSME community.

One of the forms and births of the MSME community is Lampung UMKM Naik Kelas or what is later known as the Lampung UNK Community, which in one of its work programs is to build communication and networks with fellow MSMEs (Mufidah et al., 2024) . This means that in this embodiment, a strong communication network will allow MSME actors to exchange information about new market opportunities, industry trends, and government regulations related to the process of obtaining business licenses and other great opportunities (Mardjono et al., 2022) .

The ecosystem in the form of an established community will certainly provide experiences and practices that can be shared effectively, helping MSMEs learn from the successes and failures of other MSMEs (Yusmanianti et al., 2024) . So that responding to the existing social reality, this research will identify the Lampung Classroom MSME Community which is a forum for capacity building for MSME actors, especially in the culinary, fashion, agribusiness and other sectors. In particular, it focuses on building social networks between business actors who support each other in sharing experiences, market access, business licenses and product collaboration.

METHODOLOGY

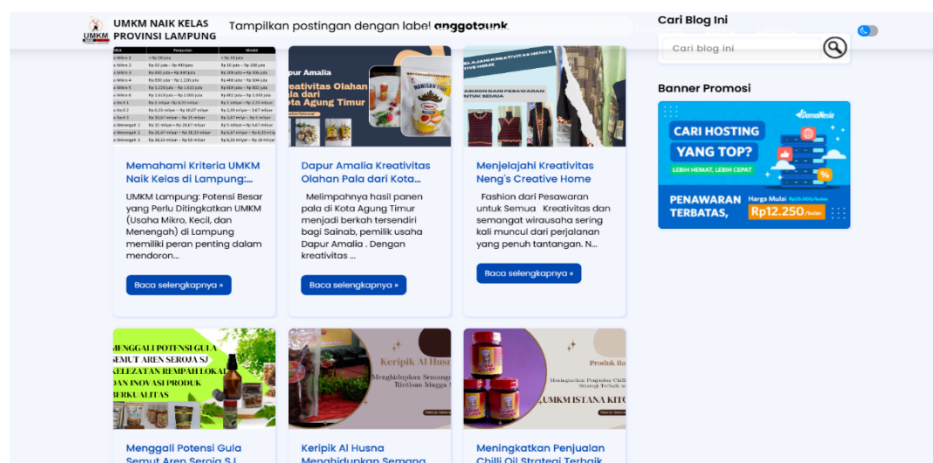
The research applied a qualitative approach with an exploratory descriptive design (Mudjiyanto, 2018). The exploratory descriptive approach was chosen because it facilitates contextual and holistic deepening of social networks in the Lampung MSMEs Naik Kelas community. The exploratory nature of qualitative research makes it particularly relevant to examine the social process of social network formation from the empowerment programs implemented (Mariyono, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hasil The results of the study explain that the existence of social networks in the digital era in the Lampung UNK Community is able to facilitate collaboration in the form of joint production or joint marketing, which in this condition can increase business scale and cost efficiency that is difficult to achieve by individual MSMEs. Some concrete forms of the positive impact of the community show that several MSMEs can work together in marketing the products developed by MSMEs.

This phenomenon is clearly reflected in the Lampung UMKM Naik Kelas Community initiative, which proactively manages and distributes its members' products through a dedicated online portal, www.komunitasunklampung.com, and utilizes popular social media ecosystems such as Instagram and TikTok. This strategy is not just an adaptation to technological developments, but a concrete representation of the importance of social networks in strengthening the capacity and competitiveness of MSMEs (Utami et al., 2024).

In the context of the discussion of the results of this research, social networks act as the main channel for information dissemination and product promotion. With centralized portals and social media, MSMEs in Lampung have access at no cost to showcase the products and services of MSME members in Lampung to a wider audience, beyond geographical boundaries. This reality can certainly overcome one of the classic barriers of MSMEs, namely limited market access and high marketing costs (Budiarto et al., 2018) . The management of promotions carried out by community administrators ensures consistency, which based on research, this consistency is still not maximized by the UNK Lampung community management



Gambar 1. UNK Community Website Display
Source: UMKM Naik Kelas Provinsi Lampung

The good impact of this promotion is of course that MSMEs can focus more on product innovation and quality improvement. So that the social network in the Lampung Upscale MSME Community creates a synergistic effect.

Therefore, the social network formed will encourage a collective presence on digital platforms to increase the visibility and credibility of MSMEs as a whole. More concretely, social media algorithms also tend to favor content that gets high interaction, and cross-promotion between community members can accelerate the spread of information. This condition is formed which means it is not just about selling products, but building a strong community brand (Riyanto et al., 2022) . So that in the end it will have a positive impact on the image and consumer confidence in Lampung MSME products.

In addition to promotional aspects, social networks also facilitate interaction and collaboration between community members (Zunaidi, 2024) . Discussions, experience sharing, and identification of partnership opportunities can occur in real-time through digital groups or forums. For example, a culinary entrepreneur can easily find raw material suppliers from other members in the community who do business in the agriculture or livestock sector, creating an efficient local supply chain. This encourages the spirit of local pride and economic circulation within Lampung's MSME ecosystem.

Overall, the strategy of utilizing social networks by the Lampung MSME Naik Kelas Community demonstrates how digital technology, when integrated with the power of community and the spirit of collaboration, can be a catalyst for MSME growth. This reinforces the idea that success in the digital age is not just the property of individuals, but rather the result of collective power and tightly knit networks that open up endless opportunities for the development of MSMEs and the local economy.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research, it can be concluded that social networks in the digital era, especially through the Lampung UMKM Naik Kelas Community initiative, play a crucial role in facilitating collaboration and improving the competitiveness of MSMEs. The existence of online platforms such as www.komunitasunklampung.com and the utilization of social media (Instagram and TikTok) have enabled MSMEs to conduct joint marketing and product promotion at no cost, thus overcoming classic barriers related to market access and high marketing costs that are often faced by individual MSMEs.

The resulting social networks not only serve as the main channel for information dissemination and product promotion that expands audience reach beyond geographical boundaries, but also create synergistic effects. The collective presence of MSMEs on digital platforms increases the overall visibility and credibility of MSMEs, reinforced by social media algorithms that favor content with high interaction and cross-promotion among members. Nonetheless, the results indicate that the consistency of promotion management by community administrators is still not maximized.

Furthermore, social networks also significantly facilitate real-time interaction, discussion and experience sharing among community members. This situation encourages the identification of partnership opportunities, such as the establishment of efficient local supply chains, and simultaneously fosters the spirit of local pride and economic circulation in the Lampung MSME ecosystem. Overall, this study confirms that the strategy of utilizing digital technology integrated with the power of community and the spirit of collaboration is the main catalyst for the growth and development of MSMEs. Success in the digital era is not merely an individual achievement, but a manifestation of collective strength and tightly knit networks.

Nevertheless, some suggestions that can be made are the strengthening of the consistency of promotional management carried out by the Lampung Upscale MSME Community, which needs to improve the consistency and effectiveness of management by forming a special team or developing more structured promotional guidelines so that MSMEs in Lampung can develop in a better direction.

REFERENCES

- Al Farisi, S., & Fasa, M. I. (2022). Peran UMKM (Usaha Mikro Kecil Menengah) dalam Meningkatkan Kesejahteraan Masyarakat. *Jurnal Dinamika Ekonomi Syariah*, 9(1), 73–84.
- Budiarto, R., Putero, S. H., Suyatna, H., Astuti, P., Saptoadi, H., Ridwan, M. M., & Susilo, B. (2018). *Pengembangan UMKM antara konseptual dan pengalaman praktis*. Ugm Press.
- Ilmi, N. A. N. (2021). Peran UMKM Dalam Mengurangi Tingkat Pengangguran Masyarakat dan Strategi UMKM Ditengah Pandemi Covid-19. *Jurnal Manajemen Bisnis*, 18(1), 96–107.
- Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Perekonomian. (2025). *Pemerintah Dorong UMKM Naik Kelas, Tingkatkan Kontribusi terhadap Ekspor Indonesia*. Ekon.Go.Id. <https://www.ekon.go.id/publikasi/detail/6152/pemerintah-dorong-umkm-naik->

kelas-tingkatkan-kontribusi-terhadap-ekspor-indonesia

- Mardjono, R., Narindro, L., Qamar, A. S., Sari, S., Maulana, A., & Jubaidah, I. (2022). Pemberdayaan UMKM Komunitas OK OCE Menggunakan Media Digital. *Abdimas Universal*, 4(1), 49–58.
- Mariyono, D. (2024). *Menguasai Penelitian Kualitatif Metode, Analisis Terapan, dan Arab Masa Depan*. Cipta Media Nusantara.
- Mudjiyanto, B. (2018). Tipe penelitian eksploratif komunikasi. *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi Dan Media*, 22(1), 65–74.
- Mufidah, H., Saleh, A., Tri, R., Pranata, H., Widia, A., Maharani, K. Z., Azzahra, M., Bogor, K., & Kelompok, K. (2024). *Komunikasi kelompok dalam mendorong kapabilitas umkm pada komunitas umkm naik kelas kota bogor*. 7, 114–124.
- Pahrijal, R., Ardhiyansyah, A., Budiman, D., Rahmawati, Y. D., Hermawan, I., Juniarso, A., & Gumelar, T. M. (2024). Mendorong Pertumbuhan Ekonomi Berkelanjutan: Strategi Pemberdayaan UMKM Berbasis Komunitas di Desa Cikahuripan Kecamatan Cisolak Kabupaten Sukabumi. *Jurnal Pengabdian West Science*, 3(04), 350–360.
- Riyanto, S., Azis, M. N. L., & Putera, A. R. (2022). Pendampingan UMKM dalam penggunaan digital marketing pada komunitas UMKM di Kabupaten Madiun. *Jurnal Abdimas BSI: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, 5(1), 137–142.
- Ulum, M. C., & Anggaini, N. L. V. (2020). *Community empowerment: teori dan praktik pemberdayaan komunitas*. Universitas Brawijaya Press.
- Utami, T., Purnomo, B., Estiana, R., Padilah, H., Harto, B., Judijanto, L., Munizu, M., Adrian, A., Ratnaningrum, L. P. R. A., & Nurrohman, R. (2024). *UMKM DIGITAL: Teori dan Implementasi UMKM pada Era Society 5.0*. PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia.
- Yusmaniarti, Y., Hernadianto, H., Astuti, B., & Duffin, D. (2024). Peningkatan Kapasitas Sdm Melalui Pelatihan Akses Dan Literasi Keuangan Bagi Pelaku Umkm Bengkulu Utara. *Jurnal Pengabdian Kolaborasi Dan Inovasi IPTEKS*, 2(6), 1676–1684.
- Zunaidi, A. (2024). *Metodologi Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat Pendekatan Praktis untuk Memberdayakan Komunitas*. Yayasan Putra Adi Dharma.