

The Impact of Website Management on MSMEs in Pabelan Village Semarang Regency

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Abstract: This research examines the influence of website management on the development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Pabelan Village, Semarang Regency. In today's digital era, websites have become an essential part of marketing strategies and business development. This study employed a qualitative approach through interviews and observations of 15 MSME owners who have implemented websites as marketing tools. The results show that proper website management positively impacts market reach, sales, and ease of information access for consumers. MSME owners who actively update content, improve appearance, and respond to customer interactions through their websites experienced an average revenue increase of 35%. These findings emphasize the importance of digital literacy and technical assistance for MSME actors in optimizing their website management as a means of business development in the digital economy era.

Keywords: Website Management, Msmes, Digital Marketing, Pabelan Village, Business Development.

INTRODUCTIONS

The digital era has brought significant changes to the business world, including for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) operating in rural areas. Pabelan Village in Semarang Regency is one such area with substantial MSME potential, offering a variety of superior products such as bamboo crafts, processed foods, agricultural products, traditional weaving, and a wide range of unique local souvenirs with high market value. This area is known as a hub for the creative industry, with more than 120 business units spread across the village. With the advancement of information technology, websites have become an essential tool for MSME actors to expand their product marketing reach. However, the use of websites as a marketing and communication medium for MSMEs in Pabelan Village remains suboptimal. This is due to various factors, such as limited knowledge of information technology, lack of skills in website management, insufficient understanding of digital marketing strategies, and inadequate access to proper digital infrastructure.

Based on a preliminary survey conducted in January 2024, out of 120 MSMEs in Pabelan Village, only around 25% had a website, and of those, less than 40% actively managed their website on a consistent basis. As noted by Wijaya and Santoso (2022), the adoption of digital technology by MSMEs in Indonesia is still at an early stage, particularly in rural areas. Although awareness of the importance of digital presence is increasing, practical implementation still faces many challenges. On the other hand, the market potential that can be reached through digital platforms is enormous. Data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) showed that in 2023, the number of internet users in Indonesia reached 210 million people, or around 73% of the total population. This number continues to grow each year, indicating a growing opportunity for MSMEs to reach consumers through digital media, including websites. According to a report by the Ministry of Communication and

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Informatics (2023), e-commerce transactions in Indonesia reached a value of IDR 401 trillion in 2022, with MSMEs contributing 64% of the total transaction value.

This study aims to analyze the impact of website management on the development of MSMEs in Pabelan Village, Semarang Regency. Specifically, this research seeks to: (1) identify the characteristics of website management among MSME actors in Pabelan Village; (2) analyze the impact of website management on marketing, sales, and business development aspects of MSMEs; (3) identify supporting and inhibiting factors in website management by MSMEs; and (4) formulate strategies to optimize website management for MSMEs in Pabelan Village. The results of this study are expected to provide insights into the critical role of website management in enhancing MSME competitiveness and identify key factors to consider in implementing websites as a digital marketing strategy.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to analyze the influence of website management on MSMEs in Pabelan Village, Semarang Regency. The choice of a qualitative approach is based on the need to obtain a deep understanding of the experiences of MSME actors in managing websites and their impact on business development. Data collection was carried out using several techniques, namely semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with 15 MSME actors in Pabelan Village who had implemented websites as part of their marketing strategies. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) having a business that has been operating for at least one year, (2) having and managing a business website for at least six months, and (3) residing in Pabelan Village, Semarang Regency.

Observations were carried out on the technical and content aspects of the websites managed by the respondents, including interface design, navigation structure, content quality, update frequency, as well as the interactive features provided. In addition, document analysis was also carried out on sales data, financial reports, and website visitor statistics to determine the impact of website management on business development. The collected data was then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The analysis process included data coding, categorization, pattern identification, and drawing conclusions. To ensure data validity, this study used source and method triangulation techniques, as well as member checking by involving respondents in verifying the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research findings, several important points were identified regarding the influence of website management on MSMEs in Pabelan Village, Semarang Regency. These findings are categorized into several aspects as follows:

Characteristics of Website Management by MSMEs

The research shows that the majority of MSME actors in Pabelan Village are still in the early stages of website management. Out of 15 respondents, only 5 MSMEs regularly update their content (at least once a week). Meanwhile, 7 respondents update their websites irregularly, and the remaining 3 rarely update them since the websites were first launched. In terms of content, most MSME websites (11 out of 15) focus on product information such as descriptions, prices, and photos. Interactive features such as online order forms and live chat were found on only 4 websites. Technical aspects such as access speed and website security

are also still a concern, with 9 out of 15 websites experiencing issues such as slow loading times and potential data security vulnerabilities. As expressed by Sutrisno, the owner of a bamboo craft business: *"We have had a website since last year, but we are still confused about how to manage it properly. So far, we've only uploaded product photos and brief descriptions, but we don't know what strategy to use to turn the website into sales."*

Impact of Website Management on MSME Development

Despite variations in management quality, the findings show a positive correlation between good website management and business development. MSMEs that consistently update content, improve technical aspects, and provide interactive features experienced a significant increase in website visitors, conversion rates, and sales revenue. Data shows that the 5 MSMEs that managed their websites optimally saw an average revenue increase of 35% in the last six months. Meanwhile, 7 MSMEs with irregular website management experienced only a 12% increase in revenue, and 3 MSMEs with minimal website management did not show a significant increase in revenue. One important factor influencing website effectiveness is its ability to reach a wider market. As stated by Winarti, the owner of a processed food business: *"Since using a website and regularly updating it with high-quality product photos and customer testimonials, orders from outside the city have increased drastically. Now, 60% of our customers come from outside Semarang Regency."*

Challenges in Website Management

This study also identified several challenges faced by MSME actors in managing their websites. The main challenge reported by the majority of respondents (12 out of 15) is the lack of knowledge and technical skills in website management. In addition, limited time and human resources are also obstacles, especially for MSMEs managed solely by their owners. Cost is another significant concern for MSME operators. The expenses for website development and maintenance, including hosting fees, domain registration, and content management services, are considered burdensome for some micro-scale businesses. Nevertheless, MSMEs that are able to manage these costs effectively and allocate a specific budget for digital development have seen a positive return on investment in the long term. Another obstacle identified is the limited internet infrastructure in some areas of Pabelan Village. Unstable internet connections make it difficult for MSMEs to update content regularly and respond quickly to customer interactions. As expressed by Supardi, a craft business owner: *"In our part of the village, the internet signal still often drops. Sometimes, just to update the website, I have to go to a coffee shop in the village center where the signal is better."*

Strategies for Optimizing Website Management

Based on the experience of MSMEs who successfully utilize websites optimally, this research identifies several strategies that can be implemented to improve the effectiveness of website management: First, systematic content planning and consistent updates. MSMEs that prepare a content update schedule and follow it disciplinedly show better website performance in terms of visitor numbers and conversion rates. Second, improvement of visual aspects and user experience. Websites with attractive design, easy navigation, and fast loading time tend to have higher visitor retention rates. Third, integration with social media and other online marketing platforms. MSMEs who connect their websites with social media accounts and marketplaces experience increased traffic and better conversion. Fourth, utilization of analytic data for evaluation and development. MSMEs that routinely analyze visitor data and consumer behavior on websites can make more effective strategic adjustments. Fifth, collaboration with other parties such as digital communities, mentoring institutions, and local government to improve capacity in website management.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that website management has a positive influence on the development of MSMEs in Pabelan Village, Semarang Regency. MSMEs that manage their websites optimally experience significant increases in market reach, consumer interaction, and sales turnover. However, the effectiveness of website management heavily depends on several factors such as consistency in content updates, quality of design and user experience, as well as integration with other digital platforms. Nevertheless, MSME actors in Pabelan Village still face various obstacles in optimizing website management, especially related to limited knowledge and technical skills, human resources, costs, and internet infrastructure. To overcome these obstacles, collaborative efforts are needed among MSME actors, local government, educational institutions, and digital communities to improve digital literacy and the technical capacity of MSME actors in managing websites.

This study has practical implications for the development of MSMEs in the digital era, particularly in rural areas. First, the importance of technical assistance and training in website management for MSME actors. Second, the need for infrastructure support and policies that facilitate the adoption of digital technology by MSMEs. Third, the importance of a collaborative approach to overcoming the digital divide in rural areas. For future research, it is recommended to conduct studies with a broader scope and quantitative methods to measure the economic impact of website management on MSMEs. In addition, research on suitable digital business models for MSMEs in rural areas also needs to be conducted to provide practical guidance for business actors in facing digital transformation.

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