

Utilization of E-Commerce Platform as An Effort to Increase Performance and Business Sustainability in Pandemic Times

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ABSTRAK

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ABSTRACT

Akibat pandemi COVID-19, kinerja UMKM Kota Medan mengalami penurunan. Penggunaan platform digital menjadi salah satu strategi yang harus diterapkan UMKM untuk bertahan di tengah kebijakan selama pandemi COVID-19. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah menganalisis pemanfaatan *E-Commerce sebagai upaya meningkatkan penjualan dan mempertahankan* bisnis UMKM kota Medan di masa pandemi. Populasi dalam penelitian ini adalah jumlah total UMKM yang terdaftar di Dinas UMKM Kota Medan yaitu sebanyak 1.717-unit UMKM. Pengambilan sampel penelitian ini menggunakan purposive sampling dengan teknik pengambilan sampel yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah non-probability sampling dengan menggunakan rumus Slovin. Sampel dalam penelitian ini adalah 323 sampel. Metode penelitian menggunakan analisis deskriptif kualitatif untuk mengkaji kondisi objek alam atau situasi objek penelitian dan memahami fenomena sosial dari sudut pandang partisipan dan kuantitatif untuk pengolahan data dengan menggunakan software tools SPSS versi 21. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa E-Commerce berpengaruh pada peningkatan kinerja dan dapat menjaga keberlangsungan bisnis sehingga dapat bertahan di masa pandemi saat ini. Implikasi penelitian ini diharapkan UMKM secara keberlanjutan mampu menjaga kelangsungan usaha dan dapat meningkatkan penjualan usaha.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the performance of MSMEs in Medan City has decreased. The use of digital platforms is one of the strategies that must be implemented by MSMEs to survive amid policies during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of this study is to analyze the use of E-Commerce as an effort to increase sales and maintain the MSME business of Medan during the pandemic. The population in this study is the total number of MSMEs registered with the Medan City MSME Office, which is 1.717-MSME units. The sampling of this study uses purposive sampling with the sampling technique used in this study is non-probability sampling using the Slovin formula. The samples in this study were 323 samples. The research method uses qualitative descriptive analysis to assess the condition of natural objects or situations of research objects and understand social phenomena from the perspective of participants and quantitative for data processing using SPSS software tools version 21. The results showed that E-Commerce has an effect on improving performance and can maintain business continuity so that it can survive during the current pandemic. The implications of this research are expected that MSMEs will be able to sustainably maintain business continuity and can increase business sales.

1. INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2019, Indonesia was shocked by the news of the spread of a virus from China known as Corona Virus Disease and continually referred to as Covid-19. The emergence of Covid-19 has had many effects felt by various business groups, including MSME players (Purba et al., 2021). According to the World Bank, the impact of covid-19 will stop the business of nearly 24 million MSMEs in East Asia and the Pacific. The World Bank also estimates that almost 35 million MSMEs will remain in poverty. The attack of the covid 19 outbreak that occurred continuously globally, almost all over the world, including in Indonesia, has triggered negative sentiment toward various businesses, especially the MSME business. A survey conducted by the Indonesian Business Development Service Association (ABDSI) on MSMEs throughout Indonesia showed that 36.7% had no sales, and 26.6% of sales fell by more than 60%. The

negative impact of the Covid-19 outbreak has hampered the growth of MSME businesses where the movement of MSME businesses that require showrooms or promotions is hindered hv physical *distancing* and the existence of the Large-Scale Social Restriction movement (PSBB), making it difficult for MSME actors to find buyers. Almost all MSMEs in Indonesia are affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic and the province of North Sumatra, especially the City of Medan, an Indonesian territory with many types of MSMEs. The city of Medan has 1,717 MSMEs registered with the Medan Cooperative Service. The city of Medan is also one of the MSME actors who have succeeded in contributing to the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GDP) of 29.46% for the province of North Sumatra. According to the Medan City Cooperatives Office (2020), during the COVID-19 Pandemic, almost all MSMEs experienced a very declining income impact; as a result, the performance of Medan City MSMEs currently experienced a decline. Judging from the decline experienced by city MSMEs, using digital platforms is one of the strategies that MSMEs must implement to survive amid policies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ecommerce could become a facilitator in gaining knowledge to create knowledge through developing new product (Bahtiar, 2020). MSME actors must be able to adapt to using digital transactions. Previous research stated that social capital and social interaction have a strong influence on purchasing decisions made in e-commerce trading (Ghahtarani et al., 2020). The use of digital marketing allows MSME actors to market their products without being constrained by policies during the pandemic (Purba et al., 2021; Redjeki & Affandi, 2021). According to previous research, customers are more comfortable making purchases using e-commerce than interacting directly with sellers (Yahia et al., 2018). Internet networks, trust and good communication through e-commerce platforms play an important role in seller-buyer transaction activities (Gibreel et al., 2018). As many as 129 million (88.1%) internet users in Indonesia have used E-Commerce to buy products. On this occasion, MSMEs must participate in using e-commerce for the sake of the survival of the business. E- Commerce is a business activity that utilizes electronic technology to connect companies, customers, and the public to reach an agreement on the sale of goods, services, and electronic information transactions (Lv et al., 2020; Widani et al., 2019). The main factor in the development of e-commerce is the ease with which customers find knowledge or information very easily (Jiang et al., 2014; Li et al., 2020).

E-Commerce is a process of buying and selling products electronically by customers and from company to company using computers as intermediaries for business transactions (Karmawan, 2014; Pradana, 2015). E-Commerce is a place for distributing, buying, selling, and marketing goods and services using electronic systems such as the internet, applications, or other computer networks. The ease of operating e-commerce features makes the trend of online shopping increasingly (Ingaldi & Ulewicz, 2019; Shaouf et al., 2016). Just like in Korea, the use of e-commerce is quite popular, especially for household needs in buying the products they need (Park et al., 2020). E-Commerce is an abbreviation of Electronic Commerce which means electronic media used as a marketing system (Chen & Zhang, 2015; Rehatalanit, 2021). E-commerce is not a product or service but a combination of goods and services. Some of the big names of E-Commerce platforms in Indonesia were Tokopedia, Shopee, Bukalapak, Lazada, and Blibli (Rakhmawati et al., 2021). The number of visits by Tokopedia was 147.8 million, Shopee 127 million, Bukalapak 29.5 million, Lazada 22.7 million, and Blibli 18.4 million. In this case, it brought fresh air to MSMEs during the COVID-19 Pandemic to take advantage of the E-Commerce platform to improve performance. Performance was the result of employee work to achieve the goals set by the organization by looking at aspects of quality, quantity, working time, and teamwork by the responsibilities given (Habaora et al., 2021; Widarko & Anwarodin, 2022). A good performance could be one of the benchmarks for the sustainability of a business to survive and develop over a long period.

Business continuity is an achievement to stabilize business conditions, whereas sustainability is a business system that includes addition, continuation, and approaches to protect and maintain business continuity and business expansion (Widayanti et al., 2017). Meanwhile, similar research also states that business continuity leads to a business's success in surviving in dynamic competition, seen from how well the business meets the needs of producers to consumer (Lukiastuti & Rosani, 2022; Riyanti et al., 2022). One thing that can be done to meet consumer needs during the COVID-19 pandemic is to offer products via E-commerce and provide convenience for consumers to access according to their wishes. According to previous research stated that marketing MSME products through e-commerce has high informative, persuasive (convincing), and intention (attractive) values (Burhanudin et al., 2022; Šaković Jovanović et al., 2020). The purpose of this study was to determine the benefits of using the E-Commerce platform as an effort to improve performance and business continuity in the Pandemic Period for MSMEs in Medan with several e-commerce platform indicators such as spending cost efficiency, reputation for ease of doing business online. Indicators of business continuity are motivation to join e-commerce, opportunities to develop a business, an attitude toward running a business, attention to business management, and community in e-commerce. Moreover, performance appraisal indicators are sales volume related to the

number of product sales that are successfully marketed and market share related to the part of the market that is controlled to improve sales performance and the urgency of this research, in particular, is to ascertain the extent to which the use of e-commerce platforms by MSMEs in Medan is to improve their performance and business continuity in the Pandemic Period and even in the future. Furthermore, utilizing the e-commerce platform can be used as a strategy for other MSMEs to introduce products through online applications and make innovations to survive and improve their performance.

2. METHODS

The research paper was conducted on MSMEs in the city of Medan and will coordinate with the MSME Service of Medan City, North Sumatra Province. The population in this study is the total number of MSMEs registered at the Medan City MSME Service. Moreover, the number of MSMEs that are active and registered with the Medan City MSME Service is 1,717 MSME units. Moreover, the sampling that will be used in this study is to use a purposive sample, and the sampling technique in this study is included in the non-probability sampling. The size of the sample in this study, using the Slovin formula with a sampling error rate of 5%, the number of samples in this study was 323. A total of 323 samples by distributing questionnaires online and offline directly to the selected MSME actors. The questionnaires have already been distributed to consumers who have been selected. This study uses a Likert scale with a score of 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree), which is then processed using descriptive analysis with the SEM-PLS method. With feedback on the distribution of questionnaires extracted online and offline, all respondents' results were collected, which were then processed through Ms. Excel and SPSS 26. This study's descriptive analysis aims to see respondents' characteristics in MSMEs in Medan, North Sumatra.

The research method uses qualitative and quantitative descriptive analysis to facilitate this research process. Qualitative descriptive analysis is used to examine the condition of natural objects or the situation of the object of research and understand social phenomena from the participant's perspective. It is suitable for researching conditions (Sugiyono, 2018). Qualitative analysis using descriptive methods through questionnaire data which will be processed from the distribution of questionnaires to respondents helps solve the problems studied. Data processing is carried out using software tools SPSS version 21 for tabulation of data, and quantitative analysis was carried out using the SEM program with the PLS program (Ghozali, 2018). This research was conducted on MSME actors in the city of Medan and later in collaboration with the Medan City MSME Service. The following is a flowchart of the research to be carried out. The measurement variables in this study are dependent and independent. There are two dependent variables in this study, namely the performance variable as a variable (Y1), which could be measured by indicators of sales volume and market share (Aribawa, 2016; Moy et al., 2020). As a variable (Y2), namely business continuity with measurement indicators, namely motivation to join e-commerce, Opportunity to develop business, and attitude toward doing business. Attention to business management, Community in e-commerce (Moy et al., 2020). The independent variable is E-Commerce, as an indicator of production cost efficiency, reputation, and ease of doing business online (Scuotto et al., 2017). Every indicator on the variables obtained through the distribution of questionnaires will be processed data using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using the PLS program. The results of processing the data obtained can be used as managerial implications for the Medan City MSMEs regarding the utilization of e-commerce platforms to improve performance and business continuity during the pandemic (case study: MSMEs in Medan). It could be seen in Figure 1 that the framework of thought in this study.

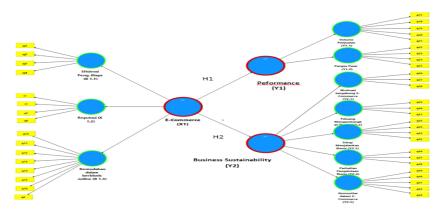


Figure 1. Thinking Framework

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

Characteristics of Respondents Using E-Commerce

Table 1 shows that media users E-commerce in Medan SMEs is dominated by women with a total of 174 with a percentage of 53.9%. In contrast, the percentage of men with a total of 149 with a percentage of 46.1%, the difference in MSME ownership in Medan City between women and men is not much different. Characteristics of age in E-commerce in MSMEs in Medan City are dominated by the average age of around 31-40 years with a total of 120 MSMEs with a percentage of 37% of all selected respondents.

Respondent Characteristics	Туре	Frequency Accumulation	Percentage	
Gender	Man	149	46.1%	
	Woman	174	53.9%	
Age	19-25 years old	72	22.3%	
-	26-30 years old	89	27.6%	
	31-40 years old	120	37.%	
	41-50 Years	40	12.4	
	> 50 years	2	0.1%	
Education	SD	18	5.56%	
	SMP	28	8.6%	
	SMA/SMK	183	56.6%	
	D1-D3	17	5.24%	
	S1-S2	77	23.8%	
Work	There aren't any	40	12.4%	
	household servant	7	2.2%	
	Student	12	3.7%	
	Employee/ Entrepreneur	231	71.4%	
	PNS/TNI/Polri	10	3.1%	
	Farmers/Farmers	16	5.0%	
	Teachers and Lecturers	7	2.1%	
Types of SMEs	Culinary	100	31.0%	
	Clothes	92	28.5%	
	Craft	50	15.4%	
	Shoe	81	25.1%	
E-commerce	Tokopedia	75	23.2%	
Platform	Shopee	88	27.2%	
	Open	39	12.1%	
	Everything	121	37.4%	
E-commerce Use	1-2 years	114	35.3%	
Year	3-5 years	118	36.5%	
	6-7 years	51	15.8%	
	> 8 years	40	12.4%	
mount	·	323	100%	

Figure 2 shows increased sales turnover for media users' E-commerce. The picture above explains that the increase in turnover obtained by MSME actors in Medan City averaged 0-20% with a total of 162 MSME actors, and 69 MSMEs obtained an increase in turnover of 21-40%, the result of an increase in turnover of 41-50% was obtained by of 53 MSME actors, an increase in turnover between 51-70% was obtained by 30 MSME actors. In comparison, only 9 MSME actors in Medan City were able to experience an increase in turnover of > 71%. It means that Medan City MSME actors must use the platform media E-commerce to increase sales and performance of MSMEs. In this case, it could be seen that the length of use of the platform media E-commerce has not been around long enough. The longer you use media, E-commerce can make it easier to provide information about the products offered to customers so that they could increase sales or performance of MSMEs (Redjeki & Affandi, 2021).

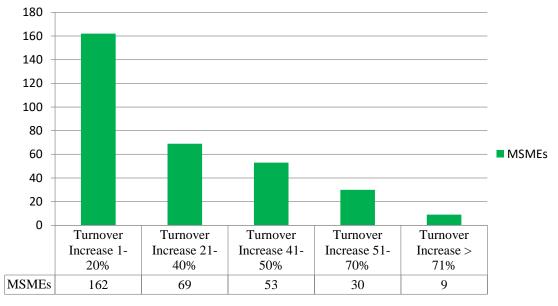
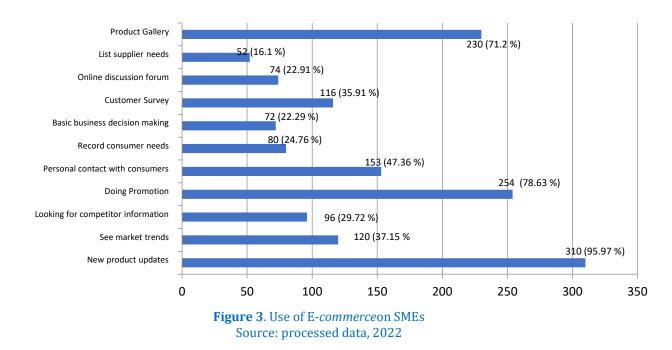


Figure 2. MSME Turnover Achievement

Figure 3 shows the results of the use of E-*commerce* in the MSMEs of Medan City and how the MSME actors attract and retain customers. In the picture above, as many as 310 MSMEs in Medan City often use media E-*commerce* to update new products with a total percentage of 95.97%, then as many as 254 MSMEs use E-*commerce* as a means of promotion to customers to increase their sales. Therefore, MSME actors must use E-commerce more as a forum for building customer relationships and retaining customers. The Figure 3 also shows the Medan City MSME actors in utilizing E-*commerce* focus more on updating new products to add and retain customers, providing promo prices for customers to give an excellent impression to prospective buyers and customers, and creating product galleries so that consumers can find out the products we sell to consumers.



SEM Analysis – PLS Outer Model Evaluation

To analyze the utilization of e-commerce platforms to improve performance and business continuity during the pandemic, MSMEs in Medan in this study used SEM-PLS. The first thing to do is test the validity of the variables and the reliability of indicators in this research. Validity occurs if the scores

are obtained from two different instruments, and each of the same variables has a high correlation. The indicator is said to be valid if the score outer loading > 0.5, AVE, and commonality > 0.5 (Ghozali, 2018). The following are the results of the outer model presented in Table 2, which states that all indicators on the AVE variable are said to meet and are valid because the AVE value and communality are > 0.5.

Table 2. Outer Model Results

Variable	Indicator	AVE value	Information	
E-Commerce	Cost Control Efficiency (X 1.1)	0.562	Valid	
	Reputation (X 1.2)	0.735	Valid	
	Ease of doing business online (X 1.3)	0.959	Valid	
Performance (Y1)	Sales Volume (Y1.1)	0.864	Valid	
	Market Share (Y1.2)	0.880	Valid	
Business Continuity (Y2)	Motivation to join E-Commerce (Y2.1)	0.724	Valid	
	Business Development Opportunity (Y2.2)	0.757	Valid	
	The attitude of Doing Business (Y2.3)	0.837	Valid	
	Business Management Attention (Y2.4)	0.805	Valid	
	Community in E-Commerce (Y2.5)	0.855	Valid	
		Source: processed data, 2022		

Inner Model Evaluation

The structural model in PLS is evaluated by using R2 for the endogenous construct on the path coefficient value (Ghozali, 2018). The result of R^2 is 0.67 good model, 0.33 moderate model, and 0.19 weak model) or t-values for each path for the significance test between constructs in the structural model (t-statistic value > t-table. At 5% alpha, the t-table value is 1.96). So, therefore, if it has a t-statistic value of more than 1.96, it can be declared significant.

Table 3. Results of the inner model

Variable	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	Inform ation
E-Commerce (X1) -> Performance (Y1)	0.594	0.597	0.043	13.859	Signific ant
E-Commerce (X1) -> Business Continuity (Y2)	0.477	0.482	0.057	8.312	Signific ant

Based on Table 3, e-commerce has an influence on performance with a t-statistic value of 0.594. The value is more significant than 1.96. E-Commerce is a place for MSMEs with a broad reach in increasing market share and sales.

Discussion

E-Commerce can reach an extensive consumer network to improve the performance of MSME actors (Rakshit et al., 2021). Similar research stated that e-commerce that ensures faster delivery to customers has increased its sales performance (Deshpande & Pendem, 2022). The utilization of E-Commerce must be more effective to improve performance during the Pandemic Period for MSMEs in Medan. E-commerce helps customers who are aged or have health problems more easily to meet their needs during a pandemic by shopping online (Nguyen et al., 2021). E-Commerce has an influence on business continuity with a t-statistic value of 0.594; the value is more significant than 0.477. Business continuity could be increased by utilizing E-Commerce to increase the number of customers and retain customers, and can also provide knowledge sharing among the community (Moy et al., 2020). Through e-commerce, sellers also have the opportunity to be closer to customers, produce new products, and directly promote them to customers (Nisar & Prabhakar, 2017).

From the results above, it could be concluded that E-Commerce should be utilized as best as possible to improve the performance of MSMEs and business continuity in the Pandemic Period for MSMEs in Medan and in the future. Previous research states that e-commerce positively impacts the performance of MSMEs, such as penetrating national and international markets, flexible business time closer to customers, and can save operational costs (Octavia et al., 2020). E-commerce connects sellers

with customers more closely through its features and increases customer purchase intentions in shopping online (Bai et al., 2015). MSME actors in the City are expected to make maximum use of the media in adding customers and retaining customers so that performance can increase and business continuity can survive and continue to exist in the business world. In this case, using social media should not only be a trend. MSMEs in Medan City must be able to manage time and make a clearer division of tasks to carry out the promotion process through E-Commerce media. E-commerce makes it possible to promote products by developing brands to build customer loyalty through their platforms (Zhang et al., 2016). MSME actors in the City of Medan are also advised to have more than one E-Commerce platform to provide product information and attractive promos to reach a wider range of consumers.

The Medan City Government should play an active role in paying attention to the quality of knowledge of MSMEs in Medan in terms of product quality or in managing their business. The Department of Cooperatives and MSMEs in Medan City needs to provide seminars or workshops to MSME actors to increase their knowledge of MSME actors. The human resource training process owned by MSMEs was required, both in a material understanding of product design, running business operations, and especially preparing MSMEs that are empowered during the day so that they can continue their business continuity during the current pandemic. The government must take part in introducing products produced by MSMEs in the City of Medan. Organizing an exhibition of MSME works does not have to be limited to the national level. Developing a business could provide many benefits in addition to increasing income, one of which is surviving the current pandemic. Through the use of E-Commerce, MSME business actors have made it easier to reach consumers and make it easier to increase market share. With the increase in market share, the sales volume will automatically increase to improve the performance of MSMEs. In improving business continuity, Medan City MSME actors must have the motivation to join other community's E-Commerce. Because with this community, MSME actors can share information and knowledge about attitudes and opportunities in developing businesses for the future.

4. CONCLUSION

The use or utilization of the E-Commerce platform on MSMEs can provide positive things with an increase in turnover that occurs in MSMEs in Medan City, ranging from 1-20% of the number of MSMEs who are respondents in this study. Updating new products is very influential in improving the performance of MSMEs in the business's continuity. In this case, MSME actors should have a particular admin to manage their business accounts. E-Commerce's use directly impacts the performance of MSMEs and business continuity in the city of Medan. It could be seen that the E-Commerce platform for MSME actors in Medan City is proliferating, and all MSME actors have used the E-Commerce platform to promote and update new products. Through the E-Commerce platform, operational costs could be controlled as efficiently as possible, making it easier to do business in terms of sales.

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