

Community Empowerment Through Digital Marketing: Enhancing the Capacity of Local MSMEs in Pesisir Selatan

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ABSTRACT

Pesisir Selatan Regency, West Sumatra, has great natural wealth and ecotourism potential. However, this region faces the challenges of high rates of stunting and extreme poverty due to limited access to health and nutrition services. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2023) shows a significant decrease in extreme poverty, but the prevalence of stunting has increased from 25.2% (2022) to 29.8% (2023). To address this, the Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Andalas, conducted a community service activity to support one of the local business development programs through training and guidance in digital marketing. The activity was held in Nagari Bayang on October 27, 2024 (08:00 AM–16:00 PM WIB) with seven SMEs participating, using public participation and focused group discussion methods through guidance on utilizing e-commerce platforms as digital marketing tools to develop SMEs. The counseling session began with an explanation of the importance of digitalization in product sales and training on creating Shopee accounts for the SME participants, assisted by students. This was followed by a discussion session where participants could ask questions, share experiences, and identify issues and solutions in developing digital-based businesses. After the SMEs understood how to use Shopee accounts, practical transactions were conducted to provide hands-on experience in using Shopee accounts. All 7 SMEs now have Shopee accounts, have followers, and can conduct online transactions. It is hoped that this activity will increase income and support improved nutrition for the community in the area.

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INTRODUCTION

Pesisir Selatan Regency in West Sumatra has many natural treasures, including beautiful beaches bordering the Indian Ocean, mountains, and tropical forests. Great ecotourism potential is seen in popular destinations such as Carocok Beach, Cingkuak Island, and Mandeh Marine Tourism Area, which attract many tourists. The region's economy relies on the agriculture, fisheries, and tourism sectors, with leading products such as rice, coconut, cacao, and durian. In addition, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are also thriving through various local products that contribute to the regional economy. The people of Pesisir Selatan Regency also maintain their customs, including the matrilineal kinship system and traditional arts, which enrich the regional culture (Alhadi et al., 2023; Bagindo et al., 2023; Putra, 2020; ZAMZAMI et al., 2021).

However, Pesisir Selatan faces social and health challenges, including high rates of stunting and extreme poverty caused by limited access to health services, education, and income. The lack of adequate health facilities and low public awareness about the importance of balanced nutrition and preventive health services exacerbate these problems. Pesisir Selatan Regency continues to grow through various tourism development initiatives and local community economic empowerment, hoping to reduce poverty levels and improve the quality of life (Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2021; Krasnik & Rasmussen, 2002; Mulyaningsih et al., 2021; Oktaviani et al., 2024)

Economic empowerment efforts are also implemented through skills improvement, market access, and the development of superior regional products, making it one of the potential areas in West Sumatra for sustainable economic growth (World Bank, 2021; World Bank Group, 2024). Based on BPS Indonesia (2023), the prevalence of stunting in this area increased from 25.2% in 2022 to 29.8% in 2023, with a total of 2,314 cases. Stunting is a serious problem that can negatively impact children's physical and cognitive development and their future quality of life (Ummah, 2019). Therefore, comprehensive efforts are needed to address this problem through various approaches, one of which is by empowering local businesses that have the potential to increase community income and reduce poverty (Fuadi et al., 2021).

According to The World Bank (2020), empowering micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and facilitating market access for local products can create better economic opportunities for families, improving nutritional status and reducing the prevalence of stunting (Mulyaningsih et al., 2021). According to the latest data from the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture (PMK) dated 26 February 2024, the estimated number of impoverished people in Pesisir Selatan District dropped dramatically from 2,170 people to 800 people, and this value shows a significant decrease in numbers. This decrease indicates practical efforts from various parties to alleviate poverty. Still, it is necessary to continue striving so that this number can be further reduced and the community's quality of life can improve (SKI, 2023). According to Ministry of Finance Report Ministry of Finance Report (2023), economic empowerment policies through the development of MSMEs have proven effective in improving welfare and overcoming poverty in areas with limited access to essential services.

The stunting problem in Pesisir Selatan Regency reflects the cumulative impact of the community's inability to access sufficient resources to meet their basic needs, especially nutrition-related ones. Stunting, which reflects chronic malnutrition in children, can be caused by various factors, including low family income, which affects purchasing power for nutritious food. In addition, limited access to health services, education, and information on healthy diets contributes to the high rate of stunting. Therefore, there is a need for economic improvement efforts that can support the improvement of community nutrition. According to Bappenas (2023), increasing family income through the development of local

economic sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, and tourism needs to be prioritized, as this can improve economic welfare and provide better access to healthy nutrition needs.

Based on the above problems, a solution is needed in the form of a program that can overcome the main issues related to stunting and extreme poverty. A local business development program focusing on product innovation and increasing sales through digital marketing is expected to be an effective solution. With this understanding of digital marketing, local MSMEs can quickly adapt to changes in consumer preferences that continue to evolve. MSMEs can more easily market their products using E-commerce, thereby increasing revenue. In the long run, this increase in income from online sales can reduce poverty levels and provide better access to basic needs, including the nutrition needed to reduce stunting. The theory that can accommodate these conditions is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which explains that technology adoption is influenced by (1) Perceived Usefulness, the extent to which MSMEs believe that Shopee is useful for increasing sales. (2) Perceived Ease of Use, the extent to which MSMEs feel that creating and managing a Shopee account is easy (Davis & Granic, 2024). Furthermore, the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology, where the main variables are performance expectancy (Shopee can increase sales), effort expectancy (ease of use), social influence (influence of the environment, community, other MSME players), and enabling conditions (training support, infrastructure) (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

There are several things that need to be done, as in study Fitranita et al (2025), such as providing training and guidance on digital financial tools, enabling MSMEs to manage transactions, cash flow, and financial reporting in real time. After the training, entrepreneurs increased their confidence, competitiveness, and ability to adapt to the digital economy more effectively. In line with research Widodo et al (2024), digital marketing interventions can strengthen market reach and product appeal, which can increase income and reduce stunting. In addition, Rahmawati et al (2025) also confirms that the adoption of e-commerce improves business performance: increased sales, wider market access, operational efficiency, and better financial results.

As part of this solution, community empowerment activities carried out by the Department of Economics at Universitas Andalas need to focus on increasing human resource capacity, particularly through training in digital marketing skills using e-commerce (Shopee). Through this approach, community MSMEs will not only be equipped with technical skills but also a comprehensive understanding of the importance of business diversification and improving product quality and practical digital marketing. With increased capacity and independence, it is hoped that a sustainable and inclusive local economic ecosystem will be created, which will directly contribute to increased income, reduced stunting rates, and extreme poverty in Pesisir Selatan.

METHOD

This section discusses the form of activities, time, location, implementation of activities, target activities, procedures, and target outcomes. Before implementing this community service, the Economics Department, as the activity organizer, held an initial meeting to discuss issues/signatures related to the development of the Rendang Lokana MSMEs business. As a result, it was agreed and approved by seven MSMEs that the implementation take place on Sunday, 27 Oktober, 2024 at 07.00 WIB until 16.00 WIB, located in Rendang Lokana, Nagari Bayang, Pesisir Selatan Regency, West Sumatra. This community service activity received funding from the Department-Based Service Grant, so several lecturers and S1-S3 students of the Department of Economics attended it. Seven (7) MSMEs from Rendang Lokana participated in this community service activity.

The main output target of this activity is the emergence of creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of MSME groups to increase their income. The target audience is the Rendang Lokana MSME group in South Pesisir, West Sumatra. These MSMEs need support from various parties, one of which is from universities. The synergy from universities is expected to optimize the potential of MSME groups. Observations were made by Lecturers of the Department of Economics to Rendang Lokana MSMEs and found several problems faced, among others:

- Rendang Lokana MSME group members lack knowledge of innovative products.
- The lack of skills and creativity of members of the Rendang Lokana MSME group in product processing.
- Lack of knowledge of the Rendang Lokana MSME group members on how to increase sales through digital marketing. So it is expected to increase their income. So that it can reduce the stunting rate in the area.

So as to explore these problems, the methods used in this service activity are public participative methods and forum group discussions. The public participation method is done through counseling and activities, followed by discussions with focus groups, focusing on discussion and exchanging opinions and experiences between presenters and participants (McQuarrie & Krueger, 1989). The counseling was related to e-commerce platforms as a form of digital marketing utilization that can help the community develop MSMEs through the digital world. After that, a directed discussion session was continued, and participants could ask questions related to the material from the counseling that had been delivered and other related matters. The next step in implementing community service activities is digital marketing training through the creation of Shopee accounts. After carrying out community service, it is necessary to evaluate the activities that have been carried out. If it is found that SMEs have not yet sold through e-commerce, after the training, SMEs will have online sales accounts through Shopee. There, we can see how many sales transactions have occurred so far, whether SME products have increased or not, and so on. It is hoped that SMEs can actively sell online so that they can increase their income. The following is a flow chart of the activity.



FIGURE 1. Flow chart of The Implementation of Community Service Activities

However, this activity also has limitations and potential challenges, such as limited internet access in rural areas, differences in digital literacy levels among participants, and the sustainability of digital technology adoption without ongoing assistance. These limitations are recognized as a context that needs to be considered so that the results of the activity can be interpreted proportionally and encourage future follow-up programs.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The service activity began with a trip made by the Service Activity Team from Padang City at 07.00 WIB to the activity location, namely Rendang Lokana, Bayang, Pesisir Selatan Regency. Upon arrival at the location at 09.30, the team was warmly welcomed by representatives of South Pesisir MSMEs who had prepared to support this event. During the first 20 minutes, final preparations were made to ensure the smooth running of the service activity and to wait for the complete presence of participants so that the service event could be carried out as planned.

Strictly at 09.50, the event began with an official opening hosted by Dr. Edi Ariyanto. In his remarks, Dr. Edi conveyed the primary purpose of this service activity: to help MSME players navigate the rapid development of the digitalization era, especially in the context of product sales. He highlighted how important it is for MSME players to utilize digital technology in expanding market reach and increasing the competitiveness of their products because, in this era, all businesses can be traded, and all entrepreneurs can participate through available technology.

Next, the opening remarks were continued by Dr. Zulkifli, the secretary of the economics department. He expressed his pleasure and gratitude that the Department of Economics has the opportunity to contribute directly to advancing local MSMEs through this service activity. Dr. Zulkifli hopes that this training can provide real benefits for the MSME participants who attend to improve their business development in the long term, especially in utilizing digital platforms to encourage business development.



FIGURE 2. Opening of Community Service Activities in Pesisir Selatan Regency

At 10.15, the official community service event began with a brief introduction regarding the importance of digitalization in product sales in the modern era, delivered by Imam Gracia Marshall. The speaker then introduced one of the e-commerce platforms currently popular among MSMEs, Shopee. After the introduction, which contained information related to the features and benefits of the platform, the session continued with creating a store account for each MSME. This activity was carried out with assistance from students who participated in this community service activity. Each participant received direct direction on creating an account, operating an account, and optimizing their e-commerce account to carry out sales activities for their respective business products effectively.



FIGURE 3. Material Presentation and Shopee Account Creation Assistance Activities

The following is the result of the resource person's assistance in the form of a shop account, as seen in Figure 4 below. The Shopee displays images of MSME products along with their unit prices, and allows for product sales transactions. The following are the names of MSMEs that already have Shopee accounts : UMKM Umniah sell Rendang, rajutan, keripik jagung, keripik kelor, keripik pare, UMKM Katidiang Sepatu sell Pantofel, sepatu kulit, sepatu hak, UMKM Randang Yo Lamak sell Randang daging, Randang Pakis, Randang Lokan, Randang Lokan Pakis, UMKM Rakik Bety sell Rakik Kacang, Rakik Maco, Rakik Udang, Rakik Kacang Kuniang, UMKM Keripik Pisang AA, UMKM Rendang Lokana, UMKM Pisang Salai, UMKM Rakik Jihan sell Rakik Ikan/Maco, Rakik Kacang Tanah, Rakik Udang Rebon, Rakik Kacang Kedelai, Rakik Kacang Hijau.

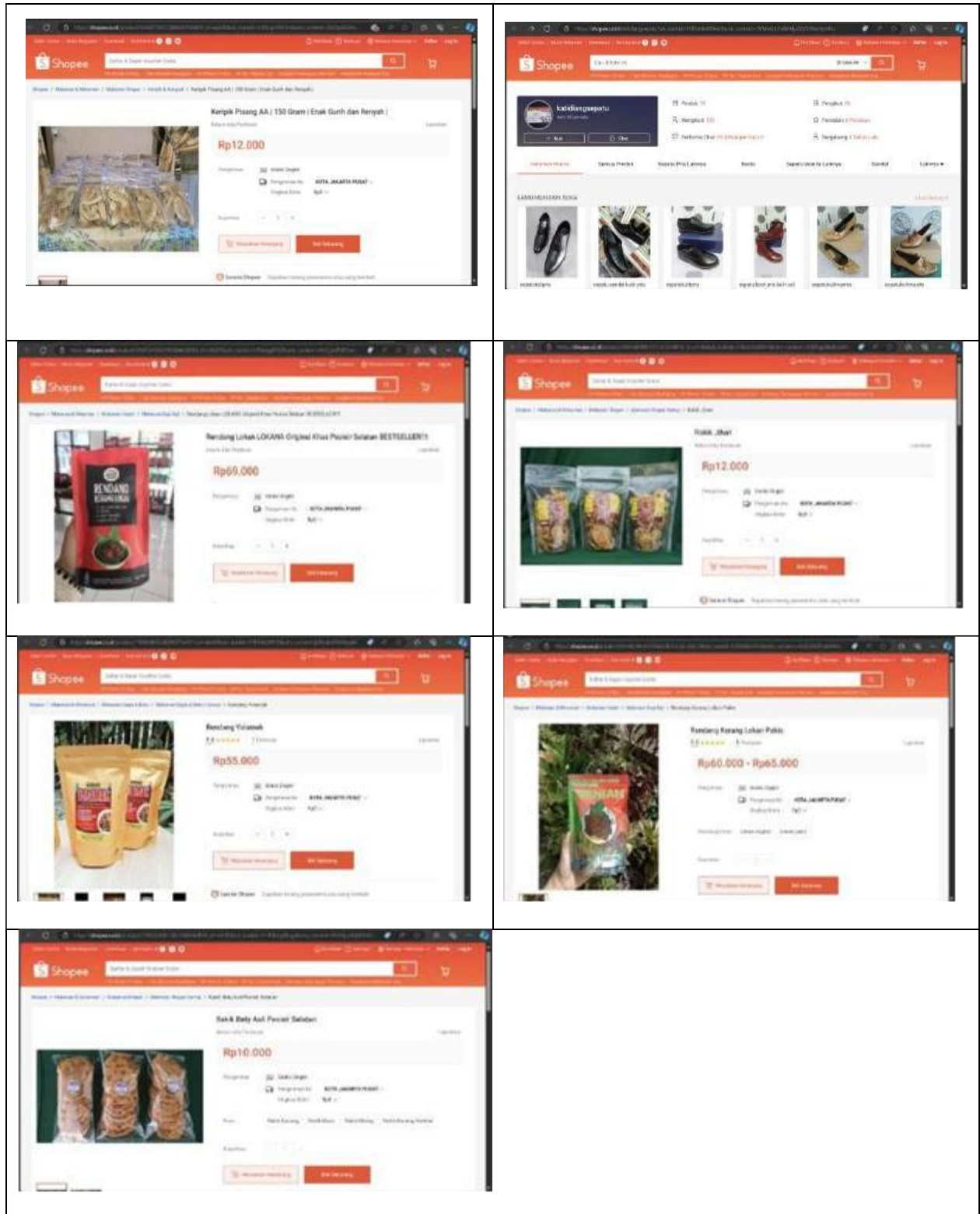


FIGURE 4. Results of Digital Marketing Training and Assistance in the form of Shopee Accounts for Rendang Lokana MSME members

After the account creation and product upload assistance activities were carried out, each participant

continued with monetization activities assisted by the Department of Economics service team. This activity is carried out by conducting product purchase transactions through e-commerce accounts. Namely, Shopee accounts from each MSME. Monetization activities aim to assist MSMEs in making actual transactions through their respective accounts. If the account is launched in general, participants who participate in this service activity can run their business entirely and well through the platform they already have. This activity has also conveyed how important this monetization activity is, where the seller can monitor the amount of sales within a certain period. In addition, sellers can also map the profits and losses of their respective accounts, so transaction data on this account is essential for business owners.



FIGURE 5. Demonstration of Transactions at the Shopee Store by the Community Service

Team At 14.30, the community service activity was ended by thanking all MSME participants for their active participation during this community service activity. After that, a group photo session was held between the service team and the MSME players, who were present as a souvenir and symbol of togetherness to increase the potential of MSMEs from the South Coastal Regency Community through digitization.



FIGURE 6. Joint Photo of the Department of Economics Community Service Team with South Coastal MSME Participants

Evaluation Activity

After the Department of Economics conducted a Community Service activity, an evaluation was conducted by looking at changes before and after the training activity was carried out. Previously, none of the MSMEs had a Shopee account, but after conducting research, all MSMEs had Shopee accounts and had tried to make transactions. After that evaluation, of all the MSMEs that received training, only Rendang Oleh oleh Lokana had a Shopee account that could be accessed through the Shopee application on a mobile phone. Rendang Oleh-oleh Lokana had 10 followers, 20 items, a 5-star rating, and a chat growth of 57%. Meanwhile, Katidiang Sepatu only appeared to have 88 followers. However, the Shopee account could not be accessed. Apart from those MSMEs, no Shopee accounts were found. This may be due to the lack of further follow-up from MSMEs to be more active in using their Shopee accounts, for example, by selling on Shopee Live. Furthermore, there was no in-depth follow-up from subsequent Community Service activities. The Department of Economics will strive for the sustainability of Community Service activities in Pesisir Selatan MSMEs.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Community service activities carried out by lecturers of the Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Andalas, aim to increase the capacity of Rendang Lokan MSMEs in Pesisir Selatan Regency through digital marketing training and assistance. Pesisir Selatan Regency has excellent economic potential but also faces social challenges such as high stunting rates and extreme poverty related to the income of the people of Pesisir Selatan Regency. Through this activity, MSMEs are empowered to utilize e-commerce platforms to expand the market and encourage the development of these MSMEs.

In implementing the activity, MSME participants were given counseling on the importance of digitalization in product sales and hands-on practice in creating and optimizing e-commerce accounts, namely Shopee, the most famous account among the public today. In addition, trial transactions are carried out to ensure that participants understand how digital platforms work so that they can run a business independently after receiving assistance through this activity. This activity positively impacts MSME players, implementers, and the government and helps realize a more independent and competitive local economy.

However, further follow-up is needed from the MSMEs themselves to enable them to use their Shopee accounts more actively. This will help their accounts become more widely known. It is hoped that this will ultimately lead to transactions, leading to an increase in their income. Furthermore, community service activities on the south coast need to be continued in the form of evaluations and follow-up activities that can support the increase in MSME income.

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