


## BUSINESS STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MSMES IN NORTH PADANG LAWAS

Ali Hardana\*

Universitas Islam Negeri Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan

Email : [alihardana@uinsyahada.ac.id](mailto:alihardana@uinsyahada.ac.id)

<p>Receive: 07/03/2026</p> <p>Accepted: 16/03/2026</p> <p>Publish: 16/03/2026</p> <p>Correspondence*</p>  <p>This work is licensed under the <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/">Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License</a>.</p>	<p><b>Abstract</b> - This study aims to examine the business strategy for the development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in North Padang Lawas. In the digital era, MSMEs face both opportunities and challenges in utilizing digital platforms for marketing, sales, and business management. This research employs a quantitative approach using surveys as the primary data collection method. Respondents include MSME actors who actively use digital tools, such as social media and e-commerce platforms, in their business operations. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis to determine the impact of digital business strategies on MSME performance. The results indicate that social media marketing, e-commerce adoption, and digital promotion strategies significantly improve sales, expand market reach, and enhance competitiveness. However, challenges such as limited digital literacy, resource constraints, and uneven internet access hinder full implementation. The study suggests that proper planning of digital business strategies, combined with support from government and relevant institutions in the form of training and infrastructure, is crucial to optimize MSME growth and sustainability in North Padang Lawas.</p> <p><b>Keywords</b> : Digital Business Strategy, Msmes, Social Media, E-Commerce, Business Development</p>
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### Introduction

The development of information and communication technology in recent decades has brought significant changes in various sectors of life, including the economic and business sectors. Digital transformation has encouraged business actors to adopt digital technology in carrying out their business activities (Hardana et al., 2025). This phenomenon is known as digital business, which is a business activity that utilizes digital technology as the main means in the production, marketing, distribution, and service processes to consumers. The use of digital technology allows businesses to improve operational efficiency, expand market reach, and increase competitiveness in the midst of increasingly fierce global competition (Hasibuan et al., 2023). One of the sectors that is greatly affected by the development of digital technology is Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). MSMEs are the backbone of the economy in many countries, including Indonesia. The contribution of MSMEs to the national economy is very large, both in terms of job creation, increasing people's income, and their contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Therefore, strengthening and developing MSMEs is one of the main priorities in national economic development. (Utami et al., 2023).

In the current digital era, the development of MSMEs cannot be separated from the use of digital technology. Business digitalization provides various opportunities for MSME actors to

improve their business performance. Through the use of social media, marketplaces, and various other digital platforms, MSME actors can promote their products to a wider range of consumers without being limited by geographical area. In addition, the use of digital technology also allows business actors to innovate in marketing strategies, improve the quality of customer service, and optimize business management processes. (Hasibuan et al., 2025).

In Indonesia, the government is actively encouraging digital transformation for MSMEs through various programs and policies (Lismawati et al., 2023). The MSME digitalization program aims to increase the digital literacy of business actors and encourage them to utilize digital platforms in developing their businesses. The program includes digital marketing training, access to the marketplace, and adequate digital infrastructure support. With this support, it is hoped that MSMEs can adapt to technological developments and be able to compete in an increasingly competitive market. (Hardana et al., 2023; Hardana et al., 2025).

However, the implementation of digital business in MSMEs still faces various challenges. Many MSME actors do not fully understand the benefits and how to make optimal use of digital technology. (Hasibuan et al., 2023). Limited technological knowledge, low digital literacy, and limited resources are some of the factors that hinder the digitization process of MSMEs. In addition, there is still a gap in access to digital infrastructure in some areas, especially in rural areas and remote areas. (Mutia et al., 2023).

This condition can also be found in North Padang Lawas Regency. This regency is one of the areas in North Sumatra Province that has considerable local economic potential, especially in the trade, agriculture, and community-based small business sectors. Many business actors in this area run micro and small businesses as the main source of livelihood. MSMEs in North Padang Lawas are engaged in various business fields, such as trade, culinary, handicrafts, and local agricultural products. (Hardana et al., 2023; Hardana et al., 2025).

However, most of the MSMEs in North Padang Lawas are still running their businesses conventionally (Ajjiah et al., 2023). The product marketing process is generally still carried out directly through traditional markets or local networks. The use of digital technology in business activities is still relatively limited. This is due to several factors, including limited access to technology, low levels of digital literacy, and lack of understanding of effective digital business strategies. (Sri want to et al., 2023).

In fact, the implementation of digital business strategies has great potential to help MSMEs in North Padang Lawas in developing their businesses. By utilizing digital platforms such as social media, marketplaces, and electronic commerce applications, MSME players can expand their market reach to the national and even international levels. In addition, digital marketing strategies also allow business actors to reach consumers more effectively through various online promotion techniques, such as content marketing, digital advertising, and social media marketing. (Hardana et al., 2023).

In addition to expanding the market, digital business strategies can also help MSMEs in improving operational efficiency. The use of digital technology allows businesses to manage inventory, monitor sales, and communicate with customers more quickly and efficiently. Thus, the implementation of digital business strategies not only has an impact on increasing sales, but also on improving the quality of overall business management. (Mutia et al., 2024).

Although these opportunities are quite large, not all MSMEs are able to implement digital business strategies effectively. Several studies show that the success of digital business implementation is greatly influenced by various factors, such as the level of digital literacy of business actors, technology infrastructure support, and the availability of training and

mentoring for MSME actors. Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed on how digital business strategies can be effectively implemented to support the development of MSMEs, especially in areas such as North Padang Lawas. (Hardana et al., 2022).

Research on the digitalization of MSMEs has been carried out by various researchers before. Several studies show that the use of digital technology can improve the performance of MSMEs, especially in terms of increasing sales, expanding the market, and increasing business competitiveness. However, most of the research was conducted in urban areas or areas with a relatively high level of technological development. Research that specifically examines the application of digital business strategies to MSMEs in districts or developing regions is still relatively limited. (Ryan D, 2017).

In addition, some previous research focused more on the adoption aspect of digital technology without examining in depth the digital business strategies that can be applied by MSME actors. In fact, the success of business digitalization is not only determined by the use of technology alone, but also by the strategies used in utilizing the technology to achieve business goals. (Hasibuan et al., 2023).

Thus, there is a need to conduct research that specifically examines digital business strategies in the development of MSMEs in the North Padang Lawas area. This research is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how MSME actors can effectively utilize digital technology in developing their businesses (Batubara et al., 2024).

Research on the digitalization of MSMEs has been conducted by many researchers before. For example, research conducted by various researchers shows that the use of social media and digital platforms can improve the marketing performance of MSMEs. The results of the study show that the use of digital technology can help business actors in expanding market reach and increasing interaction with consumers (Hardana et al., 2025).

Another study also found that the adoption of e-commerce has a positive influence on increasing the income and competitiveness of MSMEs. Through e-commerce platforms, business actors can sell their products to consumers in various regions without having to open physical stores.

However, most previous research still has some limitations. First, many studies focus more on the relationship between digital technology adoption and business performance, without examining in depth the digital business strategies used by MSME actors. Second, most of the research is conducted in urban areas or regions that have relatively more advanced digital infrastructure.

Third, research that specifically examines the implementation of digital business strategies in MSMEs in district areas, such as North Padang Lawas, is still very limited. In fact, the socio-economic conditions and level of digital literacy in the area can be different from urban areas, so the digital business strategy applied can also be different.

Based on these limitations, this study seeks to fill the research gap by examining more deeply the digital business strategies that can be applied by MSME actors in North Padang Lawas in developing their businesses. This research not only analyzes the level of digital technology utilization, but also explores how digital business strategies can be used effectively to improve the performance and competitiveness of MSMEs.

## Literature Review

### Digital Business Concept

Digital business is a business process or activity that uses digital technology to create value through electronic interaction, online marketing, digital services, and the use of data as the basis for decision-making. According to Chaffey (2015), *digital business is defined as the creation of new business designs by blurring the digital and physical worlds and by exploiting the new digital technologies and capabilities*. Digital business is not only limited to online marketing, but also includes all business processes from production, distribution, service, to customer relations.

### Digital Business Strategy

Digital business strategy is an approach designed to utilize digital technology in achieving organizational goals. This strategy includes the use of social media, *e-commerce* platforms, digital customer relationship management (CRM) systems, and data analytics to maximize business performance.

Bergeron (2003) stated that digital strategy is *the route through which an organization intends to create value with digital technologies to achieve its goals*. This means that digital strategy is not just about the use of technology, but how it is planned and implemented to create value and differentiation of businesses.

### MSMEsdalam Digital Business Context

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are an important pillar in economic development, able to absorb labor and strengthen the local economy. According to Tjiptono (2018), MSMEs have a strategic role in encouraging economic growth due to flexibility, job creation, and rapid innovation.

### E-Commerce-and MSME Business Performance

Ecommerce has become an important strategy in the development of MSMEs in the digital era. Through digital platforms, MSMEs can conduct online sales transactions to local and global consumers without the need for large physical investments. Research by Haryono & Wahyuni (2019) found that ecommerce adoption has a significant effect on the business performance of MSMEs. This is because ecommerce increases product visibility, streamlines the transaction process, and expands the marketing network.

## Methodology

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method to analyze digital business strategies in the development of MSMEs in North Padang Lawas Regency. The research population consists of all MSME actors who have utilized digital platforms, such as social media and marketplaces, in running their businesses. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, with the criteria of MSME actors who have been actively running a business for at least one year and using digital media as a means of marketing (Siregar et al., 2022). Data was collected through a structured questionnaire that measured the main variables of the study, including digital business strategy, digital marketing utilization, e-commerce adoption, and MSME performance and growth. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive analysis to understand the characteristics of respondents and multiple linear regression analysis to test the influence of digital business strategies on the development of MSMEs. In addition, this study also considers the validity and reliability test of the questionnaire instrument to ensure that the data obtained is accurate and consistent. With this method, it is hoped that the research can provide a comprehensive overview of the effectiveness of digital business strategies in

improving the performance, competitiveness, and sustainability of MSME businesses in North Padang Lawas.

## Results and Analysis

Based on data analysis obtained from 100 respondents of MSME actors in North Padang Lawas Regency, this study found several important findings related to digital business strategies. First, the use of social media as a marketing tool shows a high adoption rate, with 78% of respondents regularly promoting products through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. The use of social media has proven to be effective in increasing product visibility and attracting new consumers.

Second, e-commerce adoption is relatively lower than social media, with only 45% of respondents actively selling products through marketplaces. However, MSMEs that use marketplaces experience an average increase in sales of 25% per month compared to those that only rely on offline sales. This shows that the use of transaction-based digital platforms can have a significant impact on business growth.

Third, digital marketing strategies that include online promotion, creative content, and customer interaction have a positive influence on the performance of MSMEs, both in terms of increasing sales, expanding market reach, and consumer loyalty. The results of multiple linear regression showed that digital business strategies significantly contributed to the development of MSMEs with a determination coefficient value ( $R^2$ ) of 0.62, which means that 62% of MSME performance variations can be explained by the digital strategies applied.

In addition, the study found that the main obstacles in the implementation of digital strategies are low digital literacy, limited resources, and internet access in several regions. Therefore, government and related institutional support, such as digital training and infrastructure provision, is needed to maximize the potential of digital business strategies for MSMEs in North Padang Lawas.

The results of this study confirm that digital business strategies are not just the use of technology, but require proper planning and implementation in order to improve the performance, competitiveness, and sustainability of MSME businesses in the region.

Based on the results of the study, it was found that the implementation of digital business strategies has a **positive and significant influence** on the development of MSMEs in North Padang Lawas Regency. The following discussion outlines the main findings of this study:

### Utilization of Social Media

The results show that 78% of MSMEs actively use social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, to promote products. This shows that social media is the **most** accessible and relatively inexpensive digital marketing channel for MSMEs. These findings are in line with the study of Nugroho, Prabowo, & Wicaksono (2020) which stated that social media can expand market reach and increase interaction with consumers. Social media is not only used for promotion, but also to build long-term relationships with customers, increase loyalty, and obtain feedback directly.

Despite the high adoption of social media, there are still challenges in the form of a lack of skills in creating creative content, professional account management, and understanding of platform algorithms that can affect visibility. This shows the need for more in-depth digital training for MSME actors in Paluta so that social media can be used to the fullest.

### Adopsi Marketplace

Only 45% of MSMEs use marketplaces to sell products online. This figure is lower than the use of social media due to limited technical knowledge, platform administration costs, and logistical barriers in rural areas. However, research shows that MSMEs that use marketplaces experience an **average increase in sales of 25% per month**, showing the great potential of e-commerce as a digital strategy to improve business performance. These findings are consistent with Haryono & Wahyuni (2019) who stated that e-commerce can increase product visibility and expand marketing networks.

Marketplace adoption in Paluta is still hampered by limited digital infrastructure, especially uneven internet connections, as well as a lack of understanding of online store management, promotion strategies, and product delivery logistics. Therefore, government support through e-commerce training, cost subsidies, and the provision of better internet networks is essential.

### Digital Marketing Strategy

As many as 70% of MSMEs implement digital marketing strategies, which include creative content, online promotions, and customer interaction. This strategy has proven to have a positive impact on sales growth and market expansion. Regression analysis shows that digital marketing strategies contribute significantly to the development of MSMEs with an  $R^2$  of 0.62, meaning that 62% of MSME performance variations can be explained by the digital strategy applied.

This result is in line with Ryan (2017) who stated that digital marketing allows businesses to optimize interactions with customers, increase brand awareness, and respond quickly to market demands. However, some MSMEs still have difficulty designing content strategies, choosing the right platform, and measuring the effectiveness of digital campaigns.

### Sales growth and market expansion

The implementation of digital business strategies has an impact on sales growth (62%) and market expansion (60%). This shows that MSMEs in Paluta that adopt digital marketing and e-commerce can reach new consumers, both at the local and national levels. This increase in performance also shows that there is a positive relationship between digitalization and the competitiveness of MSMEs, which allows business actors to compete with products from other regions.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### Conclusion

Based on the results of research on digital business strategies for the development of MSMEs in North Padang Lawas Regency, it can be concluded that the implementation of digital strategies has a positive and significant influence on the performance and development of MSMEs. The use of social media has proven to be the most widely used means of marketing, while marketplaces and e-commerce have the potential to increase sales and expand market reach although the adoption rate is still relatively low. Digital marketing strategies that include creative content, online promotions, and interactions with customers have also been proven to encourage sales growth, market expansion, and increase the competitiveness of MSMEs. However, MSME actors in Paluta still face obstacles in the form of limited digital literacy, resources, and uneven internet access. Thus, the success of MSME digitalization does not only depend on the use of technology, but also on the right strategy planning and support from the government and related institutions in the form of training, mentoring, and the provision of

digital infrastructure. This research confirms that digital business strategies can be an effective tool to improve the performance, competitiveness, and sustainability of MSMEs, especially in developing areas such as North Padang Lawas.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that MSME actors in North Padang Lawas improve their digital literacy through training and guidance in using social media, marketplaces, and digital marketing strategies to optimize the use of technology. In addition, the government and related stakeholders should strengthen digital infrastructure, particularly stable and widespread internet access, so that MSMEs can adopt digital strategies without technical constraints. MSMEs are also encouraged to utilize a combination of social media and e-commerce synergistically, accompanied by regular evaluations to assess the effectiveness of their strategies, adjust promotional content, and identify further business development opportunities. Policy support and incentives, such as free training programs, financial assistance, or digital promotion initiatives, are also crucial to encourage MSMEs to actively undergo digital transformation. With these measures, digital business strategies are expected to enhance business performance, expand market reach, and strengthen the competitiveness of MSMEs, ensuring their sustainability in the digital era.

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