

Analysis of Social Network Utilization as a Business Defense Media in the Era of the Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT : *In the era of the covid-19 epidemic, this study attempts to examine how company owners are transitioning from traditional means to digital platforms to sustain their businesses. COVID-19 has spread to every corner of the globe, including Indonesia. One of these measures is the implementation of large-scale social restrictions and operating hours limitations for activities and public spaces. As a result of a lack of buyers and diminishing product demand, business actors go bankrupt. Fortunately, information and communication technology has progressed to the point that social networks and e-commerce software have been developed to assist company owners in maintaining their operations in the face of a pandemic. More than half of micro, small, and medium company owners use social media and e-commerce applications to advertise their firms, connect with consumers, and conduct transactions without having to meet in person. Facebook, Instagram, Tik-Tok, and e-commerce apps like Shopee, Lazada, Zalora, and others are among the social networks utilized by micro, small, and medium company owners. Digital technology is now highly useful for businesspeople, and it is predicted to aid in the recovery of the national economy. For technology developers, this may be utilized as incentive to enhance the newest breakthroughs in order to produce more complex digital platforms.*

KEYWORDS – *E-commerce, Network Utilization, Social Media, Covid-19 Pandemic, Business.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The world was confronted with the tragedy of an infectious sickness produced by the corona virus, also known as COVID-19, in the beginning of 2020. The corona virus, which has already spread throughout the world, originated in China's Wuhan region. Because this condition affects the human respiratory system, it poses a danger of mortality (Sampurno et al., 2020). The number of cases in Indonesia is increasing every day. Preventive measures and new laws devised by the government have also been implemented in Indonesia to stem the development of the corona virus epidemic.

The corona virus, also known as COVID-19, would drastically alter the international community's activities and lives, particularly in Indonesia. During this epidemic, advances in information technology, communication, and social media have greatly aided the flow of social activities. The urgency of changes in social activities that occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic has made the government and the public rack their brains to continue to be able to carry out activities, especially in economic activities without having to violate health protocols (Putra, 2020). New innovations have also been created because advances in communication and information technology among the community have developed, so that economic activity does not just stop because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The impact of the corona virus that endangers human health, has made the government implement new policies such as health protocols that must always be obeyed, restrictions on community activities, to a ban on

traveling out of town or abroad. This immediately had an impact on the national economy, especially for micro, small and medium enterprises. Many small stalls and shops were forced to close temporarily as a result of large-scale social restrictions policies due to the high number of Covid-19 spreads in various parts of Indonesia. The existence of micro, small and medium enterprises that provide a large enough contribution to the national economy greatly affects the decline of the Indonesian economy until it experiences a recession in 2020 (Awali, 2020).

The large number of micro, small and medium enterprises in Indonesia who went bankrupt and had to close their businesses due to the COVID-19 pandemic does not mean that there is no solution to get up and maintain their small businesses. Although not a few of them choose to stop doing small, micro and medium businesses, not a few of them continue to try to create new innovations and find solutions to survive in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic (Awali, 2020). Many of these business actors take advantage of the current advances in information and communication technology. Although stalls and shops must have limited operational activities, they can still run their business through social media or switch to opening online shops through websites or e-commerce applications.

This transitional change is not only carried out by traders and business actors, but consumers at this time also prefer to shop online, because it reduces the intensity of activities outside the home. At first the community and entrepreneurs who initially carried out traditional face-to-face activities were forced to carry out modern conventional activities based on online (Priantoro, 2020). Limitations of activities such as restrictions on transaction activities in traditional markets, shopping malls, and other restrictions in places that result in large crowds make people accustomed to the changes that are happening at this time.

Most of the business actors who switch to doing business online are reaping success in this pandemic era. The increase in business turnover due to the use of social media is mostly achieved by micro, small and medium enterprises, even local goods entrepreneurs can export their products to foreign countries. The progress of communication and information systems at this time has a positive impact on the wider community, but it still requires accuracy, skill, and thoroughness in its use. In order to avoid negative things such as fraud and abuse of copyright (Priantoro, 2020).

A study by the Head of Digital Business Unit revealed that the use of social media platforms has become a trend in Indonesia. this study uses a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods with data collection through online questionnaires, in this study managed to collect data as many as 3891 respondents from all regions in Indonesia (Winarti, 2021). Social media in the pandemic era is indeed very helpful in conducting business communications, marketing products and services, communication between consumers and producers, to making buying and selling transactions. There are several social media that are currently widely used by most business actors, including WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Telegram, and e-commerce applications such as Shopee, Lazada, Zalora, Tokopedia, and so on.

Some of these social media have great potential in conducting trading business, namely identifying customers, reciprocal communication, providing information to find out objects that customers like or are looking for. Social media is in great demand by business actors because it has a very large influence on the sustainability of business businesses in this pandemic era. Moreover, a large-scale social restriction policy that requires most people to stay at home. The ease of access in marketing business products and the ease of transactions have been widely used by micro business actors. They are more daring to promote their products so that they are better known by the wider community to outside the region and abroad.

Therefore, even in the current pandemic era, many business actors still survive by utilizing the information and communication technology that has developed. So that micro business actors can optimize and market their products even though large-scale social restrictions are in progress. So that in the current era of globalization, it is better known as the new economic era and the digital economy era. The new economic era is marked by the application of information technology in carrying out economic activities. Especially at this time it has been supported by technological sophistication such as mobile phones that have been based on smart phones or commonly known as smart phones (Winarti, 2021). So that the ease of access to social media or e-commerce application platforms is increasingly supportive of conducting online transactions.

This study aims to analyze the influence of advances in information and communication technology on micro, small and medium enterprises in the era of the covid-19 pandemic. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. As for the data used in this study, the authors use the document study method to obtain relevant information or data related to the theme to be studied. Based on the background that has been described, this research is expected to provide evaluations and references for business actors, and references for further research.

II. THEORETICAL BASIS

Since 2020 until now, the COVID-19 pandemic has not ended. The number of positive cases of COVID-19 continues to increase every day. In view of the increasingly high transmission of COVID-19 and endangering public health, the government has deployed several policies related to large-scale social restrictions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Indonesia. Restrictions on community activities outside the home to restrictions on activities involving community associations were also implemented. These policies have a negative impact on economic activity in Indonesia, especially on micro, small and medium enterprises (Alika, 2021).

During the covid-19 pandemic, there were 1785 cooperatives and 163,713 micro, small and medium enterprises (Brand et al., 2020), this resulted in the Indonesian economy continuing to decline. However, this condition has been helped a little because of advances in information and communication technology at this time (Hadiwinata et al., 2020). Conditions that require all activities to be carried out from within the home, online platforms and social media are the only best solutions in the current situation. Social media can not only be used as a means of personal communication and non-formal association, but can also be useful for advancing a business.

Social media helps most micro-entrepreneurs to carry out business communication, such as building business relationships, disseminating business information with customers or potential customers, completing trademarks, and also introducing and offering business products to a wider market (Veranita et al., 2021). Social media is an online channel that provides a place for the public to communicate, share content, and collaborate digitally. Social media is basically only used to share content related to personal activities, but since the covid pandemic, its function has developed more to open trade forums, microblogging, social networking and other activities that were previously only done offline (Mastura & Santaria, 2020).

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method in the form of a description of several observations and documentation studies. Descriptive qualitative method is a method used to analyze data or a problem by describing and describing the data that has been collected without making conclusions that apply to the public and generalizations (Sugiyono, 2009). Based on this explanation, it can be understood that the descriptive qualitative method aims to analyze data and circumstances without any intention to conclude.

This study aims to explore the phenomena that occur by observing and analyzing data through several documentations such as published reports from trusted institutions and relevant research studies. Descriptive qualitative method is one type of research that conveys a full picture of the circumstances and conditions as well as the relationship between the phenomena studied. This method is expected to produce an in-depth descriptive description of the condition of the phenomenon that occurs and obtain evidence of the accuracy of an opinion that has been created.

This study observes the phenomenon of changes in economic activity, especially micro, small and medium business actors who are turning to the digital economy. This research is descriptive qualitative, which means that the conclusions that will be generated later are not intended as generalizations but as interpretive descriptions of reality or phenomena that are studied holistically in certain settings. Whatever the findings in this study are basically limited, only on cases and observed phenomena (Winarti, 2021).

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with a phenomenological approach, because the case under study requires in-depth observation and not a case model described with quantitative figures. The use of the phenomenological approach is because the focus in this research is a form of a condition that occurs due to a

phenomenon, namely the occurrence of the covid-19 pandemic. The phenomenological approach aims to describe and observe more deeply about a condition that occurs in the environment or humans, regarding the concept of certain phenomena by exploring the structure of the environment.

The focus of the phenomenological approach is the experience that has been passed by an individual. This study will observe a condition that occurs in micro and small business actors during the covid-19 pandemic. The condition that will be observed is the condition where small and medium micro business actors choose to switch to using online media in conducting transactions and marketing the products they sell. In this observation, several forms of qualitative data are needed to support and ensure the validity of the research results. This research will use the documentation method in collecting the necessary data. Sources of data to be used in this study include the results of reports published by several institutions related to the themes observed in the study, as well as the results of previous studies and articles published with the aim of providing information to the wider community (Aslamiah, 2013).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The development of the times has brought many changes to various aspects of life, ranging from tradition, technology, and much more. One of the most significant changes is the change in the field of technology. Currently, almost all traditional methods have evolved into modernization due to the increasingly advanced and sophisticated technology created. Many human activities or activities at this time are assisted by digital power. Especially now that there is a covid pandemic that limits the movement of human activities that interact directly. The change from the traditional era to the digital era and technological sophistication are starting to be felt in the current conditions.

The COVID-19 pandemic that has attacked various aspects of life has hit aspects of the national economy. Many micro, small and medium enterprises have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic that has hit Indonesia. many of those who initially went bankrupt were finally able to rise and survive because of the sophistication of information and communication technology at this time. Especially at this time supported by the creation of smart phones that almost all Indonesians have. The development and types of smartphone devices with various brands have spread among the public (Samsiana et al., 2020).

Currently, many applications have developed such as social media which is widely used by business people to expand and develop their business networks. Some social media applications that are currently widely used as media to market various business products are Facebook, Instagram, Tik-Tok, YouTube, Telegram, and so on. The use of online media can facilitate access between producers and consumers to communicate, negotiate and transact without having to meet. In addition, the use of online media in transactions besides having advantages is also certain to have certain disadvantages so users must be more careful and more thorough.

In addition to social media applications which incidentally are applications that are devoted to sharing personal moments but are used by entrepreneurs to disseminate their business, at this time many developers are making special applications for buying and selling. Many e-commerce applications are currently used by the public such as shopee, lazada, tokopedia, zalora, and so on. These applications have greatly helped small entrepreneurs during this pandemic era to survive and develop their businesses.

The era of digital transformation as it is today makes many people more creative and innovate in various ways. Therefore, to be able to compete in the online world, these entrepreneurs must have a good and attractive business concept and product quality to be exhibited on social media. A study of micro, small and medium enterprises in the Asia Pacific area found that more than 50% of business owners in Indonesia currently have an online store. Ownership of these online stores is largely driven by the implementation of a social activity restriction policy that forces them to stop their business operating hours.

Social media has the potential to be able to connect with more people with easy reach without making it difficult for users, because in fact social media is a collection of internet-based applications based on ideological and technological frameworks of thought (Jannah, 2021). Social media has become a trend in the lives of the wider community.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the micro, small and medium-sized business sector, based on a survey by Sea Insights found that as many as 54% of micro business actors have switched to using social media to develop their businesses. This is an adaptation made to reorganize in the new normal era. Significantly the marketing strategy has changed into a digital marketing system to increase sales. According to (Alika, 2021) e-commerce systems can save on store operational costs and increase productivity and flexibility in work. SEA Insight also stated that the average income of micro, small and medium enterprises in Indonesia after adopting the e-commerce system increased by more than 160% and increased productivity by 110%.

Social media at this time has become one of the platforms that support the business world, both large and small. Especially at this time, micro, small and medium enterprises are challenged to be able to continue to survive in the free market competition among ASEAN member countries. If micro and small business actors do not improve their business marketing strategies and systems, what happens is that micro, small and medium enterprises, especially in Indonesia, will be threatened with bankruptcy or bankruptcy.

In this pandemic era, there are indeed a lot of micro, small and medium business actors who are suffocated by the situation, the difficulty of returning business capital, a decrease in sales turnover, until the closure of several business units must be carried out. However, due to advances in information and communication technology at this time, not a few of them are able to survive and even achieve success in the current COVID-19 pandemic situation. There are many examples of successful businesses just by running them online, such as the clothing, food, and entertainment industries (Gunawan, 2020). It is hoped that with the advancement of information and communication technology as well as the development of social media and the ease of access to create an online market, micro, small and medium enterprises, especially in Indonesia, will better understand their vision in branding the products to be marketed.

The many types of social media and e-commerce applications currently available make micro, small and medium business actors free to choose what type they will use. One application that is much loved by micro-entrepreneurs is Facebook. Facebook is one of the types of social media that is most in demand by the wider community, because Facebook is a social network whose users are not only limited to young people but are also widely used by later generations. Many studies state the same thing as research by Cesaroni & Consoli, (2015) and research by Srirejeki(2016)which states that Facebook is the most widely used social network for micro, small and medium enterprises.

The majority of micro, small and medium business owners are young people between 30-40 years old, so it is natural that most of them have social media networks. Although not all of his social media networks are in the name of the business he manages, they combine them with his personal account for the benefit of his business. They stated that the business they manage is not too big so that it is reported that there is no need to create a special social media account for the business that is currently being managed, besides that they also believe that using their personal account will build trust in consumers or potential customers.

Based on previous research, most micro, small and medium enterprises do not only rely on one type of social network, but they have more than one social networking platform or e-commerce application that is used to develop their business. The current business transformation from the conventional to the digital era is reported to improve business performance and is expected to encourage large-scale economic growth, especially in the current era of the COVID-19 pandemic.

V. CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the transformation of business people from conventional to digital methods to develop their business. Especially in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, many micro, small and medium businesses are threatened with closing their businesses due to a massive decline in sales turnover. Fortunately, at this time the advancement of information and communication technology is very helpful to maintain business in this era of the covid-19 pandemic. Social networks and e-commerce applications are widely used to communicate with customers, promote products, and conduct transactions without having to meet in person, considering that currently large-scale social restrictions have been implemented to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in various countries.

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