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# The Role of Digital Marketing in Increasing MSME Sales Growth

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the role of digital marketing in boosting the sales growth of UMKM Ummu Khalif, a culinary business specializing in traditional Palu sambal. In response to the digital era, UMKM Ummu Khalif leverages various digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp Business, TikTok, and Shopee to expand its market reach and increase sales volume. The research employs a qualitative method with data collection techniques including interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings reveal that WhatsApp Business is the most effective platform for driving direct transactions, contributing to the sale of up to 200 bottles of sambal per month. Meanwhile, Instagram and TikTok play crucial roles in enhancing brand awareness through engaging visual content, such as sambal-making processes, customer testimonials, and promotional activities during exhibitions. The synergy between creative promotional content and the strategic selection of digital platforms has proven to boost sales by up to 50% compared to the period before the intensive application of digital marketing. However, UMKM Ummu Khalif faces several challenges, including limited time for consistent content creation, a lack of human resources, and insufficient in-depth understanding of optimal strategies for each platform. This study emphasizes that effective and adaptive digital marketing strategies significantly contribute to UMKM growth in the post-pandemic era, where consumer behavior and digital platform trends continue to evolve. Furthermore, this study offers academic contributions by addressing research gaps related to digital marketing implementation in sambal-based culinary MSMEs, while highlighting the importance of integrating social media and marketplaces as part of a holistic digital marketing strategy.

**Keywords:** Digital marketing, UMKM, Sales Growth.

## INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, the adoption of digital marketing technology and strategies has become a determining factor in the success of various businesses, including micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). With the growth of the internet and social media, digital marketing allows MSMEs to increase their market reach, which was previously limited to a local scope, to be wider at a relatively low cost. Various studies state that the implementation of digital marketing, especially on social media platforms, has had a positive impact on

increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs in Indonesia. According to the report (OECD 2021), digital transformation has been shown to play an important role in reducing the limitations of market access and capital which are often the main challenges for MSMEs in various developing countries, including Indonesia. Other studies also reveal that the adoption of digital marketing by MSMEs can increase their visibility in the wider market and generate significant increases in revenue. Hadi, (Berger 1990) stated that digital marketing has proven to be a very effective solution in maintaining the continuity of MSME business operations. Not only that, the implementation of digital marketing has also shown significant results in increasing the sales volume of MSME actors. This is as stated in a study conducted by Febriyantoro, (Nasution and Silalahi 2022) which shows that digital marketing increases MSME sales by 30% to 100% by expanding consumer reach and facilitating their access to information available on social media, websites, and other platforms.

The important role of supporting the Indonesian economy is also reflected in its contribution to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment According to data from (Kemenkopukm 2024), the number of MSMEs in Indonesia reached 64.2 million units, contributing 61.07 percent to the gross domestic product (GDP), or around IDR 8,573.89 trillion. MSMEs also absorb 97% of the total workforce and contribute up to 60.4 percent of the total investment in Indonesia. Therefore, digital can provide a positive chain effect, not only for the growth of small businesses themselves but also for the stability and growth of the national economy as a whole.

The UMKM focused on Ummu Khalif who is engaged in the culinary business that uses digital marketing to develop the market and increase its sales. Ummu Khalif UMKM focuses on chili sauce products with a distinctive taste that is targeted at local and international consumers. The use of social media such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok, as well as marketplace platforms such as Shopee, has opened up great opportunities for this UMKM to expand their marketing reach, attract new consumers, and retain loyal customers. However, behind these benefits, Ummu Khalif UMKM still faces a number of obstacles in implementing digital marketing optimally. Some of the problems faced include the lack of effective integration of all digital platforms, limited understanding of strategies for creating attractive and consistent promotional content, and limited time and human resources. In addition, limited time and human resources are also inhibiting factors in maximizing the use of all existing digital marketing potential. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze the role of digital marketing in increasing the sales growth of Ummu Khalif UMKM.

In today's digital era, the adoption of digital marketing technology and strategies has become a determining factor in the success of various businesses, including micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). With the growth of the internet and social media, digital marketing allows MSMEs to increase their market reach, which was previously limited to a local scope, to be wider at relatively low cost. Various studies state that the implementation of digital marketing, especially on social media platforms, has had a positive impact on increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs in Indonesia. According to the report (OECD 2021), digital transformation has been shown to play an important role in reducing the limitations of market access and capital which are often the main challenges for MSMEs in various developing countries, including Indonesia. Other studies also reveal that the adoption of digital marketing by MSMEs can increase their visibility in the wider market and generate significant increases in revenue. Hadi, (Berger 1990) stated that digital marketing has proven to be a very effective solution in maintaining the continuity of MSME business operations. Not only that, the implementation of digital marketing has also shown significant results in increasing the sales volume of MSME actors. This is as stated in a study conducted by Febriyantoro, (Nasution and Silalahi 2022) which shows that digital marketing increases MSME sales by 30% to 100% by

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## Literature Review

### Digital marketing

In general, digital marketing is defined as an effort to promote products or services through digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, and YouTube with the aim of reaching target markets more widely and efficiently. According to (Kotler and Keller 2016), digital marketing includes various promotional activities via the internet, including social media, email marketing, SEO (Search Engine Optimization), and content-based marketing. According to (Wulan, Agustina, and Harini 2021) Digital marketing is a marketing communication method that was previously traditional and conventional, changing to digital (Wita Setiawati, Sofi Mutiara Insani, and Syarifah Setiana Ardiati 2024). Digital marketing is integrated interactive marketing to facilitate communication between producers, market intermediaries and potential consumers (Akbar and Irfani 2022). In line with that, (Zahara et al. 2022) showed that the implementation of digital marketing through training for kapok craft entrepreneurs in Central Sulawesi was able to improve the knowledge and skills of MSMEs in using social media and marketplaces as effective digital marketing tools and expanding their market reach. Digital marketing also plays an important role in building brand familiarity and brand engagement which ultimately supports customer loyalty, although customer loyalty is not always formed directly through digital marketing activities, but rather through a long process involving the overall customer experience (Ponirin et al. 2024). Conceptually, digital marketing is a development of the internet that utilizes search engines. Search engines via the internet began to develop in 2006 and continue to increase on mobile devices (Suspahariati; Susilawati, R. and Hidayatilla 2022). (Bachri et al. 2023) added that digital marketing not only acts as a promotional medium, but also functions to shape the overall consumer experience, from introducing products, building visual appeal, to influencing purchasing decisions and customer satisfaction. This makes digital marketing an important factor in driving sales growth, especially among MSMEs.

Digital marketing is a marketing strategy that utilizes internet media, including social media, as the main means to promote products, reach consumers, and expand networks. By combining the capabilities of the internet and social media, digital marketing allows companies to increase efficiency in achieving goals more effectively through broad connectivity and interactions that are easily accessible to various groups. In the context of MSMEs, digital marketing provides many benefits, ranging from saving on promotion costs, increasing market reach, to enabling more personal interactions with consumers. Several studies have also shown that digital marketing allows MSMEs to compete with large companies in terms of consumer engagement. In line with that, (Syarifuddin et al. 2022) stated that empowering social media as part of digital marketing has proven effective in expanding markets, building relationships with customers, and increasing the competitiveness of local MSMEs.

**Digital Marketing Dimension**

The digital marketing dimension is part of marketing that includes various digital marketing activities. The dimensions of digital marketing according to (Kotler and Keller 2016) consist of 5 dimensions, namely Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Social Media Marketing (SMM), Email Marketing and Content Marketing. However, this study only uses two dimensions of digital marketing, namely social media marketing and content marketing, because these two aspects are considered the most relevant and effective to be applied to Ummu Khalif UMKM. Based on the results of the interview, the digital marketing activities of this UMKM do indeed utilize more social media such as Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, and TikTok, considering that these platforms are easily accessible and have a wide reach. In addition, as a business in the culinary field, product visualization through photo and video content is considered more effective in attracting the attention of potential consumers than other digital marketing methods. Considering the limited resources, focusing on managing social media and creating attractive promotional content is considered sufficient to represent a digital marketing strategy that is in accordance with the needs and characteristics of Ummu Khalif UMKM.

**Social Media Marketing and Content Marketing**

1. Social Media Marketing (SMM)

SMM is a type of online marketing that utilizes social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and others. Social media has countless users, making it effective for promoting a business's products as attractively as possible for free or for a fee by using endorsement services to attract buyers in marketing products. Social media is one of the most influential components in digital marketing, especially for MSMEs. Based on data from (Social Media in Indonesia - Statistics & Facts Statista, n.d.), more than 150 million internet users in Indonesia access social media every day, making this platform a potential promotional channel for business actors. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, and YouTube are some of the platforms most often used by MSMEs to introduce products and interact with customers. Research (Rombe et al. 2023) confirms that the use of Instagram as part of a social media marketing strategy can increase purchasing decisions, especially through product visual optimization and direct interaction with customers through features such as stories, feeds, and comments. For MSMEs, this approach is effective in increasing brand visibility while strengthening relationships with consumers which ultimately have a positive impact on sales and customer satisfaction. In this context, (Ponirin et al. 2024) (Ponirin et al., 2024) also emphasizes that social media marketing has been shown to play a positive role in increasing brand engagement and brand familiarity, although the direct influence on customer loyalty is not always significant.

Social media is a platform that is often used to carry out digital marketing activities (Febriyantoro & Arisandi 2018). Social media platforms have their own characteristics (Atina et al. 2022) for example Facebook, Instagram and Twitter which are social networks for friendship. Which can be said that social media is a digital platform that is widely used in digital marketing activities because of its ability to support interaction, communication, and collaboration between users. In addition, according to (Syarifuddin et al. 2019), social media not only functions as a means of promotion, but also plays an important role in building a company's reputation. The reputation built through social media contributes significantly to improving business performance, both directly and through the intermediary of the company's positive image in the eyes of customers. Active interaction and good content management on social media will strengthen consumer trust which ultimately has a positive impact on increasing sales.

2. Content Marketing

Content Marketing is a type of online marketing that uses content in the form of videos, images, text, and others to be shared on online marketing media to convey messages about a product or service from a business that wants to be marketed. Promotional content is a key element in a digital marketing strategy. Good content management can increase consumer engagement, which ultimately has an impact on increasing sales. Digital promotional content can be in various formats, such as images, videos, articles, or posts on social media. According to research conducted by (Akbar et al. 2022) visual and informative content tends to be more successful in attracting consumer attention. Short promotional videos, for example, are considered more interesting and have a higher retention rate than plain text content.

Another study by (Ardianto, Santoso, and Hartono 2023) highlights the importance of consistency in the distribution of promotional content. They found that MSMEs that regularly post promotional content on social media managed to build more intense interactions with consumers, which contributed to an increase in sales of 20-30%. Interactive content, such as quizzes or giveaways, has also proven to be more effective in attracting consumer engagement, which can ultimately increase loyalty and retain loyal customers. However, the main challenge faced by MSMEs in managing promotional content is limited time and resources. (Zahara et al. 2023) added that the ability of MSMEs to develop digital marketing capabilities, including creating and managing content that is interesting and relevant to consumer preferences, is one of the important keys to accelerating business recovery after the pandemic. Creative, informative, and market-needed content not only attracts the attention of potential consumers but also strengthens brand image and increases customer loyalty in the long term.

## METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method that aims to deeply understand the implementation of digital marketing in Ummu Khalif UMKM and its impact on increasing sales. The qualitative method was chosen because it is able to dig deeper information and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena that occur in the field. Creswell (2009) stated that qualitative research focuses on understanding the social context or phenomenon from the perspective of participants in a study. In this case, the main focus is to understand how Ummu Khalif UMKM implements digital marketing, as well as the impact felt by business actors.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), qualitative methods provide opportunities for researchers to capture data more holistically and contextually, so that they can gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and views of certain individuals or groups. Thus, this study

can provide insight into the implementation of digital marketing that may be different from what happens in other UMKM.

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with UMKM owners, direct observation of promotional activities on social media and marketplaces, and documentation in the form of sales data and promotional content. In-depth interviews as the main data collection technique allow researchers to obtain more detailed and accurate information related to the experiences and strategies implemented by MSME owners in using digital marketing. As a reference, Patton (2002) emphasized that in-depth interviews are very effective in exploring an understanding of a phenomenon directly from people who experience or are involved in it.

The main informant in this study is the MSME owner, Mrs. Lilis, who has direct experience in implementing digital marketing strategies in the business. To support broader data, several regular customers who actively interact through social media were also involved in this study. This refers to the view of Miles and Huberman (1994) which states that qualitative research often involves various data sources to provide a richer understanding of a phenomenon.

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, which focus on identifying key patterns from the results of interviews, observations, and documentation to find key themes related to the effectiveness of digital marketing. Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that thematic analysis is a systematic technique for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns in data, which is very effective for exploring key themes that emerge from interviews and observations. By using this technique, researchers can find patterns related to the challenges and strategies used by MSMEs in utilizing digital marketing.

The triangulation process was applied in this study to increase the validity and reliability of the data. Triangulation, according to Flick (2018), is a method used to verify data by combining several data sources, data collection techniques, or different perspectives, so that the research results are more valid and reliable. In this study, triangulation was carried out by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation, as well as obtaining perspectives from various parties, namely MSME owners.

With this approach, the study aims to gain a deep understanding of the implementation of digital marketing in Ummu Khalif MSMEs and its impact on increasing sales, by considering the challenges and successes faced by business actors in utilizing digital technology.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Overview of Ummu Khalif UMKM

Ummu Khalif UMKM is a micro, small, and medium enterprise that focuses on the production of chili sauce and fried onions with various flavors. Located at Jalan Karajalembah No. 18, Palu, Central Sulawesi, this UMKM has received halal certification from the MUI, ensuring that their products are safe and in accordance with halal standards.

As a typical souvenir from Palu City, Ummu Khalif products are widely known and are a favorite choice for tourists and local people. This UMKM is also active in various business development activities, such as participating in mentoring programs to improve the quality and capacity of their production. Through dedication and commitment to quality, Ummu Khalif UMKM has succeeded in positioning itself as one of the trusted and popular producers of Palu souvenirs.

### Research Results Based on Variables

#### Social Media

Based on an interview with the owner of the Ummu Khalif UMKM business, he stated that the social media currently used for promotional media are Facebook Instagram, WhatsApp

Business, TikTok, and Shopee. The first one used as a medium for sales was Facebook in early 2019, while WhatsApp Business, TikTok, Shopee began to be used in 2020 until now.

The following are social media and marketplaces used by Ummu Khalif UMKM as a means of digital marketing:

a. Facebook

The UMKM Ummu Khalif Facebook account with the name "Lilis Ummu Khalif" has grown rapidly since 2019. The number of followers continues to grow to 6.1 thousand, this shows the high interest of social media users in Ummu Khalif UMKM products and promotions. This account plays an important role as an effective means of communication and digital promotion to expand the market and increase interaction with customers. Based on the results of the interview, promotion through this social media has succeeded in supporting product sales, which reach around 20-30 bottles per month.




**Figure 1.UMKM Ummu Khalif Facebook Account Profile**

b. Instagram

The UMKM Ummu Khalif Instagram account is named "sambal_ummuKhalif", with a total of 443 uploads. The number of followers has continued to grow since 2020 until now, reaching 1,122 followers. Based on the results of the researcher's interview with this social media entrepreneur, he managed to sell 10 bottles of chili sauce products every month.




**Figure 2. Profile of the Instagram Account of UMKM Ummu Khalif**

c. WhatsApp Business




**Figure 3. Profile of Ummu Khalif UMKM WhatsApp Business Account**

Ummu Khalif UMKM WhatsApp Business account is named "~PT Ummu Khalif Berjaya". With WhatsApp Business number 082188651108. Based on the interview results, the business owner said the number of members on WhatsApp Business is 740 contacts. Ummu Khalif UMKM WhatsApp Business account has the following detailed information:




**Figure 4. Detailed information on Ummu Khalif UMKM WhatsApp Business**

From the interview results with Mrs. Lilis as the business owner, she stated that from this social media she managed to sell 200 bottles of chili sauce products every month. This shows that WhatsApp Business plays an important role for Ummu Khalif UMKM. With 740 contacts, this media is effective in increasing sales of up to 200 bottles of chili sauce per month, helping to expand the market and support business growth.

d. TikTok

Ummu Khalif UMKM TikTok account is named "Khalif food". With a total of 133 posts, with a current number of followers of 278 followers, and a total of 3,030 thousand likes. Based on the results of the interview, the business owner said that for social media TikTok only focuses on promotional content with the aim of making the brand better known. With 133 posts and 3,030 likes, the TikTok Khalif Food account helps introduce products to a wider audience, thereby increasing brand awareness while reaching new markets. The TikTok algorithm that can display content to users outside the follower list allows this product to be known by more potential customers.




**Figure 5. Profile of the TikTok account Ummu Khalif UMKM**

e. Shopee

The Shopee account of Ummu Khalif UMKM is called "Ummu khalif berjaya". From this marketplace, based on the results of an interview with Mrs. Lilis as the business owner, she stated that around 10-20 bottles per month were successfully sold through the Shopee marketplace and the best-selling product in this account was the 150 gram baby squid chili sauce product.




**Figure 6. Ummu Khalif's Shopee UMKM Account Profile**

The selection of social media is based on the increasing trend of use among the community. Business owners realize that the more people are active on social media, the greater the opportunity to reach potential customers. Therefore, the use of various social media platforms is considered an effective strategy in digital marketing.

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In terms of frequency of use, social media is used every day to support promotional activities. Business owners revealed that promotional content is posted most often once a day, although on some occasions it can be once every two days. In addition, although communication with customers via social media is not too frequent, there is still interaction that occurs, both in the form of questions about products and purchase transactions.

The impact of social media use on brand awareness is also quite significant. MSME owners admit that social media is very helpful in increasing public awareness of their products.

With consistent digital promotion, Ummu Khalif Sambal products are increasingly known by more people, which ultimately contributes to increased sales and business growth.

**Promotional Content**

In an effort to promote its chili sauce products, Ummu Khalif MSME uses several types of marketing content on social media. Based on interviews, the content that is often created includes the process of cooking chili sauce, eating content, and documentation of activities at exhibitions. In addition, promotional content in the form of attractive price offers is also part of the digital marketing strategy used. Ummu Khalif UMKM also utilizes marketing strategies through collaboration with influencers to increase marketing reach. Several influencers who have collaborated in promoting this product are Mindud with the Instagram name @besokdiet.plw and @Magdalenaf Bar Bar Kui. This collaboration aims to expand the audience and increase brand awareness among social media users.

Based on the interview results, the business owner stated that the type of content that is most liked and shared by customers is content related to cooking activities and enjoying chili sauce, especially those uploaded via the Instagram platform. Based on the interview results, this shows that the audience is more interested in content that displays the experience of consuming the product directly compared to regular promotional content.

The digital marketing strategy implemented by Ummu Khalif UMKM has proven to have a positive impact on increasing sales. After implementing various promotional content on social media, business actors stated that sales increased by around 50%. This indicates that digital marketing, especially through social media, has an important role in increasing the growth of sales of Ummu Khalif UMKM chili sauce products.

**Sales Increase through Digital Marketing**

Based on interviews with business actors, the use of social media has proven to be very helpful in increasing product sales. Of the various digital platforms used, WhatsApp Business is the main channel that brings in the most buyers. This shows that direct communication with customers through messaging applications plays an important role in building interactions and driving purchasing decisions. In addition, marketplaces such as Shopee also contribute to increasing sales volume by reaching more potential consumers. The increase in sales from year to year can be seen in the following monthly income data, which shows significant growth, especially since the implementation of intensive digital marketing strategies.

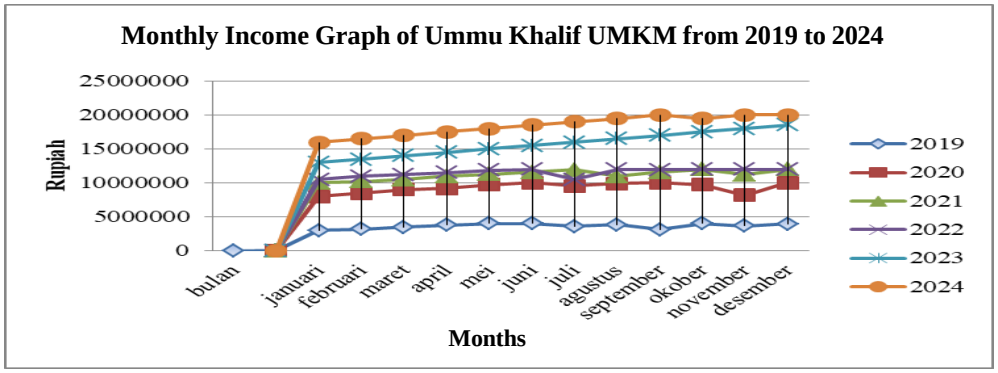



**Chart 1 Monthly Income of Ummu Khalif UMKM**

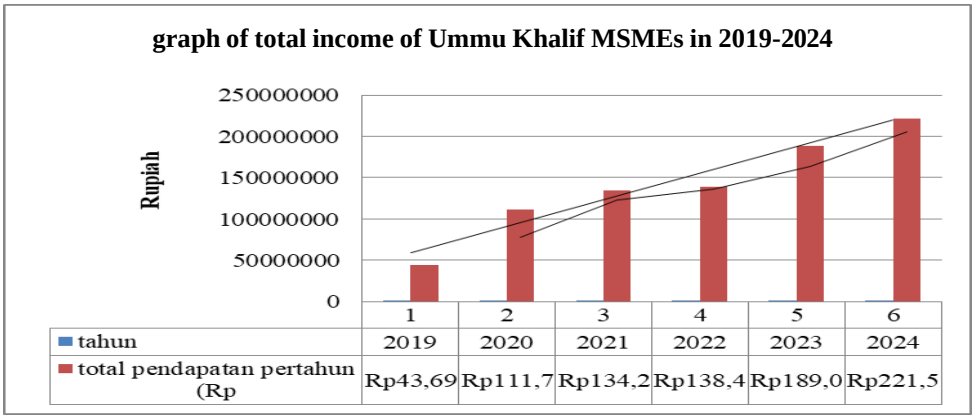



**Chart 2 Monthly Income of Ummu Khalif UMKM**

Based on and Chart 2, there is a significant trend of increasing annual income in Ummu Khalif Sambal UMKM during the period 2019–2024. In 2019, income was still relatively small with a total of IDR 43,690,000 per year. This condition changed drastically in 2020, where total income increased almost 2.5 times to IDR 111,760,000. The increase continued in 2021 to 2022, where annual income reached IDR 147,000,000. This increase was due to the virality of the product on social media which had a direct impact on sales volume. This shows that digital marketing strategies through social media such as WhatsApp Business and marketplaces such as Shopee are very effective in reaching new consumers and retaining loyal customers. In 2023, UMKM Sambal Ummu Khalif experienced an even higher spike in revenue, with a total of IDR 189,000,000. This spike was supported by various digital marketing trainings attended by business actors, so that the promotional strategy became more focused and effective.

2024 shows a predicted peak in revenue with a sub-total reaching IDR 221,000,000. This achievement is proof that optimizing online promotional strategies, including providing discounts and increasing interaction with customers, has helped increase product competitiveness in the digital market.

## Challenges in Implementing Digital Marketing

Business actors revealed that so far, the use of social media for promotion is still well understood, although there are challenges related to time. One of the main difficulties faced is the limited time to stay online consistently, considering other activities that also directly affect promotional activities.

To overcome the problem when posts do not get much attention, based on the results of interviews, business actors choose to delete and replace posts with new, more interesting content, the results according to business actors usually have a positive impact as indicated by the increase in the number of viewers of the content created. However, the experience of business owners shows that as long as the uploaded content remains interesting and relevant, the positive response from the audience tends to remain high. This shows that the quality and relevance of content is more important than the frequency of changing posts, for example, testimonial content, content on the process of making chili sauce, and promotional content when at an exhibition. From this content, it is proven to have a large number of likes and viewers. Related to the rapid changes in trends on social media, business actors emphasize the importance of adapting and learning to follow existing trends. Thus, business actors realize the importance of continuous learning to continue to adapt to market dynamics. Business actors also stated that they feel the need to continue to deepen their knowledge about online promotion. Continuing to learn and follow the latest developments is very important, because innovations in digital marketing will always emerge, and as business owners, they must continue to develop and not be complacent.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the role of digital marketing is very significant in driving sales growth for Ummu Khalif MSMEs. The use of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp Business, TikTok, and Shopee has a significant impact on expanding market reach, increasing product visibility, and strengthening relationships with customers. WhatsApp Business is recorded as the platform with the highest effectiveness in driving direct sales transactions, followed by Facebook and Shopee.

This shows that personal and interactive communication with customers through social media contributes positively to building trust and driving purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, Instagram and TikTok play a crucial role in increasing brand awareness through creative and informative visual content, attracting the attention of potential customers from various segments. Consistency in the production and distribution of quality promotional content, such as production process videos, customer testimonials, and collaboration with influencers, is a key factor in creating sustainable customer engagement.

The synergy between relevant promotional content and the use of the right platform forms an effective and adaptive digital marketing ecosystem for culinary MSMEs in the digital era. From an academic perspective, these findings enrich the literature related to MSME-based digital marketing, especially for regional culinary products that have specific market segmentation challenges. In addition, this study emphasizes the importance of implementing flexible and data-based digital marketing strategies, considering the dynamics of consumer behavior and digital trends that continue to develop, especially in today's era..

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