



# The application of digital marketing through whatsapp marketing in an effort to increase sales of sewing service MSMEs in Kupang City

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## ABSTRACT

The development of increasingly technology is inevitable in human life, so that currently people are brought to the phenomenon of social commerce (s-commerce), which is a situation where social media is also used as a means of buying and selling transactions. One of the uses of digital media is digital marketing activities, where traders promote and market their products online. The purpose of this study is to find out how the marketing strategy uses Whatsapp Marketing for UMKM Sewing Services in Kupang City. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method and is carried out data reduction data analysis techniques, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The result of this study is that there are 4 strategies used by UMKM in Sewing Services in marketing efforts to increase sales volume. By using the features in WhatsApp Business, such as: 1) Auto Reply, 2) Product Catalog, 3) Message Labels, and 4) Message Statistics.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Technology was created to solve human problems, but in reality, there are also those who have not completely solved these problems (Rosner, 2013), many feel that technology has a negative impact on employment. Like Tanah Abang traders who protested because they felt disadvantaged by the existence of TikTok Shop which made traders experience a decrease in turnover since the operation of the platform (Puwaningwulan et al., 2024), traders admitted that it was difficult to compete with the e-commerce market so they demanded that the government close e-commerce services from Shopee to Lazada (She et al., 2021).

Rapid technological developments are inevitable in human life, one of the technological developments is characterized by the existence of the internet which is quite easy to operate by everyone (Tuomi, 2002; Volti & Croissant, 2024), the internet allows individuals to communicate and convey information without the barriers of space and time even to buying and selling transactions (Butler & Peppard, 1998). The rapid advancement of technology in various fields has emerged as a reaction to answer the challenges of the times in the digital era (Zysman & Newman, 2006). Electronic commerce or *e-commerce* has automatically become part of society, one of the positive impacts is to make it easier for people to conduct business transactions (Baršauskas et al., 2008; Taher, 2021), in addition, *e-commerce* can reduce operational costs so as to increase business efficiency. According to research conducted by Sevtian (2011), *e-commerce* can increase sales by 90.9%,

the results of this study are also supported by research from Maryama (2013), which states that the use of *e-commerce* can increase sales turnover by 31% (Batubara et al., 2021).

These various studies have proven several advantages of using *e-commerce*, but in reality the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo) stated, until now there are still many MSMEs that have not gone online. Of the total 64 million MSMEs in Indonesia, only 21 million use digital technology, this figure is equivalent to 32%, which has not yet reached 50% (Hermawan & Nugraha, 2022; Riveong & Rachmad, 2018). Previous surveys found that the reason business actors in Indonesia do not use *e-commerce* is because they feel more comfortable selling directly. It can be seen from the following picture:

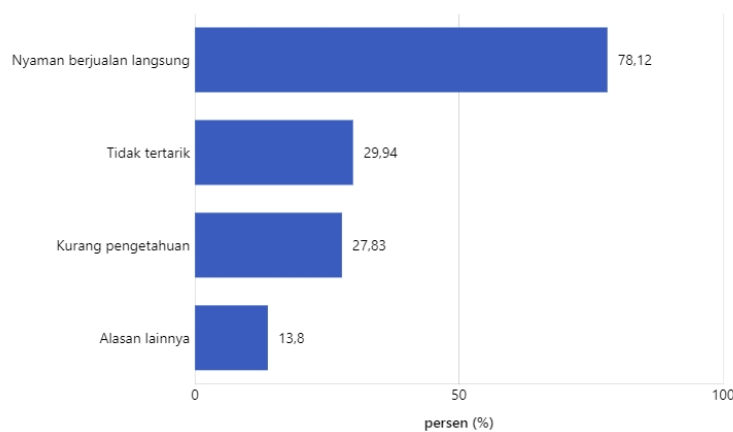


Figure 1. Data BPS 2022 Pelaku Usaha di Indonesia Yang Tidak Berjualan E-Commerce

BPS surveyed 31,753 samples of business actors who use *e-commerce* in 34 provinces and 302 districts/cities during 2022, it can be seen that 78.12% of the reasons why business actors do not use *e-commerce* is because it is more convenient to sell directly (offline); 29.94% admitted that they are not interested in selling online; as many as 27.83% felt that they lacked knowledge or expertise; and the remaining 13.80% have other reasons.

Edy Misero, Secretary General of the Indonesian MSME Association (Akumindo) stated that MSME actors have not entered digitalization because of problems in terms of education, most MSME actors are at the *middle to low* level of education, so that MSME actors have not thought forward, still feel comfortable with the previous conditions (Triana & Winstar, 2023). Therefore, motivation is needed to be able to encourage and trigger MSME actors to switch to using *e-commerce* as an effort to increase productivity that will support the community's economy (Botelho, 2005; Purwaningsih, 2019; Tavengerwei, 2018). One way to provide awareness of the benefits of *e-commerce* for MSME actors is to show that the use of *e-commerce* has a very positive influence on the progress of their business (Sutejo et al., 2022; Wirdiyanti et al., 2023).

An important part of *e-commerce* is *digital marketing*, which is promotion through the internet so that product services can have an effect on business success (Dewi & Hartono, 2019), and one of the indicators of business success is the increase in sales volume (Johnson & Soenen, 2003). For this reason, the author will examine the application of *digital marketing* to increase sales volume in sewing service MSME actors in the city of Kupang. In previous research, it was shown that the influence of *digital marketing* can affect sales because: 1) Reaching a Wider Audience Target; 2) increase brand awareness; 3) allows companies to conduct very specific targeting of potential consumers; 4) better interaction with consumers through various platforms such as social media, email, and live chat; 5) Better Measurement and Analysis; and 6) being able to create creative and innovative campaigns. Overall, *digital marketing* has a huge influence on sales (Junaidi, 2020; Olonde, 2017). This research focuses on the use of *digital marketing* by utilizing the WhatsApp Business platform, with features that support business activities as an effort to increase sales. The features that will be applied are: 1) Auto Reply Scheduler, 2) Product Catalog, 3) Message Labels, and 4) Message Statistics. Researchers choose *digital*

*marketing* using Whatsapp Business, because Whatsapp is the simplest application and almost all small business actors in the city of Kupang have used Whatsapp, this also considers business actors who are still difficult to use technology. The author also chose the subject of the research of the sewing service business because this business is less competitive with the apparel that is widely sold in online stores (Abernathy et al., 1999) in addition, this business is considered a seasonal business, where the demand is high only during the holidays.

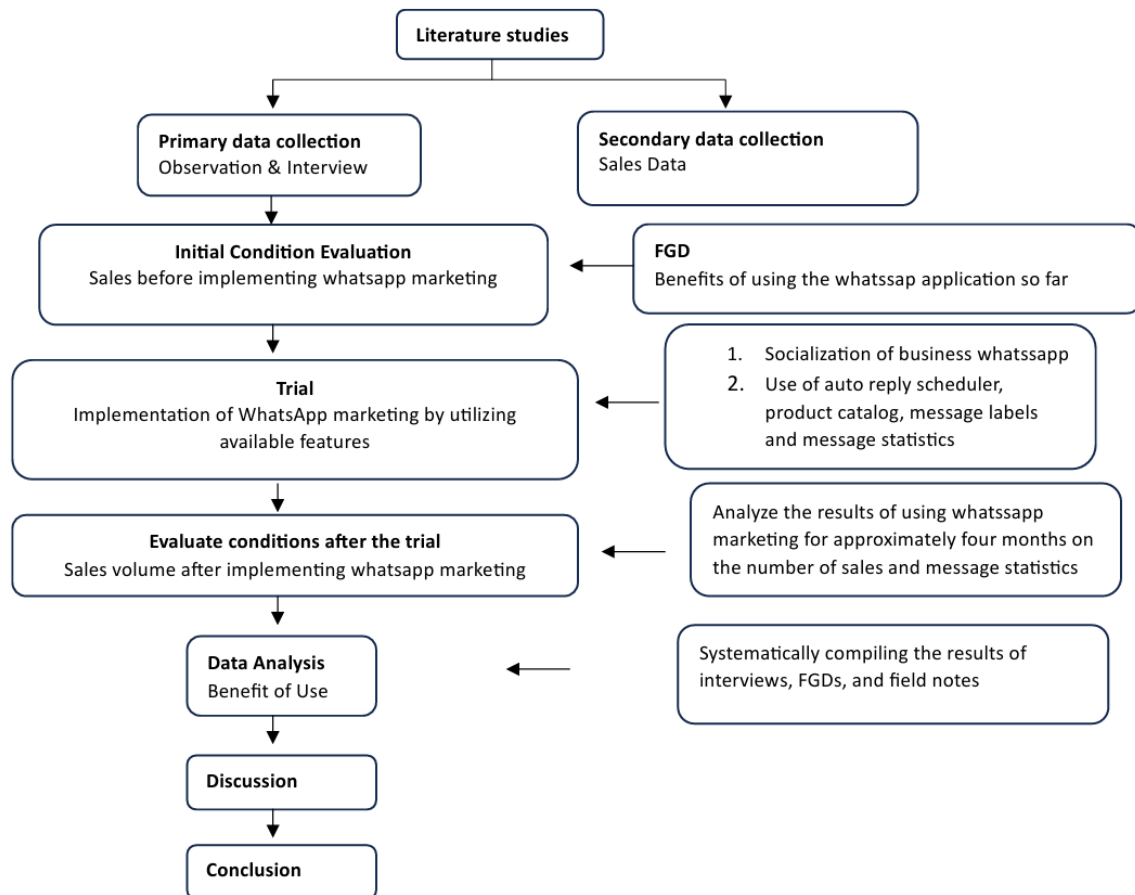


Figure 2. Flowchart of the study

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach, this type of research aims to describe the observed phenomenon or event in a deep and detailed way to understand the context and processes involved in the phenomenon (Cypress, 2015; Lim, 2024). Qualitative descriptive aims to describe, describe, explain, explain and answer the problem to be studied in more detail by studying an individual, a group or an event (Kim et al., 2017). Methods used in qualitative descriptive research such as in-depth interviews, participatory observations, document analysis, and direct observation (Owen, 2014) (Ciesielska et al., 2018). These methods allow researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the human and social phenomena studied. Data analysis is carried out by summarizing, grouping, and interpreting information from the data (Kaufman & Rousseeuw, 2009; Schensul et al., 1999).

The research was conducted to provide a more detailed picture of how to apply *digital marketing* through WhatsApp marketing to MSMEs in the sewing service business in the city of Kupang. The population of this study is homogeneous, so the sample is drawn through *purposive sampling techniques*. The subject of the research is a home industry of sewing service products in the

city of Kupang with the following criteria: 1) home industry, 2) using whatsapp social media in business communication, 3) willing to be the subject of research (Schensul et al., 1999).

The data collection method uses primary data obtained from structured interviews and in-depth interviews with business actors. The data collected includes: general characteristics data; the purpose of using WhatsApp social media in the home industry; WhatsApp features used, and the number of service orders periodically.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### Whatsapp Business Application

WhatsApp as a part of social media in the form of a messaging or chat application that is created around social networks for communication on mobile phones with a limited number of people but more features than traditional SMS. Social media currently has a very high impact on communication (Floreddu & Cabiddu, 2016), WhatsApp is a user-friendly subscription instant messaging service through smartphones (N. Kumar & Sharma, 2017). The WhatsApp application allows exchanging messages, sharing files, exchanging photos and others. WhatsApp can replace face-to-face communication, the effectiveness of emojis, voice notes, text messages in communication (Han & Keskin, 2016). In January 2018 WhatsApp introduced its new application specifically for business owners, namely WhatsApp Business. WhatsApp Business allows businesses to send messages to customers efficiently. The WhatsApp Business application can be downloaded from the Google Play Store for Android users or the App Store for Apple. Entrepreneurs and professionals share management decisions with subordinates, plan meetings, use location features to notify their customers, advertise products via WhatsApp (Sun & Xu, 2019). WhatsApp Business offers features such as location sharing, document sharing, contact lists, and website usage. Additional features available for business people are: 1. Business Profile; Company profile information display features such as address, business description, email address, and company website. 2. Chat labels; The feature to manage contacts or chats with labels with chat labels in the incoming message category of communication can be more controlled and directed. 3. Automatic messaging; This feature will provide an automatic answer when a customer sends a message. There are three features that can be used for automatic messages, namely away message, quick reply, greeting message. 4. Message statistics; feature to find out the statistics of sent messages and received messages so that you can see the process of person that reaches the target audience.

#### Sales

The sustainability of a business is highly dependent on the achievement of targets obtained from the sales team. Technology is currently used to increase sellers' creativity in providing value to customers, improving sales processes and accountability, building collaboration, and creating customer engagement and technology can improve the professionalism of salespeople when conducting sales processes with potential customers (Shah et al., 2019). Sales is a process of exchanging goods or services between sellers and buyers. Sales are part of promotion and promotion is one part of the overall marketing system (Reynolds & Lancaster, 2019). Therefore, the company must be able to develop a sales strategy by determining the sales system in Direct Selling or Indirect Selling using channel partners", after which the company can focus on developing the selected sales channel or distribution channel (BenMark & Venkatachari, 2016).

The Process of Using WhatsApp Business in a Sewing Service Business in Kupang City in this case Grace Tailor Referring to the opinion of Kotler and Armstrong (2018), that the sales process consists of seven steps, namely finding potential customers such as prospects in qualifications, initial approaches, presentations and demonstrations, handling objections, closing, and following up. The sales process system compared to the process that has been used by Grace Tailor is as follows: The first step in the sales process is to identify qualified potential customers. Jasa Jasa Grace Tailor has a database of customer contacts who have made transactions at Jasa Jasa Grace Tailor, so that the data is categorized as potential customers. Grace Tailor will share her promotional broadcasts with potential customer contacts using WhatsApp Business as her marketing channel. The

prospect and qualification process carried out by Grace Tailor is in accordance with the opinion of the Pre-approach; That is, a salesperson must prepare a strategy to communicate with customers, such as customer characteristics and habits and also collect information or make direct sales. In Grace Tailor, the pre-approach is to enter a greeting sentence at the beginning of the conversation by using the greeting message feature in WhatsApp Business automated messages. Approach is an activity where sales must know how to meet, greet and start a good relationship. This approach can be done offline or online in person or through digital conferencing or social media. This step involves a sales appearance, an opening sentence, and a follow-up. At Grace Tailor Sewing Services, the approach is done online using WhatsApp Business. Marketing personnel always give an opening sentence at the beginning of the conversation, asking for the customer's name and the information needed, and also marketing personnel give chat labels to customers as categories that must be executed such as follow-up labels, pending payments on the WhatsApp Business feature. The next step is the presentation, from the sales process, sales tell the "value" or "benefit" to the buyer, show the potential buyer how the company offers and solve customer problems. At Grace Tailor Sewing Services, marketing personnel provide presentations of Grace Tailor products. Finally, the marketing staff sent descriptions and videos as product descriptions from Grace Tailor. For customers who have recorded using Grace Tailor's services, marketers are required to use a positive approach, look for hidden complaints, ask buyers to clarify complaints, consider complaints as opportunities to provide more information and turn complaints into reasons for future purchases. At Grace Tailor Sewing Services, the next marketing plan comes up with a solution to the problems that exist for customers, namely providing a 10% discount for customers. The closing process is the condition under which a sales transaction occurs. For closing, marketers can use one of several closing techniques. They can request an order, review the agreement points, offer to help write down the order, and ask if the buyer wants this model or that model or note that the buyer will run out of items if the order is not placed now. In the closing process, a solution emerged by providing a reservation form for customers who will use Grace Tailor's sewing services. According to Kotler & Armstrong, the follow-up is the last step in the sales process. Follow-up is necessary if marketers want customer satisfaction and repeat orders. Right after closing, the marketing person must provide details about the delivery time, purchase requirements, and must ensure installation, instructions, and service. The process carried out by marketing personnel is in accordance with the follow-up concept put forward by Kotler and Armstrong. Marketing planning patterns to bind potential consumers and maintain good relationships with customers have also been carried out in previous research (Faridi & Malik, 2019). Digitalization of the process of attracting consumers due to changes in market orientation is highly recommended (Jarratt & Hadcroft, 2007). It is hoped that through the use of social media will increase customer engagement from products and services (Vanauken, 2015) provided by Grace Tailor Sewing Services where customers comment on Grace Tailor's social media content in the form of likes or questions in the chat forum with the intensity of uploading information materials to make customers close and loyal.

#### **Sales Gain in Grace Tailor Sewing Service Business in Kupang City After Using WhatsApp Business**

From the results of interviews with the owner of Grace tailor, sales after using Digital Marketing through WhatsApp Business have increased significantly every month. This is because in the past the public did not know much about Grace Tailor, but after the promotion with the Whatsapp application, Grace Tailor Services are already known to many people.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Social media can be used by business actors as a solution in marketing goods and services. One of the applications that can be used is WhatsApp. Specifically, this application provides WhatsApp marketing features specifically for business actors who want to promote their goods or services to consumers, such as the Auto reply feature, product calendars, message labels, message statistics. It is also important to know that the WhatsApp application can also be used to store consumer databases, making consumer data rankings from customers to target consumers. Choosing the right social media

will greatly help business actors in facilitating communication with customers without the need to consider running out of time and difficulties in accessing applications. Thus, the presence of social media today has opened the horizons and views of business actors in the use of information and digital technology, in addition to communicating and building networks, can also be used to increase marketing and sales of goods and services. Business actors can take advantage of digital platforms that are very easy to access and use such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok. The application can be used as part of a digital marketing strategy for business actors in the digital era. In addition to being easy to access, the application can also display product images on status, send videos, provide free features, and be able to filter incoming messages to then be used as target consumers in marketing goods and services.

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