

# Communication Strategy to Survive MSMEs in The Era Of Covid Pandemic

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## ABSTRACT

UMKM stands for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, but this small one has a very large and crucial contribution to our macro economy. MSMEs have a sizeable contribution to the Indonesian economy and contribute more than 60 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This study aims to see whether there are differences in conditions before and during the pandemic in MSMEs which include Working Hours, Size of Business, Number of Employees, Number of Buyers, and Variation. This research is also to see what strategies are used by MSMEs to survive in pandemic conditions. The sample used was 50 respondents who have businesses in food/beverage, fashion, trade, services, agriculture/livestock, handicrafts, and others. The analysis tool used is non-parametric statistics using the Wilcoxon method. The research results show that all working hypotheses are accepted. This shows that there is an effect of the Pandemic on working hours, Business Area, Number of Employees, Number of Buyers and Product Variations. To survive during a pandemic, respondents used strategies: using online media using online applications, reducing expenses, picking up the ball strategy, and replacing easily stale / damaged / expired products that are more durable.

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## I. Introduction

The mysterious pneumonia case was first reported in Wuhan, Hubei Province in December 2019. The source of this case is still unknown, but the first case was linked to a fish market in Wuhan. Indonesia first reported Covid-19 on March 2, 2020, with two cases. There were 1,528 confirmed cases and 136 cases and 18 deaths as of 31 March 2020. The Covid-19 mortality rate in Indonesia was 8.9%, this figure was the highest in Southeast Asia as of 30 March 2020. There were 693,224 cases and 33,106 deaths worldwide. With the Covid-19 pandemic, all sectors have experienced significant changes, including the Indonesian economic sector which has been badly affected. The increase in the spread of Covid-19 continues to occur, resulting in uncertainty in the pace of the global economy.

In a crisis situation like this, the MSME sector really needs special attention from the government because MSMEs are the largest contributor to GDP and can be a mainstay in absorbing labor, substituting consumption or semi-finished goods production. Since its emergence at the end of 2019, the impact of the Covid-19 virus has begun to be felt domestically. Starting from the price of oil which fell to its lowest since 1991, the stock market is in a free fall, as well as the prices of other commodities such as gas and palm oil which are also expected to be pulled down if demand does not recover soon. The information and opinions above show that many economic sectors have experienced the impact of the economic downturn due to Covid-19.

Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises or what we usually call UMKM is a business carried out by business entities or individuals which is a productive industry. In Indonesia the development of MSMEs is very rapid, according to data collected by the Ministry of Cooperatives and MSMEs as follows: - 2014 totaling 57,895,721 units 2015 totaling 59,262,772 units with 98% share - 2016 totaling 61,651,117 units with 99% share - 2017 totaling 62,922,617 units with a share of 99.99%. From these data it can be seen that MSMEs in Indonesia are increasing every year, and what is the latest in 2018 the number increased by 1,271,440 units or as much as 2.02

percent so that the data for 2019 amounted to 64,194,057, while based on data from the Ministry of Communication and Information, currently (2022) MSMEs in Indonesia have reached 65 million business actors.

This shows that MSMEs in Indonesia are running well. This increase was caused by advances in technology that encouraged small businesses to be able to expand their businesses. The current COVID-19 pandemic situation has had a major impact on MSMEs in Indonesia. The number of MSMEs has decreased, especially small entrepreneurs due to uncertain daily income and income that is only relied on by public consumption. As we all know, each region stipulates Large-Scale Social Restrictions or PSBB which hinders trading activities. The closure of several trading sectors and the imposition of curfews hampered trading activities and many were forced to permanently close their businesses because they were deemed unable to survive amid the COVID-19 pandemic. It is not surprising that since the implementation of the PSBB for the first time last April until now, the performance of MSMEs has been declining. Of course, the government will not remain silent on this matter, the government will immediately launch policies to help MSMEs. One of the policies is by giving incentives. Incentives are divided into 3 types, namely: - Incentives are given in cash directly to ultra-micro business activists.

Providing incentives in the form of productive funds to micro businesses so that they are able to carry out spending activities - Providing incentives in the form of channeling working capital loans to MSMEs, especially those whose businesses were paralyzed so that they can start their business again and develop. In addition, there are several business sectors that have experienced an increase during ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. An example is the business of medical devices and electronic devices to support work from home and study from home. Like what happened in the City of Semarang, MSMEs have also experienced a decline since the pandemic.

MSMEs are the backbone of the economy which generates 60% of local GDP. The best efforts are very important to help MSMEs survive the pandemic. "The Indonesian Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs reports that 99.99% of businesses in Indonesia are MSMEs, with a total of 64 million units. MSMEs absorb up to 97% of the workforce, while large companies absorb around 3%,"

By observing the cases above, it can be concluded that there has been a reduction in local traders which means there has been an increase in the unemployment rate among MSMEs in Semarang City, where some have closed their businesses because they could not exist during a pandemic. MSMEs that are forced to close their stalls make them lose their source of income.

Based on the data and problems above, it can be concluded that with the Covid condition, there is a difference in the performance of MSMEs and a decrease in sales activity so that it has an impact on the sustainability of the lives of the people around it, this also has a great impact on income. It turns out, when developing a marketing strategy there is no need to analyze or conduct further research related to what strategy is suitable to be applied when the Covid-19 pandemic is still ongoing. The problem of decreasing MSME activities, especially in the city of Semarang, has an impact on decreasing their income. This study aims to see whether there are differences in conditions before and during the pandemic in MSMEs which include Working Hours, Size of Business, Number of Employees, Number of Buyers, and Variation. This research is also to see what strategies are used by MSMEs to survive in pandemic conditions

In general, strategy is a method or process used to achieve a goal. Strategy is an action that is incremental (always increasing) and continuous, which is carried out based on the point of view of the expected goals. Strategy is a pattern of goals as well as policies and grand plans for achieving these goals, which are structured in such a way as to be able to define the company's business or what the company will become and what type of company it is or what type of company it wants. Strategy must provide boundaries for a project, where goals and results must follow the direction of the company going forward. Strategy is a contingency plan of action – can change according to the situation – to achieve certain goals (Casadesus-Masanell & Ricart, 2009).

Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 18 of 2002 Development is a science and technology activity that has the aim of utilizing proven scientific principles and theories to enhance the functions, benefits, and applications of existing science and technology, or produce new technologies. . Business development covers all company activities aimed at: 1) creating value and potential income for the company. 2) develop products and technologies that can be commercialized. 3) build relationships with partners, consumers and potential stakeholders, for the benefit of the company. A business development strategy is a set of company goals, policies, plans and activities aimed at identifying business opportunities in the market and maintaining business continuity or achieving business success.

MSMEs are business activities that are able to expand and increase employment for the community, provide services and increase the economy widely or highly in the community, play a role in the process of equity and

increase people's income, encourage economic growth, and play a role in realizing national stability. Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises are productive economic businesses that stand alone, which are carried out by individuals or business entities, which are not subsidiaries or part of a company or not a branch of a company that is owned by the owner of the company, controlled, or is part of either directly or non-exclusively. according to medium or large business, which meets the conditions for small business as referred to in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2008 concerning Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises. Micro business.

Table 1. Previous Research

<b>Name and Title of Research</b>	<b>Place of research</b>	<b>Research result</b>
Azky Afidah (2021) Strategi Bertahan Pedagang Pasar Tradisional Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19	Studi Kasus Di Desa Jejeg Kecamatan Bumijawa Kabupaten Tegal	With the Covid 19 virus, they prefer shopping for necessities at mobile vegetable sellers, buying cooked food, or even entrusting them to neighbors who want to go to the market. So many strategies are carried out by Jejeg market traders to survive and generate income. The strategy is divided into 3 types, namely active strategy, passive strategy, and network strategy
Evi Suryani Analisis Dampak Covid-19 Terhadap UMKM (Studi Kasus : Home Industri Klepon Di Kota Baru Driyorejo	Studi Kasus Di Kota Baru Driyorejo	Selling Strategies During a Pandemic, Namely Participating in Trainings Organized by the Government and Other Business Actors. Because taking part in training will increase your network so that your business can be known by more people. And Mrs. Andri continues to innovate so that her business can be sold online. Because in this pandemic period, many people's activities are carried out online
Nur Sindi Janati; M. Rusdi; Melis: Analisis Dampak Pandemi Covid-19 Terhadap Pendapatan Usaha Mikro Kecil Dan Menengah	Studi Kasus Industri Rumahan Kemplang Di Wilayah Jakabaring Palembang	.The Covid-19 outbreak has not had an impact on the income of the cracker/kemplang home industry in the Jakabaring District, Palembang City. The Covid-19 pandemic made changes to the sales system, which initially did not sell online and changed to online sales.
Sam'un Jaja Raharja; Sari Usih Natari : Pengembangan Usaha UMKM Di Masa Pandemi Melalui Optimalisasi Penggunaan Dan Pengelolaan Media Digital	UMKM Di Jawa Barat Yaitu Di Kota Bekasi Dan Depok	Training on the use of digital media in the development of MSMEs has proven to be useful and can increase partners' knowledge and skills. Therefore, it is recommended that the mentoring method for sustainable partners can be a solution in increasing business scale and also being ready to adapt the company to increase business scale while maintaining business continuity..
Marlina Siregar; Nurintan Asyiah Siregar; Nur'ainun Gulo : Strategi UMKM Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19 Di Rantauprapat	Kota Rantauprapat	Opportunities for MSMEs in the future are competitiveness, new market opportunities, marketing creativity and innovation (brand, shape, packaging model, and so on). The concept of a new marketing strategy that can be suggested to MSMEs in Rantauprapat City in order to improve marketing performance.

## II. Methods

### A. Research Flow

The research flow proposed to analyze the condition of MSMEs before and after the pandemic and how the strategies were implemented to survive during the pandemic are as follows :

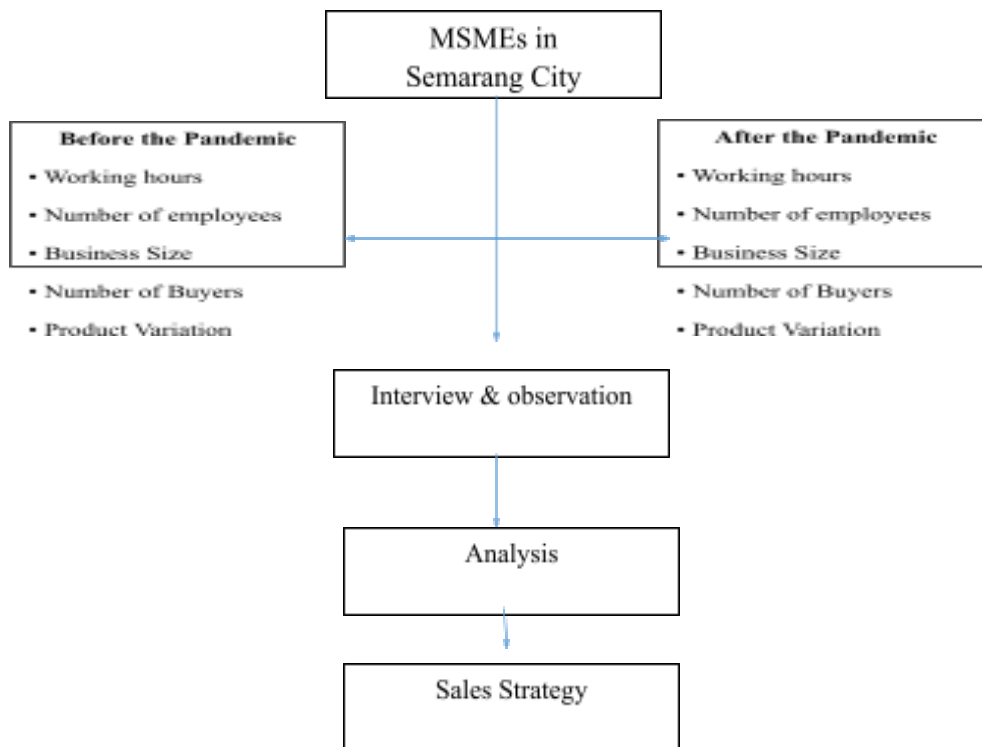


Fig. 1. Research Flow

The hypothesis of the theoretical thinking framework is :

- H1. There are differences in working hours used before and during the Pandemic
- H2. There are differences in the Business Area used before and during the Pandemic
- H3. There is a difference between the number of workers used before and during the pandemic
- H4. There is a difference between the number of buyers before and during the pandemic
- H5. There are differences between the variations of products sold before and during the pandemic

### B. Types of Research

#### 1) Quantitative Research Methods

This research is a non-parametric quantitative research, which is a process of research and understanding based on a methodology that investigates a phenomenon or problem in an object with a nonparametric test, which is a "distribution-free" statistical test. This term states that the data used in nonparametric does not need to follow a certain distribution.

Non parametric test equipment used is Wilcoxon. The Wilcoxon matched-paired signed test is a non-parametric test used to measure whether there is a difference in the mean scores of 2 sample groups that are mutually dependent. This technique is a refinement of the sign test . As in the sign test, this technique is used to test the significance of the comparative hypothesis of two correlated samples (Sugiyono, 2015)

The assumptions that must be met in the Wilcoxon test are: (1) Sample data is not normally distributed. (2) Two paired sample groups (the sample members of the two groups are the same). (3) c. Minimum scale sample of ordinal data, intervals, ratios. (4) The number of samples in both groups is the same. (5) MSMEs in Semarang City Questionnaire which will later be processed using the SPSS.

This study uses primary data through procedures and data collection techniques in the form of: direct observation and in-depth interviews and documentation. In this quantitative study, data analysis was carried out using the Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test model.

The conceptual framework or theoretical thinking is made by taking into account the description previously described, so this section will describe several things that are used as research as a basis for thinking in the future. The foundation in question will further direct research to find data and information in this research in order to solve the problems that have been described previously.

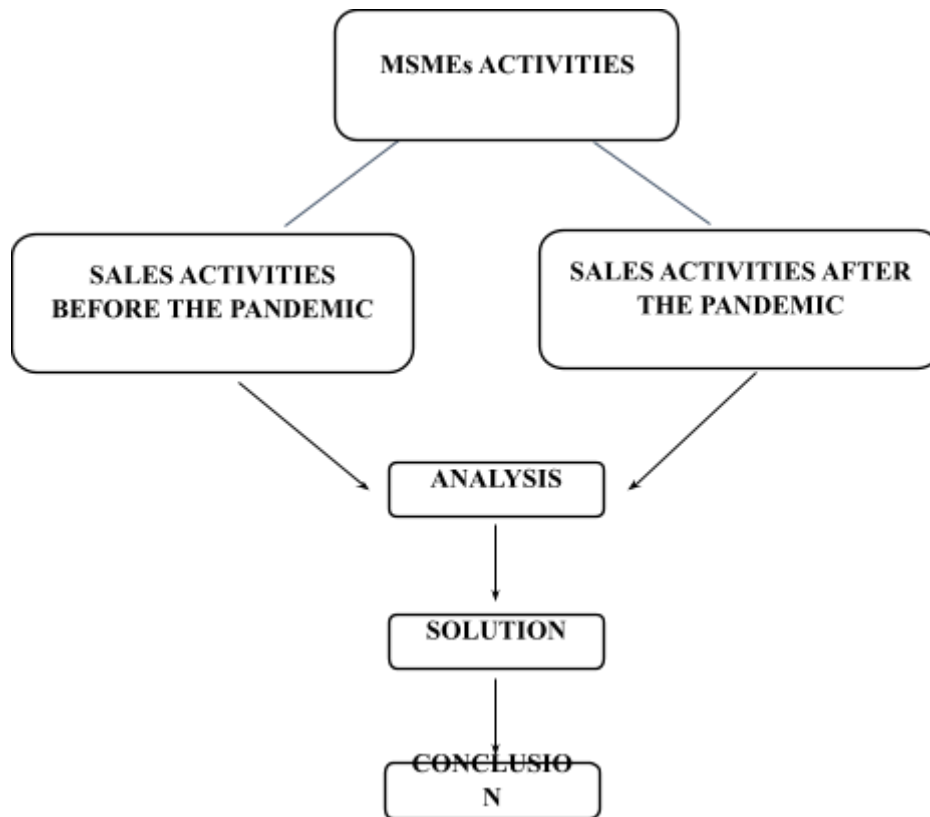


Fig. 2. Research Thinking Framework

## 2) Research Object, Sample Unit, and Population

The research object plays an important role in providing data sources for researchers, of course the object is adapted to the problem to be studied and determined at a research location, so that the research location is very necessary in this study. For this reason, the author describes the description regarding the location, population, sample and research sampling techniques.

The research location is the place where the research is carried out or it can be said to be the location of the data sources that we will look for in carrying out the research. The location in this study is in Pedurungan District, Pedurungan District was chosen because it has the

The sample units are local traders in the Pedurungan District area which are summarized in several MSME Clusters, there are 10 types of businesses: Food Processing, Batik, Milkfish, Handycraft, Herbal Medicine, Tourism, Lumpia, Bags, Metal, Furniture, Food Seller (Culinary)

Population is an important aspect in research. Population is needed in answering a problem. The population in this study are culinary sellers, textile sellers, children's toy rental owners, counter entrepreneurs, and grocery store owners in the Pedurungan area who have been selling for approximately 5 years or have experienced 2 periods, namely during the pre-pandemic period. and during a pandemic.

## III. Result and Discussion

### A. Research Object, Sample Unit, Population

The research object plays an important role in providing data sources for researchers, of course the object is adapted to the problem to be studied and determined at a research location, so that the research location is very

necessary in this study. For this reason, the author describes the description regarding the location, population, sample and research sampling techniques.

The research location is the place where the research is carried out or it can be said to be the location of the data sources that we will look for in carrying out the research. The location in this study is in Pedurungan District, Pedurungan District was chosen because it has the most MSMEs in Semarang City.

The sample units are local traders in the Pedurungan District area which are summarized in several MSME Clusters, there are 10 types of businesses: Food Processing, Batik, Milkfish, Handycraft, Herbal Medicine, Tourism, Lumpia, Bags, Metal, Furniture, Food Seller (Culinary)

Population is an important aspect in research. Population is needed in answering a problem. The population in this study are culinary sellers, textile sellers, children's toy rental owners, counter entrepreneurs, and grocery store owners in the Pedurungan area who have been selling for approximately 5 years or have experienced 2 periods, namely during the pre-pandemic period. and during a pandemic

**Discussion**

At this stage the researcher explains the meaning of the research results. The discussion emphasizes the answer to the formulation of the problem. The sequence of discussion is to describe the answers to the "what" problem formulation or the answers to the "how" problem formulation or the answers to the "why" problem formulation based on research data and describe the researcher's opinion.

Researchers want to know how sales activities were before the pandemic and activities during the pandemic. For this purpose, direct interviews were conducted with local traders to obtain relevant and valid data, so that researchers could find out the differences in sales activities before and during the pandemic. With these interviews, the following interview results were obtained.

*B. Working Hours.*

From the research results it is known that the average working hours before the pandemic was 10.8 hours and decreased to 8.78 hours with a maximum value of 18 hours and a minimum of 6 hours before the pandemic. Working hours decreased to a minimum of 5 hours and a maximum of 12 hours.

Wilcoxon's analysis showed that there were 38 respondents whose working hours were reduced, and 12 respondents whose working hours were fixed, and none of them had increased working hours, as shown in table 2 below

Table 2. Analysis of Working Hours

		Ranks		
		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Working_hours2 -	Negative Ranks	38 <sup>a</sup>	19,50	741,00
Working_hours1	Positive Ranks	0 <sup>b</sup>	,00	,00
	Ties	12 <sup>c</sup>		
	Total	50		

a. Working\_hours2 < Working\_hours1

b. Working\_hours2 > Working\_hours1

c. Working\_hours2 = Working\_hours1

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
	Working_hours2 - Working_hours1
Z	-5,439 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,000

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on positive ranks.

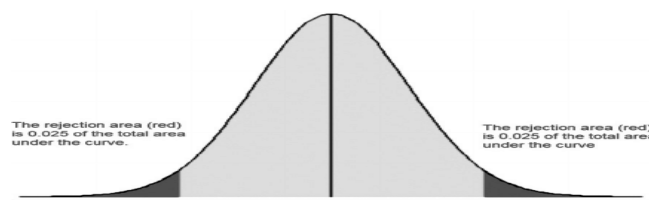


Fig. 3. Figure 3.. Work Hours Hypothesis Test Curve

Hypothesis testing using the Wilcoxon test shows that Zcount is greater than the table (2-way test) where Z table is -1.96 and Z count is -5.439 and sig 0.000 is smaller than 0.05 which means the working hypothesis is accepted which means that there is a difference working hours before and after the Pandemic. This is made clear by Figure 3

C. Business Area

From the research results it is known that the average business area (M<sup>2</sup>) before the pandemic was 20.48 m<sup>2</sup> and decreased to 17.86 m<sup>2</sup> with a maximum value of 64 m<sup>2</sup> and a minimum of 8 m<sup>2</sup> before the pandemic. The business area has decreased to a maximum of 45 m<sup>2</sup> and a minimum of 8 m<sup>2</sup>

Based on the output test statistics in table 3, the Wilcoxon test shows that the Asym.sig (2-tailed) value of 0.005 is less than 0.05 and the calculated Z value is greater than the Z table. Therefore, as the basis for making a decision on the Wilcoxon test, it can be concluded that "Hypothesis is accepted". Thus it can be said that there was a difference in Business Area before the pandemic and during the pandemic. The change in activity occurred due to the enactment of PPKM regulations in the Semarang City environment. This is shown in the following curve 4 below

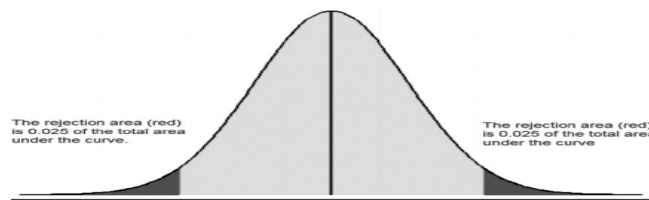


Fig. 4. Business Area Hypothesis Test Curve

The results of the analysis also showed that there were 10 respondents who experienced a decrease in business area, and 40 people who remained, and none of them experienced an increase in business area.

Table 3. Business Area Analysis

		Ranks		
		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Business_area2 -	Negative Ranks	10 <sup>a</sup>	5,50	55,00
Business_area1	Positive Ranks	0 <sup>b</sup>	,00	,00
	Ties	40 <sup>c</sup>		
	Total	50		

- a. Business\_area2 < Business\_area1
- b. Business\_area2 > Business\_area1
- c. Business\_area2 = Business\_area1

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
Business_area2 - Business_area1	
Z	-2,807 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,005

- a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
- b. Based on positive ranks.

D. Number of Employees

From the research results it is known that the average number of employees before the pandemic was 2.76 people and decreased to 1.76 people with a maximum score of 5 and a minimum of 1 before the pandemic. The number of employees decreased to a maximum of 3 people and at least 1 during the

The Wilcoxon test results in table 4 show that the calculated Z value is greater than Z table with Asym.sig (2-tailed) of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 and the calculated Z value (5.151) is greater than Z table (1.96) .

Therefore, as the basis for making a decision on the Wilcoxon test, it can be concluded that "Hypothesis is accepted". Thus it can be said that there was a difference in the number of employees before the pandemic and during the pandemic. The change in the number of employees for this activity occurred due to a decrease in sales so that MSMEs reduced the number of employees. This is shown in the following Table 4 and clarified by the following curve 5

Table 4. Analysis of Number of Employees

		Ranks		
		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Employee_2 - Employee_1	Negative Ranks	33 <sup>a</sup>	17,00	561,00
	Positive Ranks	0 <sup>b</sup>	,00	,00
	Ties	17 <sup>c</sup>		
	Total	50		

- a. Employee\_2 < Employee\_1
- b. Employee\_2 > Employee\_1
- c. Employee\_2 = Employee\_1

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
Employee_2 - Employee_1	
Z	-5,151 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,000

- a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
- b. Based on positive ranks.

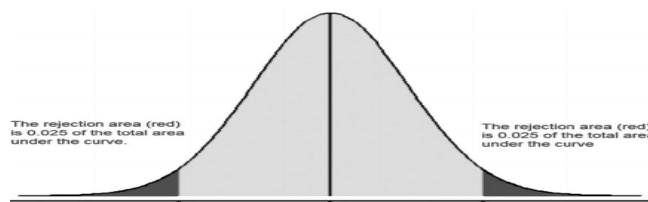


Fig. 5. Number of Employees Hypothesis Test Curve

From the Wilcoxon Analysis it is also known that there are 33 MSMEs that reduce the number of their employees, and MSMEs with a fixed number of employees there are 17 MSMEs

*E. Number of Buyers*

The Wilcoxon test conducted on the number of buyers before and during the pandemic showed that there were differences in the number of buyers before and during the pandemic. This can be seen in the following table 5.

Table 5. Buyer Number Analysis

		Ranks		
		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Buyer_2 - Buyer_1	Negative Ranks	38 <sup>a</sup>	20,95	796,00
	Positive Ranks	2 <sup>b</sup>	12,00	24,00
	Ties	10 <sup>c</sup>		
	Total	50		

- a. Buyer\_2 < Buyer\_1
- b. Buyer\_2 > Buyer\_1
- c. Buyer\_2 = Buyer\_1

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
Buyer_2 - Buyer_1	
Z	-5,260 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,000

- a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
- b. Based on positive ranks.



Table 5 above shows that the calculated Z is greater than the Z table for the 2-way test as also shown in the following curve 4.4. Z count 5.260 while Z table 1.96 with sig 0.000 this shows that there was a difference in the number of buyers before and during the pandemic.

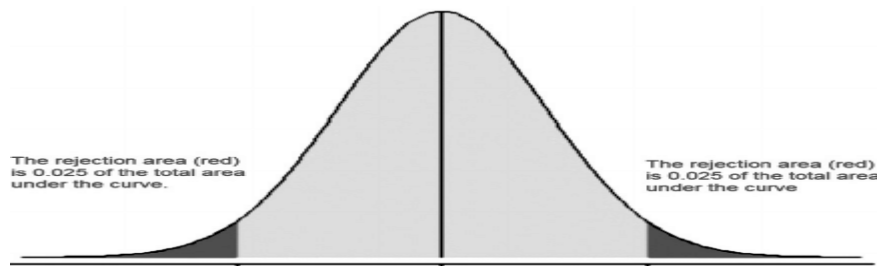


Fig. 6. Number of Buyers Hypothesis Test Curve

The research results show that the average number of buyers per day before the pandemic was 25.3 and after the pandemic was 18.88 with a maximum number of buyers before buyers of around 60 and a minimum value of 5 people. During the Pandemic the number of buyers decreased to a maximum of 40 and a minimum of 7 people

F. Product Variation

The research results show that the average variety of products sold was 27.94 products before the pandemic and decreased slightly during the pandemic to 26.82. The maximum number of product variations before the pandemic was 60 products with a minimum value of 10. The same thing happened during a pandemic where the maximum number of product variations sold was 60 and a minimum value of 10.

To test Hypothesis 5 which stated that there were differences in product variations before and during the pandemic using the Wilcoxon analysis, the results were obtained as shown in table 6 below.

Table 6. Product Variation Analysis

		Ranks		
		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Product_Variation2 - Product_Variations1	Negative Ranks	13 <sup>a</sup>	8,00	104,00
	Positive Ranks	1 <sup>b</sup>	1,00	1,00
	Ties	36 <sup>c</sup>		
	Total	50		

- a. Product\_Variation2 < Product\_Variations1
- b. Product\_Variation2 > Product\_Variations1
- c. Product\_Variation2 = Product\_Variations1

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
Product_Variation2 - Product_Variations1	
Z	-3,374 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,001

- a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
- b. Based on positive ranks.

From the test results it is known that there are 13 SMEs that have experienced a decrease in product variety, 36 which have remained and 1 UMKM which has increased product variety. The Wilcoxon test also found that the calculated Z is greater than the Z table (3.374 > 1.96) which indicates that the working hypothesis is accepted, which means that there were differences in product variations before and during the pandemic. This is also reinforced by the following curve image

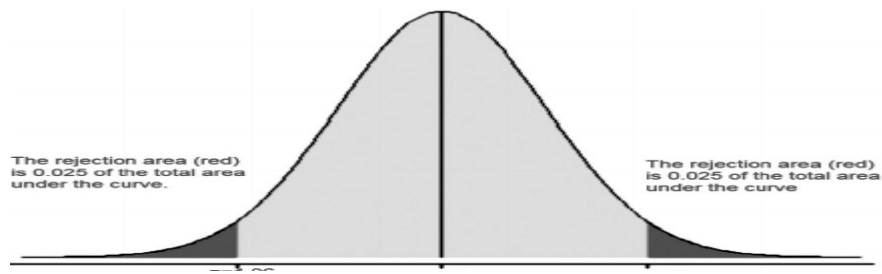


Fig. 7. Dsad Product Variation Hypothesis Test Curve

#### IV. Conclusion

Hypothesis 1, namely that there was a difference in working hours before and during the pandemic, this is indicated by the  $Z$  count  $>$   $Z$  table and the sig number  $<0.05$ . Hypothesis 2 which states that there are differences in Business Area before and during the pandemic is proven by showing the  $Z$  count  $>$   $Z$  table and the sig number  $<0.05$ . Hypothesis 3 which states that there is a difference in the number of buyers before and during the pandemic is proven by showing the  $Z$  count  $>$   $Z$  table and the sig number  $<0.05$ . Hypothesis 4 which states that there is a difference in the number of employees before and during the pandemic is proven by showing the  $Z$  count  $>$   $Z$  table and the sig number  $<0.05$ . Hypothesis 5 which states that there were differences in product variations before and during the pandemic is proven by showing the  $Z$  count  $>$   $Z$  table and the sig number  $<0.05$ . The strategy used by MSMEs during a pandemic is using online media using online applications, reducing expenses, picking up the ball strategy, and replacing products that are easily stale/damaged/expired easily which are more durable

##### A. Recommendations

To increase the number of buyers, MSMEs should innovate in their products that can be sold online, such as fast food. MSMEs must be tough, able to adapt to current conditions, for example selling hijabs and masks at the same time. MSMEs must have many social networks so that during a pandemic there are not too many difficulties in marketing their products.

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