

Effectiveness of Social Marketing Campaign in Increasing Sales of Local Products in Lebosari

Hani Nur Endah^{1*}, Abdi Hannan², Achmad Luthfun Nada³, Septy Aisah⁴, Iffah Syafaatul Arabia⁵, Rosa Ezizya Febriani⁶, Mauidzah Khasanah⁷, Takat Ardisuma Cahya⁸, Putri Misjayanti⁹, Lainatul Mudzkiyyah¹⁰

¹⁻¹⁰ Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang, Indonesia

haninurendah@gmail.com^{1*}

Alamat: Jl. Walisongo No.3-5, Tambakaji, Kec. Ngaliyan, Kota Semarang, Jawa Tengah 50185

Korespondensi penulis: haninurendah@gmail.com

Abstract. The use of social media has revolutionized consumer behavior and the way companies operate their businesses. Digital and social marketing provides a great opportunity for organizations by offering lower costs and increased sales. This study aims to explore effective marketing methods in driving sales growth through the use of social media. This study was conducted on food products that have received halal certification and labels from MSMEs in Lebosari, Kendal. This study applies a qualitative approach through a case study method. Data were collected through interviews with MSME actors. The results of the study revealed that there was no increase in sales after the digital marketing seminar held two weeks ago. The strategy implemented remains focused on selling products directly at stalls, without significant changes towards online marketing. This study is limited to the minimal use of social media by MSME actors, who generally choose free platforms for marketing. This study highlights the relationship between marketing strategies, increased sales, and the importance of social media, halal products to be more competitive.

Keywords: Branding, Local Products, Lebosari UMKM.

Abstrak. Penggunaan media sosial telah merevolusi perilaku konsumen dan cara perusahaan menjalankan bisnis mereka. Pemasaran digital dan sosial memberikan peluang besar bagi organisasi dengan menawarkan biaya yang lebih rendah dan peningkatan penjualan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi metode pemasaran yang efektif dalam mendorong pertumbuhan penjualan melalui penggunaan media sosial. Penelitian ini dilakukan pada produk makanan yang telah mendapatkan sertifikasi dan label halal dari UMKM di Lebosari, Kendal. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui metode studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dengan para pelaku UMKM. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa tidak ada peningkatan penjualan setelah seminar digital marketing yang diadakan dua minggu lalu. Strategi yang diterapkan masih terfokus pada penjualan produk secara langsung di lapak, tanpa ada perubahan yang signifikan ke arah pemasaran online. Penelitian ini terbatas pada minimnya penggunaan media sosial oleh para pelaku UMKM yang umumnya memilih platform gratis untuk pemasaran. Penelitian ini menyoroti hubungan antara strategi pemasaran, peningkatan penjualan, dan pentingnya media sosial, produk halal agar lebih kompetitif.

Kata kunci: Branding, Produk Lokal, UMKM Lebosari.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the latest statistics from January 2020, 4.54 billion people worldwide are reported to be actively using the internet, meaning that more than half of the global population—59% to be exact—is connected. This figure shows a significant increase in internet usage, highlighting how digital technologies have spread to different corners of the world, creating an increasingly connected society through global networks. Various digital communication technologies, including the internet, social media, and mobile applications, have now become an integral part of the daily routines of billions of people around the world.

The presence of these technologies has changed the way people interact, work, and obtain information, making them an essential component of modern life (Statista, 2020a).

Through social media and digital marketing, MSMEs have the opportunity to achieve various marketing goals more effectively and efficiently. This is because digital marketing offers various strategies that can be tailored to the specific needs of the company, such as increasing brand awareness, expanding market reach, or increasing sales. In addition, the use of social media as a marketing platform provides direct access to a wider audience without having to spend a lot of money compared to traditional marketing methods. Thus, companies can optimize their budgets to achieve maximum results (Ajina, 2019).

Social media technology and applications and digital platforms have developed rapidly and are widely used to raise public awareness of various public services, including health and education. In addition, this media is also used as an effective tool to promote campaigns, products, and services, both by governments, non-profit organizations, and private companies, with the aim of reaching a wider audience and encouraging active participation from the community (Grover et al., 2019).

People are now spending more time online researching products and services, reading reviews and recommendations from other consumers, and communicating their experiences. In addition, they are increasingly engaging with companies through digital platforms, whether through social media, apps, or websites. In response to this shift in consumer behavior, organizations and businesses have responded by integrating social media and digital technologies as an integral and essential element of their business marketing strategy. This approach not only allows companies to connect more closely with consumers, but also to personalize their messages, increase customer engagement, and monitor market trends in real-time (Stephen, 2016).

Social media platforms have paved the way for individuals to connect with each other and share important information about their interests, hobbies, and aspects of their personal lives. With their interactive features and easy access, users can quickly communicate their views, experiences, and preferences to a wider social network. This not only strengthens relationships between individuals but also creates dynamic and engaged digital communities. For marketers, these platforms offer a tremendous opportunity to conduct real-time marketing. They can interact directly with consumers, respond to their spontaneous needs and wants, and associate their brand with events, goals, and moments that matter in consumers' lives. This allows companies to stay relevant and connected with their audiences at every step of the consumer journey, from initial awareness to purchase decision. In the context of the digital era,

social media marketing (SMM) has become one of the most dominant trends and has had a significant impact in changing the overall marketing landscape. SMM challenges traditional, more static marketing methods, offering a more flexible, responsive, and customized approach. By leveraging data analytics and consumer behavioral insights gained from online activities, marketers can develop more effective and tailored strategies to audience needs, and continue to innovate to win the competition in an increasingly competitive market (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

MSMEs in Lebosari, which focus on selling halal-certified food products, have shown that despite efforts to use marketing strategies through social media, its effectiveness has not been proven to significantly increase sales by 20%. The products they offer, including superior products such as gadung-flavored cassava chips, are still widely sold through conventional methods, such as in local stalls and traditional markets. Although these products have succeeded in penetrating the domestic market without any digital promotion or through social media, this is not entirely due to sophisticated strategies, but rather due to the limited knowledge of MSMEs about the use of digital technology and their late adaptation to developments in the era.

This lag has caused MSMEs in Lebosari not to fully utilize the enormous potential offered by social media as a marketing tool. Amid the increasing dominance of digital technology in all aspects of life, they still rely on traditional ways to market their products, which although proven successful in some cases, have not been able to maximally increase their competitiveness, especially in the face of increasingly tight competition in the market.

This study aims to identify more effective marketing strategies for halal-certified food and beverage MSMEs in Lebosari, especially by optimally utilizing social media. Thus, this study seeks to explore the great potential that has not been fully utilized by business actors, providing references and guidance for them to be better prepared to compete in the digital era. It is hoped that through increasing understanding and implementation of social media-based marketing strategies, MSMEs in Lebosari can increase sales, expand market reach, and compete more effectively in both domestic and global markets.

2. METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative method with a case study approach. Information is collected through interviews with business actors. This study focuses on MSME actors in Lebosari, Kendal, who produce halal-certified and labeled food. Many business actors were selected based on the extent to which the answers given can provide in-depth insights into the research questions. A total of 20 digital marketing seminar participants and 2 MSME actors were interviewed in this study. The sample of MSME actors was taken from Lebosari, Kendal considering the diversity of products produced and the level of adoption of social media as a marketing platform. Data were collected using the triangulation method and analyzed through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. This analysis is applied to each case individually and comparatively to verify the findings (Nursansiwati, 2024). This study aims to explore the experiences and views of individuals who actively use social media for buying and selling. It is hoped that the results of this study can make a significant contribution to the development of MSMEs in Lebosari, Kendal.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From this study, there has been no increase in sales through social media in the last two weeks. MSMEs are still under-utilizing social media as a marketing platform that is not only free but also very affordable. In fact, social media has great potential to help them reach more customers and significantly increase sales levels. Unfortunately, many of them are not yet fully aware of or understand the benefits that can be obtained from this digital marketing strategy, so that the great opportunity to develop a business through social media has not been optimally utilized. Social media plays an important role in increasing sales of certified and halal-labeled food and beverage products for MSMEs in Kendal. Through this platform, MSMEs can expand their market reach more easily and effectively, especially since many consumers are looking for trusted halal products. Social media also allows business actors to interact directly with consumers, promote product advantages, and build a stronger image related to the halalness of their products. This makes social media a very influential tool in business development in this sector. Social media used by MSMEs to increase sales of halal-certified food and beverage products in Kendal include platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and online marketplaces such as Shopee. The use of these various platforms allows MSMEs to reach consumers from various segments, either through direct interactions such as instant messages on WhatsApp, visual promotions on Instagram, or direct transactions through Shopee.

Facebook also serves as a wider promotional medium, allowing MSMEs to introduce their products to a wider audience in a more interactive way.

The following are marketing strategies implemented by MSMEs:

- a. Deeply understand customer needs and characteristics,
- b. MSMEs tend to choose appropriate social media platforms to use, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram, because all of them can still be accessed without charge. Even so, the use of Facebook and WhatsApp is more often prioritized compared to Instagram.
- c. MSMEs routinely promote their products by uploading daily content on social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram through their personal accounts.
- d. The main goal of MSMEs is to make sales transactions with their customers.
- e. MSMEs try to establish good relationships with customers by offering friendship to better understand their needs and continue to update information about the products they offer.

Building a strong online community is equally important in this strategy. By maintaining consistent and authentic interactions across social media platforms, MSMEs can create meaningful long-term relationships with customers. More than just product or service transactions, focusing on creating a positive experience is essential to building customer loyalty (Sutrisno, 2023) . Engaging customers in discussions, providing quality content, and responding to questions and feedback quickly are important steps in strengthening the relationship between MSMEs and customers. With a strong online community, MSMEs can create a collaborative and supportive environment that not only encourages customer retention but also encourages positive recommendations. This approach has a long-term impact, where a positive reputation and close relationships become valuable assets for business sustainability and future growth. Through innovative marketing strategies, MSMEs have the opportunity to maximize social media as an effective marketing tool, leading them to success in the ever-evolving digital era. This transformation is not only following trends, but also creating new trends, making MSMEs key players in the dynamic business world. With this strategy, MSMEs can leverage social media features and innovations to create a strong presence and take advantage of untapped growth opportunities, maintaining competitiveness amidst constant change. Adopting innovative marketing strategies is a proactive step in shaping the future of a successful business in this digital era (Ohara, Suparwata and Rijal, 2024) .

4. CONCLUSION

This study has successfully identified the important role of social media in increasing MSME sales. However, the limited sample that focuses on MSME actors who are already actively using social media is the main obstacle. For further research, it is recommended to involve MSME actors with a wider variety of social media usage. Thus, future research can provide more comprehensive and effective recommendations to encourage social media adoption among MSMEs, so that it can contribute to increasing the competitiveness of local products and regional economic growth.

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