

MARKETING COMMUNICATION AS A FORM OF MSME DIGITAL LITERACY IN SUMEDANG REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

The government is currently stepping up its support for the digital literacy movement in the hopes that its citizens will become not just tech-savvy but also digitally literate and able to exercise responsible behavior when using digital tools. Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Businesses (MSMEs) in the Sumedang area are among the primary audiences for this initiative. To help micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) compete on a larger scale and expand their customer base, marketing communications are being digitized. Therefore, the goal of this research is to examine MSMEs' use of digital marketing communications as a form of digital literacy. To better understand the phenomenon under investigation, this study employs a qualitative strategy and descriptive methods of analysis. Based on the findings of this research, the MSME Digital Literacy Development is implemented through the utilization of social media due to its low cost, high efficiency, and high effectiveness. Constructing content, databases, and promotional materials contributes to the growth of digital literacy. The use of social media for marketing purposes has the potential to expand the target audience beyond what could be attained through traditional channels of communication..

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1. INTRODUCTION

The high productive age in Indonesia is not directly correlated with the availability of jobs, and this has resulted in the country having the most players in the MSME industry (Utama, 2019). This motivates Indonesians to challenge one another to improve their competitiveness through innovative breakthroughs that will ultimately benefit the progress of their economies. There is a growing number of companies operating in the UMKM (Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises) market (Wardhanie et al, 2018).

Strengthening micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) across the world can help countries recover from the economic downturn caused by the pandemic and the global crisis. SMEs have a major effect on the Indonesian economy (Firdaus et al, 2020). The draft policy for the Master Plan for the Acceleration and Expansion of Indonesian Economic Development states that the Indonesian government intends to achieve its goal of making Indonesia a middle-income country by 2025. (MP3EI). This requires annual economic growth in Indonesia of at least 7%, which is 2% above average (Baiquni, 2012).

The economic crisis that hit Indonesia in 1997 caused many large companies to lose money, slack off, and even shut down; we can learn from their mistakes. In contrast, SMEs were better able to withstand the economic crisis and save the Indonesian economy when it was hit by the crisis; as a result, the SME sector is expected to be able to boost economic growth in Indonesia (Slamet et al, 2016).

Micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are productive business units that can stand on their own and can be carried out by individuals or business entities in any sector of the economy, according to (Tambunan, 2012). Micro enterprises (UMI), small enterprises (UK), medium enterprises (UM), and large enterprises (LG) can be distinguished from one another based on the initial asset value of the company (excluding land and buildings), the average annual turnover, or the number of permanent workers. Large enterprises fall into the category of large enterprises (LG) (UB). However, the definition of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) can differ from one nation to another depending on which of these three measurement tools is used. Because of this, comparing the significance of the roles played by MSMEs or their importance from country to country is an endeavor that is fraught with difficulty (Agnusia, 2022).

The rapid development of the internet and information and communication technology (ICT) has had a significant impact on all aspects of the activities that are carried out in social and organizational settings. This impact can be broken down into two categories: (1) social and organizational settings, and (2) organizational settings. The government has made efforts to increase access to technology to develop innovative micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) actors, including by making use of information and communication technology (ICT), in the hopes that these domestic MSME actors will be able to compete with MSME actors from other countries. These efforts were made in the hope that these domestic MSME actors will be able to compete with MSME actors from other countries.

It is necessary to carry out capacity-building activities that are based on communication and information technology to improve the quality of governance in micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSME). Activities geared toward promoting digital literacy are being carried out in this specific instance. It is hoped that the development of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) that are based on the application of digital technology will be accompanied by the capability to use this technology to access, manage, integrate, analyze, and evaluate information, as well as to build new knowledge and create digital marketing communications. The overall performance of digital-based MSME organizations will be able to be optimized as a result of this (Wibowo, 2021).

During the pandemic, there was a change in consumer purchasing behavior patterns from offline to online. A survey from Deloitte in 2020 shows that 78% of internet users in Indonesia buy products online via mobile devices (Mavilinda et al, 2021). This change in consumer behavior has forced almost all business sectors to adapt through digital transformation in running their business. This shows that marketing communication by strengthening digital literacy is very necessary for MSME actors, including MSME actors in the Sumedang district so that they can adapt to the digital era they can support economic development and development (Firmansyah & Saepuloh, 2022). Based on the thoughts above, researchers are encouraged to examine more deeply a study entitled Marketing Communication as a Form of Digital Literacy for MSMEs in Sumedang Regency.

2. METHODS

The methodology employed in this study is known as qualitative descriptive research. (Gunawan, 2022) explains that the reason scientists conduct qualitative studies is to learn more about intangible, descriptive phenomena. Workflow procedures, recipe formulations, conceptual understandings, product and service attributes, aesthetic preferences, cultural regulations, artifact physical models, and so on are all examples of such phenomena. Furthermore, (Nugrahani, 2014) suggests qualitative research as a research method based on the post positivism philosophy, used to examine the conditions of natural objects, where the researcher is the key instrument, data collection techniques by triangulation, data analysis can be inductive or qualitative, and the results are presented. The condition of natural objects is studied using this

methodology. Qualitative research methods place more emphasis on interpreting results than on drawing broad conclusions. Interviews, field notes, and other forms of documentation were used to gather data for this study so that researchers could address the research questions and complete the objectives set out for them. Research for this article was conducted at the MSME Cooperative Office for Industry and Trade in Sumedang Regency. Researchers in Sumedang Regency compiled data on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) listed with the Industry and Trade MSME Cooperative Service.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Marketing Communications

Communication is the cornerstone of marketing, and when done well, marketing can be quite effective. It's not simple to get people to pay attention to, learn about, and develop a desire to purchase a product or service through various forms of communication. "Communication is the process by which an individual transmits stimulation (usually verbal) to modify the behavior of other individuals," Hovland, Janis, and Kelly (1953) According to this definition, communication is a social process that takes place between two people, during which stimuli are sent from one person to another. Verbal stimuli can take the form of messages transmitted through various channels of communication, eliciting some sort of transformation or reaction in the recipient (Priansa, 2017).

Marketing is a social process in which people create, offer, and freely exchange goods and services of value with one another to satisfy their wants and needs (Kotler and Keller, 2007). This demonstrates that marketing encompasses the entire framework of a company's actions in satisfying customers' wants and needs through a variety of channels. There is a close connection between marketing and communication. Where words and symbols are used to convey ideas and information between people or between businesses and customers. The art of marketing communication is not a simple one. When the communicator employs the appropriate strategy and meticulously plans the delivery of the message to the communicant, the latter can be encouraged to receive the message. To inform, persuade, and remind consumers about the products and brands they offer, businesses engage in marketing communication.

Almost everyone equates marketing communications with some form of advertising or promotion. In step with these ongoing changes, marketing communications are becoming a more nuanced and distinctive form of interpersonal interaction. Marketing communications can be understood as all promotional elements of the marketing mix that involve communication between organizations and target audiences in any form to improve marketing performance, as defined by academics and practitioners. Communication is the exchange of information and ideas between people or between groups of people and other entities. Marketing is the method by which a company or other organization provides value (exchange) to its customers. As a result, the marketing mix or marketing mix is presented in marketing communications to create meaning that is communicated to customers or clients. When the two are joined, it indicates that the marketing mix is being presented in full via the marketing communications channel.

(Firmansyah, 2020) explains that marketing communication is the act of sharing details about a company and its wares with the demographic the firm intends to attract. The goal of marketing communication is to inform, persuade, and remind the company's target market to accept, purchase, and remain loyal to the company's products or services. The success of any business or marketer depends critically on their ability to effectively communicate with their target audience. If there is no dissemination of information, consumers and the general public will not be aware of the availability of products and services.

Digital Literacy

Marketing Communication as a Form of MSME Digital Literacy in Sumedang Regency - Instanti Elyana et.al

Since 1990, a new idea known as "digital literacy" has been developing. One of the well-known figures is (Gilster, 1997), who defines digital literacy as the capability to comprehend and make use of information obtained from a variety of digital sources. Therefore, not only does it cover reading skills, but it also covers the process of critical thinking, which is required to evaluate the information that can be found through digital media.

In the Indonesian Language Dictionary (KBBI) "Literacy is the ability to read, write, and individual ability to process information". Digital in KBBI relates to numbers in a certain numbering system. Literacy is usually combined with other syllables to show ability in a particular field. The meaning of the word digital literacy is the ability to read, write, and process information in a certain numbering system.

As the number and variety of digital information sources increase alongside the advancement of information and communication technology as a result of the phenomenon of media convergence, digital literacy skills become increasingly important. Media convergence, as defined by (Preston, 1998), is the process by which different forms of mass media and information technology are combined into a single technological device, making it simpler for their owners to access a wide range of information and impressions. Convergence, then, refers to the merging of previously separate media into a single, more advanced medium. As the name implies, the focus of this new media is on digital media disseminated via the internet. The emergence of the internet is what ultimately triggers an explosion of information. This is related to the characteristics of the internet which can connect information from various parts of the world so that the dissemination of information can be done easily and quickly. In addition, through the internet one can easily search for information by utilizing the digital media they have without any distance and time limitations.

According to (Bawden, 2008) Literacy is expected to support achievement in the learning process optimally. The following are the goals of digital literacy:

- a) Forming students to become readers, writers, and communicators.
- b) Can improve the ability and habits of thinking in students.
- c) Increase and deepen the motivation and interest in learning of students
- d) Develop student learning independence so that they are creative, productive, innovative, and have character.

Meanwhile, according to (Glister, 1997), there are 4 competencies possessed by someone who has been able to carry out digital literacy including:

- a) Web-based research. This competency consists of multiple components, including the ability to search for information on the Internet using search engines, as well as perform a variety of tasks on the Internet.
- b) Navigation via hypertext. This competency consists of several components, including the following: knowledge of hypertext and hyperlinks and their operation, understanding of the distinction between reading a textbook and surfing the Internet. Understanding how the web operates requires familiarity with bandwidth, HTTP, HTML, and URLs, in addition to the ability to comprehend the characteristics of web pages.
- c) Analyzing the Content. Differentiating between the display and information content, i.e., how a web page appears to the user; Competence in evaluating online content in its full context, including an interest in discovering its origins and authors. Understanding the various domains for each institution or country, being able to analyze a web page, and being familiar with the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) in a newsgroup/discussion group are all skills necessary for evaluating a web address.
- d) Collecting and Organizing Information. Components of this competency include the ability to conduct an internet search for relevant information, the ability to create a custom newsfeed or receive up-to-the-minute notifications by joining and subscribing to a

newsgroup, mailing list, or another discussion group that addresses or discusses a topic of interest, the capability of verifying the accuracy of information obtained through multiple channels, of using different forms of media to demonstrate the veracity of information, and of integrating online and offline data sources.

Marketing Communication as a form of Digital Literacy for MSMEs in Sumedang Regency

In today's businesses, product promotion is an interactive process thanks to the use of information technology. The website has served as a hub for the company's online communications with customers, including product catalogs and promotions, as well as message boards, online surveys, mailing lists, and e-mail coordination. To boost their competitiveness in the market and streamline internal operations, businesses of all sizes, but especially SMEs, are increasingly adopting the digitalization of business processes.

Businesses of all sizes in Sumedang Regency are starting to realize the benefits that can be gained from using the internet and other digital tools. When a company adopts an information system based on the World Wide Web, it is said to have "digitized." As a result, the expansion of Sumedang district's MSMEs should be seen as a program to improve the effectiveness of the public sector.

If public sector productivity is to increase when resources such as money, time, and energy are pooled, then quality management, human resource development, technology adaptation, strategic partnerships, and organizational performance measures must be implemented, argue (Holzer and Callahan, 1998). Open data access, digital technology-based organizational management, public information dissemination through new media, cost-effective application implementation, and cross-cutting strategy were also mentioned as means by which technology adaptation was achieved by Holzer and Callahan. In other words, the focus of Holzer and Callahan's suggestions is on the digitalization of businesses, and more specifically, MSME.

If micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are created with a focus on digital literacy, then the next concept to be explained is the production of marketing communications. Implemented marketing communication strategies are one of the pillars of the success of MSMEs. Communication is the process by which individuals generate and exchange information to reach a consensus. In the meantime, effective marketing strengthens the position of MSMEs to the point where they deserve to be considered in national economic activities and ultimately generates profits for these companies. Moreover, it can compete and grow in national economic activities." (Swastatuti, 2016).

Marketing communication through social media has an important role, its wide coverage will make it easier for Sumedang district MSME entrepreneurs who have developed digital literacy to reach consumers who are far away, especially during a pandemic and the imposition of restrictions on community activities (PPKM), with social media entrepreneurs can also be creative in creating content and provide interesting information to potential customers/buyers by utilizing features on social media. Thus, potential consumers will find it easier to find products/services and are interested in buying the product.

Social media platforms are of particular concern because media are the mainstream platforms used in digital marketing communications. Apart from being cheap, social media can reach almost all social strata. The introduction of digital marketing starts from the introduction of the device or platform used, the upload design, to the content that must be uploaded. Social media platforms introduced to MSMEs in Sumedang Regency include; Instagram (IG), Facebook (FB), WhatsApp (WA), and the YouTube channel. Instagram and Facebook are used for uploads in the form of product images with interesting captions. Uniformized upload designs to maintain consistency. WhatsApp is used as a direct promotional communication medium to targeted persons or potential customers. The strategy is to use blasting messages to the WA group at certain times. The purpose of this blasting is to instill in the minds of customers regarding the

products and brands being marketed. Meanwhile, a YouTube account is used to create a business company profile.

Of all the challenges that have arisen in the New Normal era and world economic uncertainty caused by several current crises, MSMEs in Sumedang Regency have been able to respond to them and take advantage of the opportunities that exist by implementing the right marketing communication strategy, namely by developing their digital literacy skills so that able to expand marketing digitally (online) and carry out soft selling marketing techniques. MSMEs must also always update information, to get inspiration and business solutions for the current New Normal era so that the MSME business can continue to grow amid the current Covid-19 pandemic.

4. CONCLUSION

One of the keys for MSMEs in Sumedang Regency to survive during the current pandemic and economic crisis is to adapt to market changes. MSME actors must be able to develop a marketing communication strategy as part of adaptation to survive and also continue to develop in current conditions. The right marketing communication to do at this time is digital. Therefore, there must be a strengthening of digital literacy for MSME actors to be able to survive and continue to develop their businesses. The development of MSME digital literacy can be carried out by paying attention to three elements, namely content, databases, and advertisements. In terms of content, for example, MSMEs must be able to create interesting content for the new target market. This new target market is compiled in a complete database so that it is easy to analyze in selecting the right prospective customers. After getting potential customers, MSMEs can use advertising for promotion to expand the scope of marketing to new users according to the target market. In essence, all of these marketing communication strategies aim to promote MSME products to increase brand awareness and ultimately increase the number of purchases.

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