

The Role of Social Media in Increasing the Competitiveness of MSMEs in Halal Local Products Case Study of Carica Gemilang

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ABSTRACT

This research discusses the role of social media in increasing the income and competitiveness of MSMEs with Carica Gemilang halal local products in Wonosobo. Before utilizing social media, Carica Gemilang MSMEs experienced difficulties in expanding the market and increasing revenue due to limited access to traditional marketing. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of social media use on the income and competitiveness of MSMEs, especially halal products. The research was conducted through descriptive qualitative case studies with interviews, analysis of social media content, and direct observation. The results of the study show that social media plays an important role in increasing Carica Gemilang's revenue through promotions and wider interaction with consumers. Product competitiveness also increases due to the ease of promoting the advantages of halal products in a competitive market. Thus, social media is an effective tool for MSMEs in increasing the income and competitiveness of halal products in the digital era.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) industry in Indonesia has a significant impact on the national economy (Hamza and Agustien, 2019). MSMEs make an important contribution in terms of production results, labor absorption, and state foreign exchange income. MSMEs have special advantages in the form of local content-based products at affordable prices, easy-to-obtain labor, and unique products with international market potential. As one of the main pillars of the Indonesian economy, MSMEs have played a role in maintaining the stability of the economic ecosystem, such as during the 1998 economic crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic (Hanim, et.al, 2021). This has a major impact on various aspects of life, including in the fields of education, business, communication, and so on. The use of ICT has opened up many new opportunities, but it also brings new challenges and risks.

Therefore, it is important for the public to be able to understand, master, and use information and communication technology wisely. Education about ICT needs to be improved, both in the school environment and the general public, so that everyone can benefit from this technological development. That way, we can take advantage of ICT to improve the quality of life and achieve better progress. The rapid development of ICT has made the internet the main communication tool that is in great demand by the public. This is the background for the change in communication technology from conventional to modern and all-digital.

The development of the use of internet media as a means of communication became more and more rapid after the internet began to be accessible through mobile phones and even then the term smartphone appeared. With the presence of Smartphones, the facilities provided in communication are also increasingly challenging, ranging from sms, mms, chat, email, browsing and social media. According to Nasrullah (2015), social media is a media on the internet that allows users to represent themselves or interact, cooperate, share, communicate with other users to form social bonds virtually. In social media, the three forms that refer to social meaning are cognition, communication, and cooperation. However, there are still many SMEs that have not been maximized in utilizing social media to expand market reach and introduce their products to the digital world. Therefore, the role of the government and related institutions in providing education and training on the use of social media is very important.

Thus, it is hoped that SMEs in Indonesia can be better prepared to compete in the global market through the optimal use of social media. SMEs can use social media to increase views and increase sales. Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) can also save money and speed up operations by using social media to access services such as payment processing and delivery. Social media can also offer data and insights into customer behavior, allowing businesses to improve the quality of their goods and services. To make SME goods more competitive, three initiatives can be implemented: improving product quality, improving labeling and packaging quality, and expanding marketing reach. The results of this assistance show that the quality of products, packaging, and labeling is getting stronger, and digital marketing is used to diversify marketing.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Competition

Competition is an effort to maintain and expand market share in the midst of many similar products. According to Sudaryono, competitiveness is a benefit that exists when a company produces a better product or service than its competitors. According to Crown Dirgantoro, competitiveness is the development of the value that companies are able to create to buy it. According to Michael Porter, national competitiveness is the ability of a country to maintain an advantageous position compared to other countries. By continuing to innovate both in the form of product quality, branding, and marketing to stand out more than other competitors. Competitiveness indicators can be measured by several things, such as:

- a. Competitive price
- b. Product quality
- c. Competitive advantage
- d. The degree to which a company can meet market demand
- e. Maintain revenue
- f. Enhancing the competitive ability of the role of social media in increasing competitiveness
- g. Social Media has an important role in increasing competitiveness, especially in product marketing and sales:
- h. Reaching a wider market, Social Media allows businesses to reach a wider target market at a relatively low cost
- i. Building Brand Awareness, Social Media can be used to build Brand awareness, namely brand awareness among consumers
- j. Building relationships with customers, Social Media can be used to build long-term relationships with customers. Through the comment and direct message features, business actors can interact directly with customers, receive feedback, and understand customer needs
- k. Increase sales, Social media can be used to increase product sales
- l. Developing a marketing strategy, Social media can help businesses to develop the right marketing strategy and take advantage of the full potential of social media platforms.
- m. Several strategies that can be done to utilize social media in marketing include: determining the target audience that suits the type of business, creating interesting content, using influencers on social media, maximizing live streaming features.

2.2 Definition of MSMEs (Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises)

According to Rudjito, MSMEs are businesses that play an important role in the Indonesian economy, in terms of employment and the number of businesses. The definition of MSMEs according to Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2008, MSMEs are productive businesses owned by individuals and/or individual business entities that meet the criteria for micro businesses. Quoted from www.gamedia.com that there are several criteria used to define the definition and criteria of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises. That is:

1. Micro

Micro Enterprises are productive businesses owned by individuals and individual business entities that meet the criteria for micro businesses as regulated in this Law:

- a. Has a net worth of at most Rp. 50,000,000.00 (fifty million rupiah).
- b. It has an annual sales result of at most Rp. 300,000,000.00 (three hundred million rupiah).

2. Small Business

Small Business is an independent productive economic enterprise, which is carried out by an individual or business entity that is not a subsidiary or branch of the Company that is owned, controlled, and is part either directly or indirectly of a Medium Business or Large Business that meets the criteria for Small Business as intended in this Law:

- a. Have a net worth of more than Rp. 50,000,000.00 (fifty million rupiah) to a maximum of Rp. 500,000,000.00 (five hundred million rupiah) excluding land and buildings where the business is located; or
- b. Have an annual sales result of more than Rp. 300,000,000.00 (three hundred million rupiah) to a maximum of Rp. 2,500,000,000.00 (two billion five hundred million rupiah).

3. Medium Enterprises

Medium Enterprises are independent productive economic enterprises, which are carried out by individuals or business entities that are not subsidiaries or branches of the Company that are owned, controlled, or part either directly or indirectly with small businesses or large enterprises with the amount of net worth or annual sales as regulated in this Law:

- a. Have a net worth of more than Rp. 500,000,000.00 (five hundred million rupiah) to a maximum of Rp. 10,000,000,000.00 (ten billion rupiah).
- b. Have an annual sales result of more than Rp. 2,500,000,000.00 (two billion five hundred million rupiah) to a maximum of Rp. 50,000,000,000.00 (fifty billion rupiah).

4. Big Venture

Large enterprises are productive economic enterprises carried out by business entities with a net worth or annual sales revenue greater than Medium Enterprises, which include state-owned or private national enterprises, joint ventures, and foreign businesses that carry out economic activities in Indonesia. MSMEs are the most widely carried out economic activity by the Indonesian people. MSMEs play an important role in the Indonesian economy, including:

- a. Introducing local products to the international world
- b. Absorbing labor, reaching 90% when compared to large enterprises

2.3 Social Media

According to Kaplan and Heanlin (2010), Social Media is a group of internet-based applications that use Web 2.0 ideology and technology, where users can create or exchange information on the application. There are several social media that are widely used and loved by millions of users in Indonesia such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Instagram*, *Youtube*, *Blog*, *TikTok*, and others. Social media allows users to communicate with other users (Williams et al.2012). For marketers, this is a great potential and opportunity to be used as a marketing communication tool. It makes it possible to share information between users with enormous potential and is widely used by large companies.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive type of research, focusing on collecting interview data and analyzing social media content.

3.1 Data Collection Techniques

- a. In-depth interviews,

Interviews were conducted with the owner and marketing team of Carica Gemilang Wonosobo to obtain information related to the strategy of using Social Media.

- b. Obsevasi

Direct observation of marketing activities on Social Media Carica Gemilang Wonosobo (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok)

- c. Content Analytics

Analyze the content posted on Social Media to understand the types of content that are most effective in capturing consumers' attention.

3.2 Research Information

The main informants are the manager of Carica Gemilang and the marketing team responsible for managing Social Media.

3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data will be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify the main themes in the use of Social Media, as well as their impact on the competitiveness of MSMEs. Social Media content data will also be analyzed to see the type of content that manages to attract consumers' attention.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This research shows that social media plays an important role in the success of Carica Gemilang as a halal local MSME. With a segmented, consistent, and creative marketing strategy, Carica Gemilang is able to increase sales by up to 30%, expand market reach, and build a strong brand image.

4.1 Background of Carica Gemilang

Carica Gemilang is one of the MSMEs that is developing in Wonosobo Regency, Central Java, which focuses on the production of processed carica fruits, a typical fruit that can only grow in the Dieng highlands. This carica fruit has a distinctive sweet taste and is often used for various processed products, such as jams, sweets, and syrups. This business was established in 2013, starting from a home-based industrial scale that produces processed carica in a simple way and limited to the local market. The initial focus of Carica Gemilang is to process carica fruit into products that are ready for consumption, but with limited capacity and reach markets around Wonosobo Regency.

In 2015, this business underwent a major change with the opening of its own factory. This step is an important milestone for Carica Gemilang, because in addition to significantly increasing production capacity, the new factory also allows them to implement a more structured and efficient management system. With a larger capacity, Carica Gemilang is now able to meet the growing market demand, not only at the local level but also nationally.

Digital transformation is an important part of Carica Gemilang's journey, especially in the marketing aspect. At the same time as the expansion of production capacity, the company began to adopt a digital-based marketing strategy, which is growing rapidly in Indonesia. The use of social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp, allows Carica Gemilang to reach a wider market, including consumers outside Wonosobo Regency, and even to other major cities in Indonesia. The existence of social media as a marketing channel provides significant advantages for MSMEs in facing increasingly fierce competition, especially in Wonosobo which has more than 400 other carica brands.

With social media, Carica Gemilang is able to reach consumers who were previously difficult to reach through traditional marketing methods. Customers from various regions can now find out about their processed carica products through attractive visual posts and effective promotions. This strategy not only increases sales but also introduces the Carica Gemilang brand to a wider audience. Social media also allows for direct interaction with customers, providing room for feedback and increasing consumer loyalty.

In addition, this digital marketing strategy also makes it easier for Carica Gemilang to run a more targeted promotional campaign. Through influencer marketing, they can target consumers who have a special interest in processed carica products. This is one of the efficient solutions for MSMEs to increase their competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market.

Thanks to the innovations and adaptations made, Carica Gemilang is now not only a pioneer in the use of digital technology among MSMEs in Wonosobo Regency, but also an example of how the use of social media can help MSMEs expand market reach, increase competitiveness, and create greater growth opportunities in the market.

4.2 Marketing Strategy through Social Media

1. Social Media Segmentation

Carica Gemilang has adopted a social media-based marketing approach by leveraging various platforms to reach different market segments, each with a tailored strategy to create maximum impact. This segmentation aims to take advantage of the characteristics of each platform, as well as the preferences and habits of users in each demographic group.

- a. Facebook is a social media platform that is better known by consumers aged 30 years and older, who tend to be more active on this social media compared to the younger generation. Carica Gemilang uses Facebook to reach a more mature audience, focusing on consumers who have more stable purchasing power and tend to prioritize complete and detailed information. Content shared on Facebook is often in-depth product information, special offers and promotions aimed at driving direct conversions. Here, Carica Gemilang also optimizes the community group feature to build relationships with more loyal consumers and make them brand ambassadors. In addition, Facebook allows Carica Gemilang to use advertising features that can target audiences based on geographic location, interests, and behaviors. This allows for more targeted product promotions and leads to increased direct sales. With this platform, Carica Gemilang can also interact directly with customers through product comments, messages, and reviews.
- b. Instagram is Carica Gemilang's main platform in building branding and introducing their brand image, especially to millennial audiences between the ages of 20 and 35. Content on Instagram is more visual, where product images and videos are produced with high quality, consistent aesthetics, and attractive designs. It aims to create a professional and premium impression, which can attract the attention of consumers who care about product quality and aesthetic value. Through Instagram, Carica Gemilang not only showcases their products, but also shows the process of making their processed carica, introduces behind-the-scenes stories,

and shares moments that strengthen their brand identity. Features such as Instagram Stories, Reels, and Shopping are also leveraged to increase audience engagement. Instagram makes it possible to reach a wider audience through the use of relevant hashtags, collaboration with influencers, as well as conducting ad campaigns that can be tailored to specific target markets. This strategy creates a evocative visual experience and is able to encourage audiences to engage further with the brand, as well as increase brand awareness among digitally active young consumers.

- c. TikTok, as a platform that is very popular among Gen Z, offers an opportunity for Carica Gemilang to attract the attention of a younger audience, between the ages of 16 and 25. TikTok allows for the creation of creative and interactive content with more relaxed and entertaining characters. Carica Gemilang can take advantage of various viral trends to grab the attention of the audience, in a lighter, funny, and easy-to-understand way. The content shared on TikTok is more spontaneous and informal, creating a closer and authentic relationship between the brand and the audience. For example, videos about unique ways to cultivate carica, challenges, or collaborations with popular TikTokers can increase the visibility and appeal of a product. TikTok also allows users to create short videos that are easy to share, thus increasing the potential for virality. In addition, TikTok provides an opportunity for Carica Gemilang to innovate with creative ads that are suitable for the short video format. They can leverage features like TikTok Ads to target audiences based on specific interests or behaviors, as well as run campaigns that are relevant to the season or ongoing trends, increasing their chances of capturing the attention of younger audiences.

4.3 Strategy Integration Across Multiple Platforms

Carica Gemilang's social media marketing strategy also includes the integration between these platforms to create a consistent and holistic brand experience. By leveraging the uniqueness of each platform, Carica Gemilang can build a strong and adaptive brand image to different audience groups. For example, by using Facebook to educate and provide detailed information about products, Instagram to build a visual and aspirational brand image, and TikTok to reach a younger audience with creative and entertaining content. In addition, promotional campaigns on one platform can be promoted or supported by another, creating synergies that strengthen marketing messages and increase the reach and impact of the strategy. This multi-platform approach not only increases brand visibility, but also allows Carica Gemilang to reach various market segments efficiently and effectively

1. Marketing Strategies through Social Media:

a. Upload Consistency

Upload consistency is one of the main pillars in Carica Gemilang's social media marketing strategy. On Instagram, they keep the audience engaged by uploading daily content, especially through Instagram Stories. Every day, Carica Gemilang updates content that is light but informative, such as the production process, product use, or simply sharing interesting moments related to carica. By regularly uploading Stories, Carica Gemilang's Instagram account remains active and attracts new visitors, as well as maintains relationships with existing followers. Consistency of uploads also aims to build trust and create the impression that the brand is always present and responsive to customer needs. Additionally, being active on social media on a daily basis makes brands more memorable, which is essential for staying on the minds of consumers in a market full of information and competition. To ensure the quality and relevance of the content, Carica Gemilang arranges the upload schedule and plans the topics that will be raised every week. This helps maintain a clear flow of communication with the audience, as well as ensuring that the brand performs regularly and in a planned manner. In addition to Stories, Carica Gemilang also uses Instagram feeds to upload more curated and professional content, providing a balance between a casual and high-quality feel.

b. Soft-Selling

Carica Gemilang realizes that social media audiences are not always responsive to promotions that are hard-selling or too focused on direct sales. Therefore, they choose to use a soft-selling approach, where the content shared focuses more on education, entertainment, and information, without forcing the audience to buy the product too much. This approach allows Carica Gemilang to build a more natural and authentic relationship with her followers. The content uploaded is often informative, such as the health benefits of carica fruit, the unique way of processing, or interesting facts about the history and origin of carica in the Dieng highlands. In addition, Carica Gemilang also creates entertaining content, such as quizzes or small challenges that involve the audience, or heartfelt stories about their business journey from a home industry to a successful factory. This approach allows Carica Gemilang to maintain a brand image that is not too pushy, but still keep the audience's interest in staying engaged and feeling connected to the product. Soft-selling also encourages audiences to feel more value from the brand, which ultimately increases their chances of buying without feeling pressured.

c. Collaboration with Influencers

Collaboration with influencers is an important strategy to expand Carica Gemilang's market reach, especially in attracting the attention of a wider and more specific audience, such as travel or culinary enthusiasts. Carica Gemilang establishes partnerships with influencers who have followers relevant to their products. The selected

influencers usually have a close relationship with the world of tourism or culinary, so they can introduce these processed carica products to audiences who have an interest in regional specialties or traditional souvenirs. This collaboration is carried out periodically, namely twice a month, with a target of producing 10 promotional content per influencer contract. The content produced includes product review videos, unboxing, or moments when they enjoy Carica Gemilang products in an atmosphere that is relevant to their audience, such as while on vacation to Dieng or while enjoying regional specialties. In this way, Carica Gemilang's products appear in a more natural context and blend in with the lifestyle of the influencer audience. This influencer's content is not only published through Instagram, but also on other platforms such as YouTube and TikTok, depending on the audience of the influencer in question. The content shared is usually in the form of evocative stories, offers information about product quality, and invites the audience to try the product. Influencers working with Carica Gemilang are expected to create a wide buzz, increase brand awareness, and build product authority in the eyes of a larger and more segmented audience. Carica Gemilang ensures that this collaboration is in line with their brand values and image, while maintaining authenticity in promotion, so that it does not seem like an exaggerated advertisement. This helps to build a closer and authentic relationship with the audience, as well as increases the likelihood that the audience will feel inspired to buy the product.

4.4 The Impact of Social Media on Sales and Competitiveness

1. Increased Sales

Social media has had a very significant impact on the sales of Carica Gemilang products, especially in reaching customers from outside the city. Around 30% of Carica Gemilang's total sales come from marketing activities carried out through social media. This reflects how effective platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok are in reaching a wider range of consumers, transcending the geographical limitations of the local market. One of the key factors driving this increase in sales is the ability of social media to facilitate direct marketing to consumers, without going through intermediaries. Carica Gemilang can easily reach out to potential consumers in different regions through the content they upload, targeted promotions, and direct interaction with the audience.

By utilizing features such as Instagram Shopping and Facebook Ads, they can make it easier for customers to buy products directly through these social media platforms. This strategy has been shown to accelerate the conversion process, from simply getting to know the product to making a purchase, which contributes directly to increased sales. In addition, with a variety of uploaded content, ranging from product information, usage tips, to entertainment content, Carica Gemilang has managed to build deeper engagement with their audience. This engagement leads to increased buying interest and encourages audiences to recommend their products to friends or family, creating a profitable viral effect for businesses.

2. Increased Competitiveness

Carica Gemilang's activeness on social media gives them a very clear competitive advantage in an increasingly competitive market. With more than 14,000 followers on Instagram, Carica Gemilang managed to reach a larger and more diverse audience, which created strong customer loyalty. Their presence on social media also makes this brand more accessible and better known by consumers in various regions, not only in Wonosobo Regency. In terms of competitiveness, Carica Gemilang has a clear advantage over many local competitors who still rely on traditional marketing, such as brochures, banners, or word-of-mouth marketing.

While most competitors are still limited to the local market or have not maximized their digital potential, Carica Gemilang has been able to leverage social media as a main channel to build its brand image and expand its market reach. In fact, even though there are more than 400 other carica brands in Wonosobo, Carica Gemilang has been able to maintain a prominent position thanks to its innovative and consistent digital marketing strategy. Their active presence on various platforms makes these brands easier to find, compared to competing brands that have not optimized their use of social media to the fullest.

3. Market Expansion

One of the biggest impacts of the use of social media for Carica Gemilang is their ability to expand the market without geographical restrictions. Before social media, the Carica Gemilang market may have been limited to local customers or the area around Wonosobo. However, thanks to their presence on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, Carica Gemilang products can now be reached by consumers throughout Indonesia, even abroad. TikTok, for example, with its content that easily goes viral, allows Carica Gemilang to introduce their products to a younger and wider audience, including in big cities that were previously difficult to reach. Creative videos that showcase unique ways of processing or consuming carica products can be an attraction for new audiences who are interested in regional specialties or local products.

With the ability to develop the market online, Carica Gemilang not only expands its customer base but also strengthens their position as a leader in the halal local food industry. This market expansion also has a positive impact on sales, as they can reach more specific audiences, such as consumers looking for regional souvenirs or high-quality halal food products. Furthermore, the expansion of the market driven by social media also provides

an opportunity to increase brand recognition, namely higher brand awareness among consumers from different walks of life. This increases the potential for brands to enter a wider market, whether in terms of product distribution in physical stores or through e-commerce platforms, further strengthening their position in a more competitive market.

4. Increased Customer Engagement and Feedback

Carica Gemilang's active presence on social media also allows them to receive direct feedback from customers. Through comments, private messages, and product reviews, Carica Gemilang can identify customer needs and preferences more precisely. This involvement provides an advantage because brands can quickly adapt and improve product quality according to market expectations. In addition, this involvement opens up opportunities for Carica Gemilang to create more relevant and engaging campaigns. Positive feedback received through social media is often used as promotional material, where testimonials or photos from customers can be used to increase product trust and credibility. This customer trust, in turn, strengthens Carica Gemilang's competitiveness in the wider market.

4.5 Challenges in Social Media Management

1. Content Creativity

One of the biggest challenges in managing social media is maintaining content creativity to keep it appealing to audiences. Social media is very dynamic, and audiences have very short attention spans, so content that is monotonous or overly focused on live promotion can quickly make the audience lose interest. For this reason, Carica Gemilang must continue to innovate and create fresh, relevant, and entertaining content. Carica Gemilang needs to keep up with the growing trends on social media, whether it's related to the use of new content formats such as reels, viral challenges, or new features on platforms like Instagram and TikTok. In addition, to keep the audience engaged, they need to combine various types of content, such as product tutorials, behind-the-scenes stories, customer testimonials, to lighter and more entertaining content.

This also requires continuous market research so that the content produced can remain in accordance with the audience's preferences and relevant to the latest trends. Creating content that is authentic but consistent with the brand identity is also a challenge, considering that each social media platform has an audience with different preferences. For example, Instagram content may have to be more aesthetic and visual, while TikTok is more focused on creativity and speed. Carica Gemilang had to ensure that all content posted still reflected their brand values, while meeting the expectations of the audience on each platform.

2. Local Market Competition

In Wonosobo, competition in the carica market is getting tougher, with more than 400 carica brands spread across the region. Many of Carica Gemilang's competitors are now starting to use social media to increase their visibility. This adds to the challenge for Carica Gemilang to continue to maintain their position as a market leader. Because the local carica market is very dense, Carica Gemilang must continue to innovate in terms of product offerings and marketing strategies to stay ahead. While social media provides an opportunity to expand market reach, this highly competitive local market requires a more personalized and more targeted approach.

Carica Gemilang must find a way to differentiate itself from other brands by prioritizing product uniqueness, quality excellence, or a more personal and authentic brand story. In addition, they must be able to create strong customer loyalty in order to overcome fierce competition. One way to do this is to continue to actively interact with customers, offer promotions or loyalty programs, and provide responsive and professional customer service on social media. In the midst of increasingly fierce competition, creativity and foresight in responding to customer needs are very important to win the hearts of the audience.

3. Time Management and Day Resources

Managing social media effectively and consistently requires a lot of time and resources. Creating high-quality content, maintaining accounts, and responding to audience interactions require a well-organized team. Carica Gemilang, despite having a young team full of enthusiasm and ideas, still faces challenges in terms of time management and proper resource allocation. The process of creating engaging and professional content requires more than just technical skills. Careful planning, an understanding of visual design that matches the brand identity, and the ability to analyze market data and trends are required. The Carica Gemilang team must ensure that every content posted is not only creative but also measurable in terms of the results achieved, such as engagement and sales conversion.

In addition, they must also be able to maintain team productivity, so that social media management does not interfere with the main business operations. One solution that can be implemented is the use of automation tools to schedule uploads or respond to customer inquiries more efficiently. However, while the tool helps reduce the workload, human interaction is still important for maintaining a more personal relationship with the audience. This challenge requires Carica Gemilang to continue to maximize existing resources, be it in terms of manpower, technology, or careful planning.

4. Changes in Social Media Algorithms

One additional challenge that brands that are active on social media often face is the change in algorithms implemented by platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, or TikTok. These algorithms affect how content is displayed to audiences and can impact organic reach as well as engagement with users. Carica Gemilang had to be able to adapt to these algorithm changes to ensure that their content remained visible to relevant audiences. Algorithm changes can often lower the reach of content without prior warning, which can disrupt an already planned marketing strategy. Therefore, Carica Gemilang must continue to observe and analyze the impact of any algorithm changes and make adjustments to their marketing strategy to maximize visibility and interaction.

5. Performance Measurement and Analysis

Measuring the effectiveness of marketing strategies on social media is also quite a challenge. Carica Gemilang needed to have the right system in place to analyze data and understand key metrics such as engagement rates, reach, sales conversions, and more. Without proper analysis, it is difficult to assess whether the implemented strategy is effective or needs to be improved. While many platforms offer built-in analytics tools, understanding data and turning it into informed strategic decisions requires skill and experience. Carica Gemilang needs to continue to develop the team's capacity in terms of data analysis to ensure that every marketing decision is based on accurate insights and not just assumptions.

4.6 The Role of Social Media in MSME Marketing

According to Kotler and Keller (2016), marketing is the process of creating value for customers through effective communication. In the context of MSMEs such as Carica Gemilang, social media plays an important role as a platform to reach customers more efficiently and at a lower cost than traditional marketing methods. The marketing process on social media can be analyzed using the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) model. AIDA is a framework that describes the stages that consumers go through in the purchase decision making process:

a. Attention (Perhatian)

Social media such as TikTok plays a role in attracting the attention of the audience with creative and engaging content. The use of a viral short video format allows Carica Gemilang to appear in front of a wider audience, including those who were previously unaware of the product. TikTok is the right place to display attention-grabbing visuals.

b. Interest

Branding done through Instagram, which prioritizes visuals and aesthetics, focuses on developing customer interest by creating a consistent brand image. Instagram allows Carica Gemilang to highlight the product's excellence, compelling image quality, and the in-depth story behind the brand.

c. Desire and Action

After building interest and desire, Carica Gemilang directs the audience to the purchase action through direct promotion and collaboration with influencers. Influencers who have a loyal following provide additional trust for consumers, encouraging them to make a purchase. (Elmertian et al., 2024)

4.7 Digital Marketing and Branding Strategy

a. Soft-Selling as the Key to Interaction

According to Berry's (1983) theory of Relationship Marketing, emotional relationships with customers are more effective than direct promotions. Soft-selling helps build long-term relationships that are based on trust, which is more durable than aggressive promotional strategies. Carica Gemilang leverages social media to provide content that is educational, informative, or entertaining, without putting direct pressure on the product to buy. This gives the audience the opportunity to get to know the brand in a more natural and non-coercive way.

b. Branding through Social Media

The branding strategy carried out by Carica Gemilang on Instagram shows the application of the theory of Brand Equity (Aaker, 1991), which emphasizes the importance of building a strong brand image through visual consistency, effective communication, and content quality. According to Aaker, brand equity is the value that a brand brings based on perceptions and associations owned by consumers. On Instagram, Carica Gemilang visually shows the advantages of their products, shows the quality of the products, and tells the values behind the brand. By engaging the audience in the brand story, they build a positive image and increase customer perception of the product. (Nasional et al., 2022).

4.8 Challenges and Solutions

a. Content Creativity

The Creative Advertising theory put forward by Rossiter & Percy (1997) explains that the effectiveness of advertising is highly dependent on creativity in conveying relevant messages to the audience. Carica Gemilang can overcome this challenge by involving a team of young creatives who follow the latest trends on social media. These teams can develop content that is not only engaging but also entertaining and relevant to the audience, which can increase engagement and response to the brand. In addition, Carica Gemilang needed to ensure that the

content remained authentic and not only relied on regular advertising, but also created a compelling story for their audience.

b. **Market Competition**

With many local competitors also starting to use social media, Carica Gemilang needs to continue to update their marketing strategy to stay ahead. In the face of fierce competition, an omnichannel approach becomes important. Solomon et al. (2013) in their book on consumer behavior emphasize the importance of a consistent and seamless customer experience across multiple channels (both online and offline). Carica Gemilang can integrate social media marketing with offline sales in stores or local markets. This creates an all-encompassing experience for consumers, allowing them to interact with brands across multiple touchpoints, both digitally and physically.

c. **Time and Resource Management**

Social media management requires consistent attention and proper time allocation. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), one of the biggest challenges in digital marketing is maintaining consistency and relevance of content across multiple platforms. Carica Gemilang needed to leverage marketing automation and social media management tools to ensure posts remained consistent and timely, without disrupting other operational processes. While automation tools are beneficial, it's important for teams to keep the personal aspect of their interactions with audiences and maintain brand authenticity.

d. **Changes in Social Media Algorithms**

Social media is constantly undergoing algorithm changes, which can affect the reach and effectiveness of marketing campaigns. Tuten & Solomon (2015) stated that algorithm changes are part of the dynamics of social media platforms that affect how content is prioritized in user feeds. Carica Gemilang needs to adapt their strategy to stay relevant to the new algorithm, for example by increasing the use of video or live streaming content that is now preferred by Instagram and Facebook algorithms. As such, a good understanding of the algorithm can help Carica Gemilang ensure that their content remains visible and affordable to the right audience.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This research shows that Carica Gemilang has successfully optimized social media as an effective marketing tool to increase competitiveness and expand its market reach. Through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, Carica Gemilang can reach consumers both in the local market and outside the Wonosobo area, even nationally. In the face of fierce market competition, especially with more than 400 other carica brands in Wonosobo, Carica Gemilang can stand out by utilizing the right digital marketing strategy, which includes upload consistency, collaboration with influencers, and a soft-selling approach that prioritizes emotional connection with customers. The marketing approach carried out by Carica Gemilang has been in line with various relevant marketing theories. For example, the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) strategy applied in creating awareness and interest in products, and Relationship Marketing (Berry, 1983) which prioritizes long-term relationships with customers through more personalized interactions.

In addition, branding carried out on Instagram adopts the principle of Brand Equity (Aaker, 1991), which focuses on creating a positive image through visual consistency and quality of content received by the audience. However, even though social media provides various benefits, Carica Gemilang still faces a number of challenges in social media management, including content creativity, increasingly fierce market competition, and challenges related to changes in social media algorithms that continue to grow. Therefore, Carica Gemilang must continue to innovate in their marketing strategies, in order to remain relevant and competitive in a dynamic market.

5.2 Implication

This research shows that Carica Gemilang needs to continue to improve content creativity and adopt an omnichannel approach to combine online and offline marketing, as well as adapt to changes in social media algorithms to remain effective in reaching audiences. For other MSMEs, the use of social media as the main marketing channel is very important to reach a wider audience at an efficient cost, as well as strengthening the ability of digital marketing teams is the key to designing more effective strategies. This research also suggests the development of a comprehensive digital marketing model to help MSMEs design data-based strategies. Finally, the government and related institutions must strengthen digital marketing training and assistance programs for MSMEs and introduce policies that facilitate MSMEs' access to digital technology to optimize their online marketing strategies.

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