



## IMPROVING THE MARKETING PERFORMANCE OF "BOLEN KITA" MSMEs THROUGH DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES

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### Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided a significant impetus for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to adopt online business models to survive. Amid these changes, promoting MSMEs through online media, such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp and other social media platforms, has become a common choice. This research focuses on the case of the MSME "Bolen Kita" and aims to investigate the positive impact of digital marketing strategies in improving the marketing performance of these MSMEs.

This study uses qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques to gain insight into how digital marketing strategies have positively impacted the marketing performance of "Bolen Kita" MSMEs throughout the pandemic. The findings of this research will likely provide helpful direction for other MSMEs looking to bolster their presence in today's digital business ecosystem. In the context of the pandemic, digital marketing strategies are an efficient tool for increasing visibility and a critical factor in determining whether micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) will survive this difficult time.

**Keywords: Marketing Performance, MSMEs, Digital Marketing**

### INTRODUCTION

The world has faced extraordinary challenges for more than two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This challenge has affected all aspects of people's lives, including health, economy, education, and social and cultural life. Amid this situation, various parties have united to face the severe impacts caused by this pandemic, hoping to get through this challenging time together. One of the sectors most heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic is Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The Katadata Insight Center data illustrates the problematic situation for MSMEs during the pandemic. The survey shows that only around 5.9% of MSMEs made a profit during this pandemic. On the other hand, around 82.9% of business actors experienced a negative impact from the pandemic, and 63.9% experienced a decline in turnover of more than 30%.

In this context, genuine efforts are needed to support MSMEs so that they can survive and even grow amidst these challenging conditions. One approach that has emerged as a potential solution is the use of digital marketing strategies. Digital marketing strategies can be an effective tool to help MSMEs like "Bolen Kita" increase visibility, reach a wider market, and adapt to changes in consumer behavior that are increasingly digitalized. Therefore, this research aims to investigate how implementing digital marketing strategies can help "Bolen Kita" MSMEs improve their marketing performance in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. With a deeper understanding of the contribution of digital marketing strategies, it is hoped that it can provide useful guidance for other MSMEs facing similar challenges. Thus, this research is not only a contribution to academics but is also important in a practical context to support the economic recovery of MSMEs during this uncertain pandemic.

Empowering Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), the government has recognized the important role played by this sector in developing the national economy. The MSME classification, which includes micro, small and medium enterprises, provides a basis for appropriate development and support. MSMEs have the potential to develop regional potential-based and market-oriented businesses so that they can become strong economic drivers on a local and national scale. In the journal (Nurminingsih et al., 2017) business is all aspects of activities to distribute goods through productive channels from purchasing raw goods, until they become finished goods.

One example of an MSME that has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic is "Bolen Kita," a food business located on JL Inayah, RT.003/008, Kelapa Dua Wetan Village, Ciracas District, East Jakarta. This MSME focuses on the production of wet cakes, which are home made products. As stated, this pandemic has caused a decrease in turnover of 30%, which has resulted in a reduction in the workforce.

Facing this challenge, "Bolen Kita" has understood the importance of adapting to changing times, especially with technological developments. In an increasingly advanced digital era, digital marketing strategies are the key to increasing turnover and competitiveness. Tight market competition with big players such as "Kartika Sari" and "Amanda Brownies" requires MSMEs such as "Bolen Kita" to look for new ways to face an increasingly diverse market. Therefore, the owners of "Bolen Kita" have decided to change their marketing strategy by adopting digital marketing as a new approach. This is the right response to address the decline in turnover and expand their reach. This digital marketing strategy is expected to help "Bolen Kita" compete more effectively in an increasingly competitive market, replacing the direct sales method to consumers (door to door) which may no longer be adequate in current conditions.

Internet is a basic need in this millennial era. There is not a single job that does not require the internet. The internet facilitates all aspects of life, including education, entertainment, information, public service, knowledge, advertising, investment, interaction, and communication, as well as business and selling. The internet can also be enjoyed by everyone, even if you have to sacrifice credit or quota. The existence of the internet is expected to be a supporting and strengthening instrument for creative economy actors and MSMEs in developing their businesses and marketing their sales. Marketing through digital has been widely used by business actors in the ASIPA community (Association of Creative Industries and Business Actors) in South Tangerang. ASIPA, which has 247 SME and IKM players, during the global pandemic, its sales turnover decreased by less than 1 billion, around 500 million per year in the ratio of Micro MSMEs (Yulianti et al., 2022).

Perpetrator business start use technology information and telecommunication for operate nor support activity business them . Movement and change method increasingly doing business fast and easy to direction digitization this compel perpetrator business for adapt follow change the . For businessman once micro , a business strategy that leads to the digitalization process this no too

experience obstacles because with characteristics effort scale micro that has source enough power \_ easy (Sri Yulianti et al., 2023).

Within this framework, the research we conducted will investigate in more depth this change in digital marketing strategy and how it can influence the marketing performance of “Bolen Kita” MSMEs. With a deeper understanding of the role of digital marketing strategies in the context of MSMEs, we can explore ways to increase competitiveness and ensure the continuity of MSME businesses amidst this rapid economic change.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)**

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in a country's economy, and their contribution to economic growth cannot be ignored (Acs & Audretsch, 2010). As an integral part of the economy, MSMEs create jobs, advance business development based on regional potential, and contribute to encouraging overall national economic growth. However, the journey for MSMEs is not always smooth, and several significant challenges often arise, especially in the midst of a crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic. In the context of this pandemic, MSMEs, including “Bolen Kita,” have faced serious impacts, including a significant decline in turnover (Bartik et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important for MSMEs to explore solutions that can help them survive and grow while still playing a vital role in the economy.

One solution that is increasingly relevant is the implementation of digital marketing strategies. Through this approach, MSMEs like “Bolen Kita” can combine the power of technology and creativity to reach a wider market. Digital marketing strategies involve the use of digital tools such as social media, online advertising, and email marketing (Chaffey & Smith, 2017). Thus, implementing a digital marketing strategy is not only a practical solution for MSMEs in facing the pandemic and economic changes, but is also a strategy that is in line with the key role of MSMEs in supporting national economic growth (Acs & Audretsch, 2010).

### **Covid-19 Pandemic and its Impact on MSMEs**

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the global business landscape and presented extraordinary challenges for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) throughout the world. In this pandemic, MSMEs, which are usually the backbone of a country's economy, feel a significant economic impact. Data revealed by Bartik et al. (2020) in their research shows that this pandemic has resulted in a significant decline in turnover for most MSMEs. Economic uncertainty is further exacerbated by mobility restrictions, business closures, and significant changes in consumer behavior.

In facing these unexpected economic challenges, MSMEs must adapt and innovate to survive (Wenzel et al., 2020). Business adaptation includes changes in the way MSMEs operate, including

shifting their business focus, adjusting sales models, and looking for new ways to reach customers. Innovation is the key to identifying new opportunities in the midst of a crisis, both in terms of products, services and business models.

### **Digital Marketing Strategy**

Digital marketing strategies involve the use of various digital tools such as social media, online advertising, and email marketing to reach target markets (Chaffey & Smith, 2017). Social media plays an important role in building connections with customers and increasing online visibility (Smith & Zook, 2011). Personalization and interaction with customers are key aspects in digital marketing (Hanna et al., 2011).

### **METHOD**

This research method is qualitative research with a case study approach. The case study approach was chosen because it provides a valuable opportunity to explore in depth and holistically understand the digital marketing strategy implemented by MSME "Bolen Kita." This approach allows researchers to explore the unique nuances and contexts associated with these MSMEs, examining aspects such as the planning, execution and impact of their digital marketing strategies. Researchers will take the MSME "Bolen Kita" as a case to be investigated in depth. This will involve a comprehensive data search through interviews with owners or key stakeholders, direct observation, and analysis of related documents. Through this approach, researchers can explore details that may be missed in quantitative research, such as nuances in interactions with customers, challenges faced during the implementation of digital marketing strategies, and the impact of these strategies on the marketing performance of MSME "Bolen Kita."

### **Data analysis**

Data obtained from interviews will be the core of the qualitative analysis in this research. This analysis will be used to gain a deeper understanding of how the digital marketing strategies implemented by MSMEs "Bolen Kita" have influenced and improved their marketing performance. The following is a further development of data analysis methods:

#### **1. Pattern Identification**

One of the first steps in data analysis is identifying patterns that emerge in the interviews. This includes recognizing trends, similarities, and differences in the answers given by respondents. These patterns may include specific strategies that were successful, challenges faced, or changes in customer behavior as a result of a digital marketing strategy.

#### **2. Key Findings**

In qualitative analysis, researchers will look for the main findings that emerge from the interview data. This may include aspects such as how digital marketing has helped “Bolen Kita” MSMEs reach a wider market, increase interactions with customers, or increase sales. These findings will provide valuable insight into the impact of digital marketing strategies.

### 3. Interpretation of Results

After identifying the main findings, the next step is to interpret the results. This includes a deeper understanding of why and how digital marketing strategies have been successful or faced certain obstacles in the context of “Bolen Kita” MSMEs. These interpretations will help build a strong narrative about the impact of digital marketing strategies on marketing performance.

During the data analysis process, researchers will look for connections between various aspects of digital marketing strategies, in “Bolen Kita” MSMEs, and the results found. This will help in drawing up comprehensive conclusions about the effectiveness of the digital marketing strategy implemented.

## **Comparative Study**

In this research, apart from analyzing data and findings from the MSME “Bolen Kita,” a comparison will be made with case studies of other MSMEs which may have implemented digital marketing strategies with different approaches. This concept of comparison is very important as it will help in identifying the advantages and disadvantages of different digital marketing strategies and how they impact the marketing performance of MSMEs.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Research result**

The research results show that in facing economic changes towards an increasingly developing digital economic ecosystem, “Bolen Kita” MSMEs have adopted a number of diverse digital marketing strategies. The government has provided support through the “MSME Go Digital” program to encourage MSMEs to adopt digital technology in their operations. This program aims to facilitate the use of digital tools so that it can reach all MSME players in Indonesia. There is an ambitious target to cover 30 million MSMEs in this program by 2024.

The digital marketing strategy implemented by MSME “Bolen Kita” includes various approaches, including:

#### 1. Use of Influencers and KOLs (Key Opinion Leaders)

MSME “Bolen Kita” has utilized influencers and KOLs to promote its products/services. This approach focuses on the power of influence of influencers or KOLs in conveying messages to their followers. The use of influencers or KOLs can build a high level of brand awareness and increase consumer reach.

#### 2. Social Media Ads

MSME "Bolen Kita" also utilizes social media advertising to expand market reach. Through social media advertising, businesses can attract social media users who already or don't know about their products/services. These ads help products/services be seen repeatedly on the accounts of people with similar interests.

### 3. Google My Business

MSME "Bolen Kita" uses Google My Business to make it easier for consumers to find information about their business. With information such as address, contact, hours of operation, and customer reviews, businesses can be more easily found on Google Maps. This increases the ease of consumers in finding business locations.

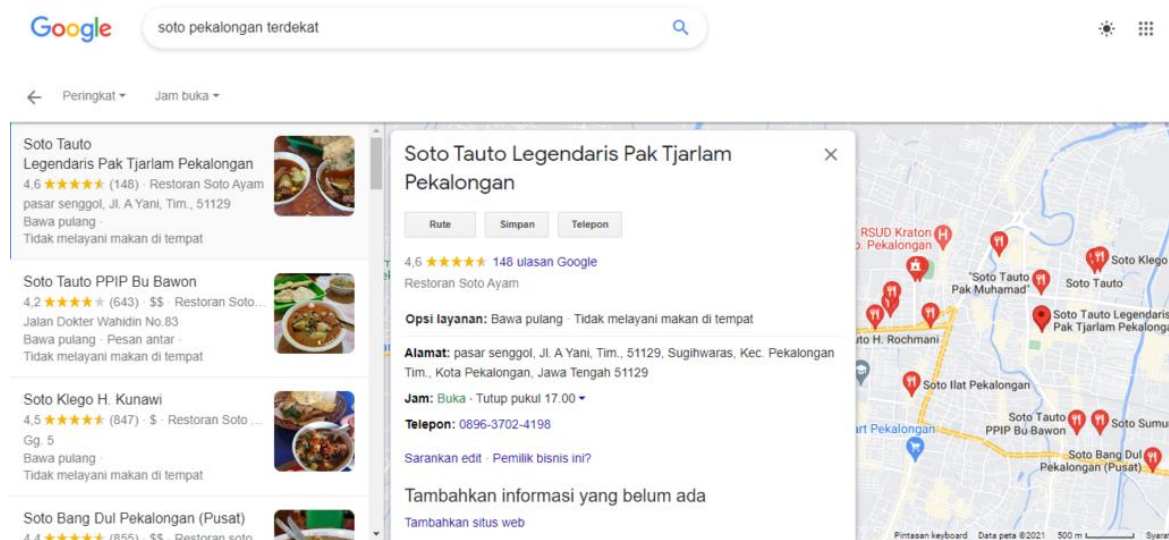


Figure 1 Google My Business View

### 4. TikTok

MSME "Bolen Kita" also uses TikTok, a video-based social media platform, to promote its products/services. By sharing informative videos related to products/services, businesses can explain more detailed information to consumers, such as how to use or creativity related to the product. TikTok for Business, TikTok's advertising platform, is also used to reach a wider audience.

In the face of increasingly fierce competition in the digital era, the use of various digital marketing strategies has helped "Bolen Kita" MSMEs increase their online visibility, reach a wider target market, and optimize their overall marketing performance.

## Discussion

The results of this research discussion reflect the importance of marketing strategies in developing business, especially in the context of the increasingly developing digital era. Marketing strategy is a very important plan to achieve optimal results in marketing activities. The scope of

marketing strategy covers various aspects, including strategies for facing competition, product strategies, pricing strategies, place strategies, and promotional strategies.

**Importance of Marketing Through Social Media:** In today's context, sales has shifted its focus to social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and WhatsApp. Social media is a digital platform that allows users to interact, communicate and share content online. Marketing via social media has become very important in increasing sales turnover, especially because of its ability to reach a wide audience.

**Marketing of "Bolen Kita" MSMEs via Instagram** "Bolen Kita" MSMEs have implemented a marketing strategy focused on Instagram, considering the large potential of Instagram users in Indonesia. Data shows that in October 2021, there were 91.01 million Instagram users in Indonesia. Although the number of users is down slightly compared to August 2021, Instagram remains a significant platform for reaching consumers.

Based on age group and gender, the majority of Instagram users in Indonesia are aged 18-24 years, with a higher percentage of women compared to men. However, users from various age groups and genders are also recorded in these statistics. Therefore, Instagram provides a great opportunity for "Bolen Kita" MSMEs to reach various consumer groups.



Figure 2 Our Bolen Variants



Figure 3 Size of Besan

### **Product Innovation**

Apart from utilizing social media, the MSME "Bolen Kita" also continues to innovate in their products by creating various flavor variants for bolen, such as bolen cheese, bolen chocolate, bolen tape, bolen taro, and bolen mung beans. This innovation helps increase consumer interest and opens up wider business opportunities.

**Positive Impact of Marketing Strategy:** Through this marketing strategy, "Bolen Kita" MSMEs succeeded in increasing their sales turnover. With the resulting increase in turnover, MSMEs can re-employ employees who previously experienced layoffs. Apart from that, the success of the MSME "Bolen Kita" in their marketing strategy also created positive attention, such as a visit from Member of

the DPR RI Commission IX Dr. Hj. Anis Byarwati, S.Ag, M.Si, who visited based on the popularity of their delicious bolen.



Figure 4 Visit of DPR RI Members



Figure 5 Bolen Making Process

The results of this research illustrate that digital marketing strategies through social media, especially Instagram, have a positive impact on MSMEs "Bolen Kita." By covering various aspects of marketing strategy, including product innovation, these MSMEs have succeeded in increasing their sales turnover, reaching various consumer groups, and gaining positive recognition from the public.

## CONCLUSION

In this research, researchers have explored the efforts of the MSME "Bolen Kita" in improving marketing performance through digital marketing strategies. This MSME, which operates in the food and cake sector, is in a business environment full of competition, especially in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic which has affected various aspects of life, including the business world.

The research results show that "Bolen Kita" MSMEs have succeeded in utilizing social media, especially Instagram, as one of the main means to improve their marketing performance. By understanding the concept of digital marketing, this MSME implements a marketing strategy that focuses more on social media, especially Instagram, to promote their products. The key factors for the success of this strategy are improving content quality, interaction with customers, and more efficient targeting.

Digital marketing strategies, especially through social media such as Instagram, have helped "Bolen Kita" MSMEs improve their marketing performance. Awareness of the importance of digital marketing and implementing appropriate strategies has had a positive impact in overcoming competitive challenges in the MSME market. In the current digital era, utilizing social media is not only an opportunity but also a necessity for MSMEs who want to develop and remain competitive in an increasingly competitive market.

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