



## ANALYSIS OF MARKETING STRATEGIES IN SUSTAINING MSMEs BUSINESS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Siti Mariam<sup>1</sup>, Retno Wulansari<sup>2\*</sup>, Pramudi Harsono<sup>3</sup>, Fatari<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Esa Unggul University, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Pamulang University, Indonesia

<sup>3,4</sup>Bina Bangsa University, Indonesia

Correspondent email: [lecturer00568@unpam.ac.id](mailto:lecturer00568@unpam.ac.id)

### Abstract

This study aims to determine the marketing strategy in MSMEs, especially the applied marketing mix. This study uses a qualitative method: a case study that produces descriptive data described in words. The data source of this study used design sampling techniques and data collection techniques. The authors conducted personal interviews with the MSME Bhayangkara Florist during this study. It includes sales data for several years of return and concluded several discussions, including strategies, constraints, and solutions.

The strategy used is the 4P mix (*Product, Promotion, Price, and Place*). The *product* strategy is in the form of a bouquet of masks innovation. The *promotion* strategy is in the form of price discounts. The *price* strategy is that every bouquet purchase gets a bonus mask. The *place* strategy is in the form of flexibility in product delivery to maintain and improve product quality.

Even though there are financial and raw material constraints, they can still find solutions and alternatives, including managing finances and effectively using natural materials. Then, the MSME's answer in dealing with Covid-19 is to maintain cash flow, product innovation, optimize social media and optimize delivery services.

**Keywords:** Marketing Strategy, Marketing Mix, Covid-19

### INTRODUCTION

Marketing strategy has an essential role in achieving commercial success, so the field of marketing plays a critical role in achieving business plans. According to Wibowo et al. (2015), marketing strategy is a way to get a sustainable competitive advantage for both companies that produce goods or services. Marketing strategy can be considered one of the basics used in preparing the overall business plan to guide the company segments in carrying out their activities.

Marketing Strategy there is the term marketing mix. The marketing mix is how entrepreneurs can influence consumers, which requires careful planning, oversight, and concrete actions. For this purpose, entrepreneurs can take steps of 4 types: actions regarding products, pricing, distribution, or product placement and promotion. (Kashmir, 2019)

Marketing activities have several goals to be achieved in the short and long term. In the short time, it usually attracts consumers, especially for the launch of the new products, while in the long term, it takes to keep existing products around. To achieve this goal, the entrepreneurs must attract consumers through their products, which can do by promotion. This promotion can do by participating in exhibitions and media such as magazines, newspapers, television, radio, and the internet.

Bhayangkara Florist Flower Shop is a small and medium-sized company known as MSME engaged in the creative field and has established so far. Bhayangkara Florist Flower Shop produces various flower bouquets, ranging from round flowers, stacked flower bouquets, box flower bouquets, and snack bouquets. This florist faces stiff competition from other bouquet shops of similar flowers.

Based on the observations, on average, MSMEs felt a decrease in turnover during Covid-19. The situation is due to a reduction in activities outside the home, the difficulty of obtaining raw materials to transportation constraints, and a decline in public confidence in the product. Another conclusion based on observations, all MSMEs should not close their business. There is a thought that always persists despite the decline in sales. And make adjustments in terms of products and do some marketing strategies to survive.

Based on the context of the problem, the formulation of trouble in this research is as follows: 1) What marketing strategy was applied by Bhayangkara florists during the Covid-19 Pandemic? 2) What obstacles did Bhayangkara Florist encounter in implementing marketing strategies to survive the Covid-19 pandemic? 3) The solution for the Bhayangkara florist against the Covid-19 pandemic is to maintain a business? So in this study, several research objectives have been defined, including: (1) want to know the most appropriate marketing strategy to be implemented during the covid-19 pandemic? (2) want to know the obstacles MSMEs face in implementing marketing strategies to survive during the covid-19 pandemic? (3) want to know the solution of Bhayangkara florist flowers in treating the Covid-19 pandemic to maintain the company?

### **Strategy**

According to Kenneth R. Andrews, strategy is assessing the company's strengths and weaknesses concerning the opportunities and threats in the environment and deciding on a market strategy that adapts the company's capacity to environmental opportunities (Panji Anoraga, 2014). Meanwhile, Husein Umar said that the system is progressive (continuously improving) and continuous action and carried out according to what customers expect in the future. Thus, the strategy almost always starts from what can happen and does not start from what happens (Husein Umar, 2016).

In his book *Trout On Strategy*, Jack Trout states that the essence of strategy is how to create a good perception in the minds of different consumers. Recognizing competitors' strengths and weaknesses become specialization, mastering simple words in the head, and leadership that provides direction and amplifies market realities by being first rather than better.

The strategy, in this case, is to plan sales in the market with good and appropriate marketing planning and implementation to make maximum sales to carry out the company's mission to dominate the market.

### **Marketing**

Marketing comes from the word market or can interpret in a traditional context as "where people buy and sell" (Kasmir, 2019). Definition of Marketing According to Kotler (2016), marketing is a social and management process in which individuals and groups receive what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value. Meanwhile, according to Sofjan Asauri (2018), marketing is an activity or activity indicated to fulfill the needs and desires of consumers through an exchange process.

### **Marketing strategy**

Marketing strategy can understand as the marketing logic by which a business unit hopes to achieve its objectives (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012). According to Tull and Kahle's Marketing Strategy (in Tjiptono, 2016), a fundamental tool, plans to achieve company goals by developing sustainable competitive advantages in market and marketing programs that include reaching the target market.

The following will briefly describe each element of the marketing mix, including:

#### **1. Product**

In essence, someone buys something to fulfill a need and want. Or in other words, someone buys services not only physically because each person's type of profit and level of satisfaction is different and developed.

An entrepreneur who works on their business to thrive and survive must always be creative and dynamic and keep thinking and find a high imagination to find many new advantages that can add to their products. The product has an advantage over rival products.

Product marketing is the central point of marketing activities. Remember that after all the major promotions, distributions, and prices, if they are not followed by quality products and loved by consumers, marketing activities will not succeed. Therefore, it is necessary to examine which products will market, consumer tastes, product variations, product packaging, innovation, and brands must have serious attention (Kasmir and Jakfar, 2012).

Decisions about the logo and currency design and currency creation, and packaging and labeling are all part of the company's product strategy.

#### **2. Price**

Price is the amount required to obtain specific goods and services. Price is also one of the critical aspects of marketing mix activities; pricing is significant to pay attention to because the price is one of the causes of product behavior offered. Insufficient for determining the price will not produce a product in the market (Basu Swastha, 2015). When setting prices, owners must consider their competitors' prices. But it doesn't fit right away or doesn't get a price. While price is an essential factor in buying, it is not the only consideration.

As a result, pricing by companies intends for various objectives to achieve. The purpose of determining prices, in general, is to survive, maximize profits, and expand market share and product quality because of competitors.

### 3. Promotion

Without promotion, customers don't expect to know about the offered product or service. Thus, promotion is the most effective way to attract and retain consumers. One of the company's promotional objectives is to inform all types of products offered and attract new potential customers (Hermawan, 2018).

### 4. The place

This place is a company activity that provides products for a purpose. Business refers to the supply of this product at a suitable home for the customer. This place is almost synonymous with distribution. Location determination and distribution, as well as supporting facilities and infrastructure, are significant. Consumers can easily reach every location. Location means relating to where the company should be in its head office and operations. Companies must choose a site that is easily accessible, in other words (Saiman, 2015).

## **Marketing Goals**

Profitable sales volume is the goal of marketing. This sale means that benefits can achieve through customer satisfaction. Benefits can grow and develop communities, use greater capacity for consumers and strengthen overall economic conditions. Profit is the common goal of society. Marketing objectives are the form of a planned plan directed in the field of marketing to get optimal results.

## **Corona Virus-19**

Coronavirus is a positive single-strain RNA virus encapsulated and unsegmented. Coronavirus belongs to the order Nidovirales, family Coronaviridae. Coronaviruses divide into two subfamilies distinguished by serotype and genomic characteristics. There are four genera

namely *alpha coronavirus*, *betacoronavirus*, *deltacoronavirus* and *gamma coronavirus*. (PDPI, 2020). CoronaVirus is a large family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from mild to severe. At least two types of coronavirus are known to cause diseases that can cause severe symptoms, such as *Middle East Respiratory Syndrome* (MERS) and *Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome* (SARS). Ministry of Health RI, 2020).

**SARS-CoV19 Virus** This is a new type of coronavirus that causes a pandemic. Clinical manifestations usually appear within two days of the 14th day after the exhibition. Coronavirus infection's common signs and symptoms include acute respiratory distress such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. It can lead to pneumonia, acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure, and even death in severe cases.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Time and Place**

The researchers carry out the time of this research with about two months of data recovery time, namely in August and September 2021. The data obtained may be treated enough to be treated. It will be faster, and if the data is not enough to be treated, the researcher will extend the time. At the same time, this research took place at the flower shop Bhayangkara.

### **Types of research**

This research uses the descriptive qualitative method. A qualitative study aims to explore or build a proposal or explain the meaning of reality. Researchers reject reality or events in the field (Sugiyono, 2018). A sampling of data sources carries by *purposive sampling* to the Bhayangkara Florist Flower Shop owner, then employees, and up to several consumers. *The purposive sampling* technique obtains through a question and answer process conducted by researchers and several resource persons.

### **Data Type**

Sources of data the researchers used two data sources to find and collect data sources in this study are as follows:

#### **1. Primary data**

Primary data is data obtained directly from sources, received or collected directly in the field by people who carry out research or are concerned and those who need it. The primary data of this study are data obtained directly by research respondent researchers, such as interview data and direct observation of the owner of Bhayangkara Florist.

#### **2. Secondary Data**

It is possible to gather more search and reinforcement data using secondary sources. Besides books and journals, secondary data sources included in this study include scientific papers, media articles, the internet, and marketing methods companies use to stay in business

### **Data Collection Technique**

#### **1. Observation**

Data flaws and systematic collecting support the observation method, which is an observation method. The Bhayangkara Florist bouquet examines using the observation method in this study to explore the significant issue directly. In this study, the researcher observed participation through collecting data by monitoring and recognizing where the informants' daily lives were involved with the researcher.

#### **2. Interview**

Interviews in this study were conducted by researchers using questions and responses, face-to-face between the questioner and interviewer with answers or announcements using the interview method, researchers prepared more questions (Sugiyono, 2018). In the context of this research, an interview with the Budget Bayangkara Florist Shop owner.

#### **3. Documentation**

Documentation is an event that has occurred orally in an oral drawing, a person's drawing, or a monumental work. Thus, in this study, the data used by social research methodologies to trace historical data.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

Data analysis in qualitative research begins before entering the field of the area. Verification means checking the report and then concluding the results obtained according to data collection techniques, business strategy methods, and survival and individual experience.

#### **1. Analysis before in the field**

Qualitative researchers conducted data analysis before the researchers arrived in the field. The purpose of this research is always temporary and will develop after study in the area.

#### **2. Data analysis in the miles and Huberman model field**

Miles and Huberman use activities in data analysis, namely: data *collection*, data *reduction*, data *display*, and *conclusion drawing/verification*.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### **1. Marketing strategy implemented during the covid-19 pandemic**

The coronavirus directly influences a wide range of industries, including small and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs). Work usually done face-to-face becomes more complicated when infected with the coronavirus.

Some businesspeople have had difficulty achieving their goals when the corona disrupted the national economy. In addition to the challenges encountered in realizing specific targets, the market was slow due to the impact of the coronavirus, which was unable to strengthen the sales of MSME business players. The effect of the income received is not as expected. It caused the company financial distress. The worst impact of published activities can be bankruptcy due to exhausted funds before the company develops or does not invest.

For MSMEs to survive, they must make business decisions. An important conclusion is in the area of marketing. The marketing strategy that the company must take is a decision in terms of the marketing mix. The decision taken must be a profitable decision for the company because this decision directly impacts increasing sales volume.

If the corporation wants to stay afloat in the present pandemic of covid-19, it will have to get more inventive with how it markets its products.

The marketing strategies that Bhayangkara Florist has carried out in maintaining its business during the Covid-19 pandemic are:

a. Product Strategy

The tenacity and commitment that Bhayangkara Florist pays to all employees are expected from Bhayangkara Florist to provide maximum customer satisfaction. The company's products are round flowers, stacked bouquets, bakery bouquets, and snack flowers. Bhayangkara Florist is a solution for consumers looking for a unique fragrance because consumers can order the special character bouquet they want during the Covid-19 Pandemic, Bhayangkara Florist also published innovations in the latest bouquet product, the Mask Bouquet. Consumers can use masks not only as a display during this covid-19 outbreak. The uniqueness of each product invites attraction in the community reasonably priced products of good quality.

According to the shop owner, "Bhayangkara Florist is always developing product quality and creating new products like this mask bouquet. Because at the time, the corona was a wreath that was generally minimal amateurs. And employees are thinking of doing adapted products at this point and have created a bouquet of masks. Since now, masks have become the main need of the community".

Bhayangkara flower shop MSME products are in the form of flannel cloth flowers and are of good quality with their uniqueness. There are many flower bouquets, namely round bouquets, flower box bouquets, stack bouquets, snack bouquets, and the last innovation is mask bouquets. Bhayangkara Florist has a beautiful shape with a variety of good quality colors and does not use expensive basic materials so that bouquet products can enter the target market.

**b. Pricing Strategy**

Price is a marketing mix element that plays an essential role for a business because price maintains a unique position in the marketing mix and is closely related to other components. In implementing the pricing policy, some of the factors are determining the product's base price, the updated price, financing shipping costs, and different related prices. So that a product can compete in the market, entrepreneurs can make a price in a market relationship, whether the price is lower than the market or above the market.

Determination of reasonable prices, ability to operate, and optimal marketing activities for the goods offered. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Bhayangkara Florist also continued to price strategies in reductions to attract consumers and maintain business. Provisions relating to the provision of this reduction.

The production department of Bhayangkara Florist said: "The discount we are giving is because at the start of the corona, very few people were buying bouquets, so Bhayangkara Florist's income has fallen spectacularly. If the price, we do not remove the possibility of threatening our business. As a result, we are attracting our consumers by providing discounts. But giving a discount is always an advantage because there is no point in giving a discount, but on the contrary, it can't be taken advantage of even if a little profit can obtain. The transaction must continue so that this Bhayangkara Florist remains amid this pandemic".

One of the flower shop consumers, Bhayangkara Florists, said: "Because the bouquets are very high quality and often have discounts or promotions compared to other bouquets."

This promotion is as in pricing to achieve a general goal. In this case, the goal is to set the lowest possible price with the intention that the proposed product sells on the market at a record low cost but is consistently profitable and able to increase profits.

**c. Promotion Strategy**



Promotion is a mixing activity that is as essential as the above activities. In this case, the entrepreneur tries to promote all his services, either directly or indirectly. Without promotion, the customer cannot recognize the offered product or service. Therefore, promotion is the most powerful means to attract and retain consumers.

For people to know and get to know the products marketed by Bhayangkara Florist flower shops, the promotion policy contains activities that provide product information, market targets, and distribution channels to buy their products. The promotions used by Bhayangkara Florist are advertising, individual sales, and sales promotions.

#### d. Venue Strategy

Customers with product offers or transactions meet at the location in question, not a physical location. Strategically, this area is closer to the distribution and supply chain strategy. A company's product distribution system or distribution can be a competitive advantage. By building a more robust distribution network, inventive business owners will have a clear goal.

The marketing department says: "Our store location is quite strategic, allowing consumers to find our store more efficiently. And also, for consumers who can't come to the store, we provide delivery service or delivery directly by employees or using Grab or Gojek. By sending products to access consumers, we continue to implement the covid-19 health protocol, i.e., before the bouquet is shipped, we spray disinfectant. We do so so that the products sold are safe and not contaminated with the coronavirus ".

One of the primary consumers of Bhayangkara Florists said: "First of all, because the location of Bhayangkara Florist is very strategic near my house. And if I don't have time to stop at the store, I can anticipate at home ".

#### 1. The obstacles faced by Bhayangkara Florist in implementing a marketing strategy to be able to survive during the Covid-19 pandemic

The company must have encountered obstacles both small and large. It can resolve with the existing management of the company. If the challenges faced are not correctly decided, it will have a systemic impact on the growth and survival of not excluded companies.

The owner of Bhayangkara Florist said: "The absence of campus activities such as a graduation is a barrier to us because the primary segmentation of our market is a student. For the revenue of this bouquet to be spectacularly lowered, we only count online sales on the market ".

The finance department also felt constraints: "If there is a financial side, I feel the decline, as usual, we can sell dozens of fans in one month because the corona does not exceed five bouquets."

This presentation explains that the obstacle faced by Bhayangkara Florist in implementing the marketing strategy is to reduce the demand for bouquet interest due to the lack of campus activities and the company's financial side.

## 2. Bhayangkara Florist Solutions Facing the Covid-19 Pandemic and Maintaining business

The Covid-19 pandemic situation offers challenges and MSMEs to maintain business. The challenge must interpret. There must be a straightforward solution for MSMEs. Opportunities solved, short-term solutions must be continued with long-term solutions, in particular, if they are linked to the digital age to support economic activities. Some solutions are:

### a. *Keeping Cashflow healthy*

Cash flow is one of the essential elements of the business. Therefore, the company must manage money optimally and correctly; otherwise, the business risks going bankrupt. For this reason, it is essential to maintain cash flow conditions to remain balanced.

### b. Product innovation based on needs

The increasing demand for face masks during the pandemic has made many businesses win the chance to create products that people want. Innovating product-based products is a solution to survive during a pandemic.

### c. Maximizing the use of Medsos for Business

*Social distancing* does today suppress the spread of the coronavirus, and social media is the closest place to visit many people. So, it's necessary to get the most out of social media companies to introduce products. Starting from the account name, bio information, content, caption, and hashtag need to be thought-about to attract *awareness* and *engagement*.

### d. Maximize same-day delivery service

The need for delivery services must accompany MSME companies in online channels. MSMEs can use the same-day delivery service to receive products quickly from consumers. Owners of bouquet companies maximize their sales with the same delivery service but still implement the covid-19 health protocol.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and the discussion described, the conclusions obtained are as follows:

1. In conducting the marketing strategy of Bhayangkara Florist Shop, the 4P Marketing Mix consists of product strategy, price strategy, promotion strategy, and place strategy.
2. The obstacles faced by Bhayangkara Florist are raw materials and store finances.
3. Bhayangkara Florist flower shop solutions in the face of the pandemic are maintaining cash flow, product innovation, social media, and intercompany services.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to thank all of the groups and communities that have supported and encouraged him throughout this study. A comparative study on MSME marketing strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic or the exact research size can be utilized as reading material and information on marketing management, especially addressing MSME marketing strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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