

Digital Marketing Strategy For Business Development

Strategi Pemasaran Digital untuk Pengembangan Bisnis

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine how digital marketing strategies are implemented at XXX Bakery in Semarang City and to identify obstacles, solutions, and existing problems. This study employed a qualitative method with a case study approach, conducted through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation with the XXX Bakery in Semarang City. Data source and data collection were tested for data credibility. Seven participants were used as data sources for the in-depth interviews. The results showed that XXX Bakery in Semarang City implemented its digital marketing strategy through social media platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram, employing the 4P marketing mix: Product, Place, Price, and Promotion. This study identified challenges such as competition and slow order delivery. The solution to these problems was maintaining bread quality and offering attractive promotions. Delays in delivery were addressed by adding dedicated staff and providing time estimates.

Keywords: Development, Digital Marketing, 4P, Bread

Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan tujuan mengetahui tentang bagaimana penerapan strategi digital marketing yang dilakukan sebagai strategi pemasaran Bakery XXX di Kota Semarang dan untuk mengetahui kendala dan solusi serta masalah yang ada. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan yang diambil yakni studi kasus dengan cara melakukan wawancara mendalam, Observasi langsung dan dokumentasi dengan pihak Bakery XXX di Kota Semarang. Untuk pengujian kredibilitas data menggunakan Metode Triangulasi sumber data dan pengumpulan data. Sumber data penelitian dalam melakukan wawancara mendalam adalah dengan 7 orang partisipan. Hasil Penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Bakery XXX di Kota Semarang dalam melakukan penerapan strategi digital marketingnya adalah melalui sosial media Whaatshap dan Instagram sebagai strategi pemasarannya dan menggunakan bauran Marketing mix 4P : Product, Place, price, dan Promotion yang telah di terapkan. Pada penelitian ini ditemukan terjadinya kendala yang di alami yaitu terdapat persaingan dan lambat proses pengantaran pesanan, Solusi permasalahannya dengan cara menjaga kualitas roti dan mengadakan promo menarik. Jika mengalami keterlambatan dalam proses pengantaran mengatasinya dengan menambah karyawan tersendiri dalam proses pengantaran serta memberi estimasi waktu.

Kata Kunci : Pengembangan, Digital Marketing, 4P, Roti

1. Introduction

In the modern business landscape, digital technology has revolutionized marketing practices by integrating traditional methods with online platforms, giving rise to digital marketing as a dominant strategy for business growth and sustainability. Digital marketing enables businesses, distributors, and consumers to interact effectively through digital channels, facilitating targeted promotion, engagement, and sales. This transformation has led companies of all sizes to utilize digital tools to reach broader audiences and achieve competitive advantage. As Cai and Choi (2023) highlight, the omni-channel marketing strategy has become an essential approach in the digital era, allowing businesses to connect seamlessly with consumers across multiple platforms. Likewise, Homburg and Wielgos (2022) emphasize that digital marketing capabilities significantly enhance firm performance and are now central to strategic marketing development.

The increasing importance of social media platforms in marketing has further strengthened this shift. Social media provides an interactive space for businesses to build relationships, increase customer engagement, and develop brand awareness (Bilgin, 2018). Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok have become indispensable marketing tools due to their accessibility and ability to reach millions of users globally. Laradi et al. (2024) affirm that leveraging social media marketing capabilities directly contributes to business success through stronger brand visibility and customer loyalty. In the Indonesian context, Astuti et al. (2024) find that the implementation of digital marketing plays a crucial role in advancing micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), particularly in highly competitive urban markets like South Jakarta.

Digital marketing's effectiveness is particularly evident among MSMEs, which form the backbone of many developing economies. MSMEs often face challenges in market reach and visibility due to limited financial and technological resources. However, digital marketing provides affordable and efficient solutions to promote products and engage customers directly (Amalia & Nurhadi, 2023; Asep, 2023). The adoption of digital platforms not only enhances competitiveness but also promotes innovation and adaptability in response to market demands (Gideon, 2023). These trends indicate that digital marketing has transitioned from being a supplementary strategy to an essential component of business operations.

Despite its rapid adoption, research indicates that many MSMEs still face barriers in implementing digital marketing effectively. Limited knowledge, digital literacy, and inadequate integration between online and offline strategies often reduce marketing efficiency (Barlatier et al., 2023). Additionally, the evolution of artificial intelligence (AI) in marketing, such as generative AI, introduces new complexities in strategy formulation and customer interaction management (Islam et al., 2024). While advanced technologies can enhance personalization and predictive analytics, many small businesses struggle to adapt due to resource constraints and lack of technical expertise. This creates a significant research gap regarding how digital marketing can be optimized for MSMEs in emerging markets like Indonesia.

Another gap lies in the lack of empirical evidence on how digital marketing directly influences business development, particularly for localized enterprises such as food and retail businesses. For example, bakery shops and small restaurants increasingly rely on digital channels to attract customers, yet research focusing on their digital marketing effectiveness remains limited (Azzahra et al., 2023; Citra, 2022). Similarly, Hartanti and Oktyani (2020) observed that digital promotion can significantly improve brand recognition for small-scale food businesses, but sustainability in long-term performance is not guaranteed without consistent digital

engagement. These findings suggest the need for more context-specific studies that explore the strategic and operational aspects of digital marketing for small businesses.

Moreover, while numerous studies have explored digital marketing from a conceptual perspective, relatively few have examined its role in developing sustained competitive advantage within localized business contexts (Citra, 2020; Hesti & Dwi, 2023). Jung (2023) argues that digital marketing innovation mediates firm performance through enhanced marketing capabilities, yet this relationship may vary across industries and scales of operation. Therefore, there is a pressing need to investigate how small businesses utilize digital marketing to sustain business growth and adapt to dynamic market conditions. This research aims to bridge this gap by providing empirical insights into how digital marketing strategies contribute to business development outcomes.

The urgency of this study lies in the accelerating digitalization of business processes in Indonesia, particularly among MSMEs that drive regional economies. As Aqillah Sifwah and Dewi (2024) point out, implementing digital marketing strategies significantly enhances competitiveness and long-term growth potential. The increasing digital literacy among consumers also pushes businesses to adopt innovative marketing techniques to maintain relevance. In this context, understanding how digital marketing influences sales performance, consumer engagement, and brand sustainability becomes essential for policy-makers, entrepreneurs, and scholars alike.

Therefore, this study contributes to the literature by analyzing digital marketing strategy as a critical driver for business development. It offers a comprehensive understanding of how digital channels—particularly social media—impact visibility, customer engagement, and profitability in small business contexts. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on empirical analysis of digital marketing implementation in local businesses, bridging theoretical concepts with practical outcomes. Ultimately, the study aims to provide strategic recommendations for MSMEs to optimize their digital marketing practices for sustainable business growth in the era of digital transformation.

2. Methods

This qualitative descriptive research is a research procedure that draws on descriptive data in the form of written or spoken sentences from subjects and observable behavior. This research seeks to explain how to implement digital marketing as a marketing strategy at XXX Bakery. Within the context of the time and situation in question, qualitative research is useful for answering questions that require in-depth understanding. The research site is the location or object of a study. Determining the location of the research is the most crucial stage in qualitative research. Determining the location of the research means that the object and objectives have been determined, facilitating the author's research. The author's research location is at XXX Bakery in Semarang City. The participants in this study were individuals who already understood information about XXX Bakery: 1 owner, 1 employee, and 2 consumers. The author chose these participants because they could meet the need for information and answers.

Data Collection Methods: The data collection techniques used in this study were: 1) Interviews. 2) Observation. 3) Documentation. Two data sources were used in this study: 1) Primary Data. In this primary data collection technique, the author conducted in-depth interviews with all participants at XXX Bakery in Semarang City, namely the owner, employees, and consumers. This technique was used to obtain data and analyze digital marketing as a marketing strategy. 2) Secondary Data. Secondary data in this study was obtained by reading

books, articles, journals, literature, and related materials on the application of digital marketing as a marketing strategy.

In qualitative research, data credibility testing is conducted to prove that the research is truly scientific and also to validate the data obtained. This study used two triangulation methods: 1) Data Source Triangulation and 2) Data Collection Triangulation. The analysis technique used is an interactive and continuous model. The data analysis process can be carried out in three stages: 1) Data Reduction, 2) Data Display, and 3) Conclusion Drawing.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of in-depth interviews with participants to answer questions, direct field observations, and documentation using photos and recording devices. Digital marketing, or e-marketing, is a broad marketing activity that uses digital media and the internet, such as social media and websites, to increase the number of customers (Chaffey & Chadwick, 2019). Businesses are currently moving away from traditional (old) marketing methods and shifting to modern (online) marketing, namely digital marketing. Implementing digital marketing as a marketing strategy is a step towards achieving success for business owners. As a result of these marketing strategies, people who were previously unaware of a business's information become aware of it. Mr. O., the owner of Bakery XXX in Semarang, stated the following: "Initially, Bakery XXX only served offline purchases through word-of-mouth promotion. However, this marketing strategy was deemed insufficient, and only a few consumers were aware of it. Bakery XXX implemented online promotions through social media, and it turned out that many consumers were aware of this, resulting in increased sales." Based on the questions he answered, he stated that there are two marketing strategies implemented: offline word-of-mouth, and now, he has shifted to online marketing through digital media, promoting on social media. Furthermore, Ms. Y, from an interview with a Bakery XXX employee, added: "Our online marketing strategy utilizes social media. The platforms used are WhatsApp and Instagram. This makes it easier for consumers to recognize the product."

The explanation given in the answer reveals that the social media platforms used are WhatsApp and Instagram. According to Mr. B, the implementation of digital marketing as a marketing strategy at Bakery XXX is as follows: "The active social media platforms, as mentioned by Ms. Erin, are WhatsApp and Instagram, so the implementation is smart." Our smartness in playing viral social media such as doing promotions through Instagram instastory, not only that by making statuses on WhatsApp about Bread products, the difference is that on Instagram sometimes use affiliates with many followers to entrust spill products by tagging the XXX Bread account. The implementation of digital marketing carried out by XXX Bakery through WhatsApp and Instagram to get closer to consumers and also through Instagram affiliates. Then Ms. Erin also added the following answer: "for the ordering system through social media, it is a buy order when someone wants to order, they can chat or DM via WhatsApp or Instagram which is already listed, then we provide an estimated time for delivery to avoid risks such as order cancellations." Social media is an internet-based online media where users can easily utilize it to meet their communication needs (Widada, 2018). Social media itself is a place for social interaction with easier access and wider efficiency. Currently, business actors rely on social media to help business actors in the business they are currently running. The XXX Bakery uses the WhatsApp and Instagram platforms in its marketing strategy. These two platforms, WhatsApp and Instagram, are used to introduce products to the public and allow customers at XXX Bakery to interact directly with employees. Consumers can also easily find out about promotions and information provided at XXX Bakery.

1. WhatsApp.

WhatsApp is a cross-platform messaging application that allows us to exchange phone messages and information without SMS charges, using only an internet data package using an internet connection. Roti XXX has used the WhatsApp media platform since its inception. WhatsApp is a very effective marketing strategy for expanding its online presence compared to other messaging platforms. This is because WhatsApp's features are primarily used to communicate with consumers. Furthermore, WhatsApp can upload status updates to facilitate consumer purchases. Consumers can conduct direct transactions or simply ask questions about products through WhatsApp's chat feature. Furthermore, the broadcast message and story features are used to provide product information in the form of promotions, price lists, and testimonials to consumers who have purchased them. WhatsApp has become a widely used chat application, making it a suitable marketing tool.

2. Instagram

Instagram is a photo and video sharing application that allows users to edit uploaded media, creating posts that can be uploaded or made public. The Instagram platform has become increasingly popular due to its features, so it's no surprise that many businesses continue to sell and promote their products through the platform. Marketing on Instagram involves uploading Insta Stories (videos and photos). This makes it easier for consumers to learn about the products offered by Roti XXX. Product promotions also include engaging visual captions, allowing hashtags (#) to be used as a reinforcement in promoting products. Instagram accounts are used to upload photos, videos, content, reviews, and information about existing products. The marketing strategy implemented by Bakery XXX using Instagram is similar to WhatsApp. Bakery XXX promotes its products by creating status updates on Instagram stories, then sharing and uploading various menu items to expand consumers' awareness of the products marketed by Ayam Geprek Olin Randublatung. Not only uploading product photos uploaded on the Olin Randublatung geprek chicken account, but Instagram social media also promotes through affiliates with many followers, usually Roti XXX sends for the affiliate's review and then creates content to be uploaded. Roti XXX consumers also do not need to search much about product information, the use of the hashtag (#) feature is used to make it easier for consumers who are looking for information on Instagram. Roti XXX consumers can also interact directly through the comments and direct messages feature where the Roti XXX admins will answer all comments and questions directly.

3. Marketing Mix

a.) Product

At XXX Bakery, packaging is made more attractive and delicious to ensure the products are marketed and suitable for sale to consumers. XXX Bakery offers a wide variety of menu items and consistently strives to offer variety across its menus to attract a wider audience.

b.) Price

Price is a key selling point. Prices at XXX Bakery are not set too high, but rather equal to those of competitors or the market; prices are kept affordable. Relatively low prices compared to the market make XXX Bakery more attractive.

c.) Place

The strategic location of XXX Bakery is located on the main roadside, with ample parking, making it easy for consumers to visit.

d.) Promotion

XXX Bakery has implemented various marketing strategies to attract consumers. Promotion is a way to inform, persuade, and remind consumers, directly or indirectly, about a product. The promotions offered for Olin's fried chicken (ayam geprek) influence consumers to buy it, and the promotions offered vary.

Consumers can access these promotions on various platforms, including social media platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp, as well as through dine-in. These promotions are what attract consumers, making them loyal customers of Olin's fried chicken (ayam geprek) in Randublatung. It all depends on consumer interest. Not only are the promotions offered, but they also offer free shipping in certain areas for online purchases.

Obstacles and Solutions

In marketing strategies, Bakery XXX certainly faces numerous obstacles, problems, and solutions. "Many obstacles are encountered, especially in rural areas. There are many new competitors, both visible and invisible. Almost all entrepreneurs experience this, especially those with mystical elements. Many unexpected events occur, even beyond our control, because they feel threatened by competition and resort to various means. This is especially true for competitors who lower their prices. Furthermore, with delivery systems, there are often time constraints/delays in deliveries. The large number of new competitors makes trade more competitive, impacting sales, profitability, and business resilience. This intense competition makes entrepreneurs feel threatened, so they resort to various means to compete, especially with mystical elements. Furthermore, the high level of competition also lowers selling prices, which can impact market share because consumers have many choices, which can lead to decreased sales. Implementing a digital marketing buy-order system also encounters obstacles such as estimated time for food delivery. Ultimately, late delivery can affect customer satisfaction. If customers are dissatisfied with the service, this can impact sales. Therefore, late delivery times are a significant obstacle that requires further attention.

Regarding the solution to this problem, he stated, "The solution I use to overcome this problem is to always maintain the quality of the food, run promotions to attract customers. I also provide good service to attract customers. For things that happen beyond my control, I just leave it to God and pray a lot." The owner of Bakery XXX explained that the solution to this problem is to maintain the quality of his food, not only by providing the best service, but also by praying a lot to God. The large number of competitors means consumers have many choices, so by maintaining quality and providing the best service to customers, Roti XXX can attract customers and encourage them to buy again.

Bakery XXX also offers attractive promotions to attract customers. To address late delivery, Bakery XXX usually notifies customers of the estimated delivery time, which is 60 minutes after the order is placed. Customers are asked to be patient while waiting for their orders. Additional staff are also being added to address this issue.

Discussion

The findings from in-depth interviews and field observations at Bakery XXX illustrate how digital marketing has become a pivotal driver of business visibility and sales growth in small enterprises. The shift from traditional word-of-mouth promotion to modern online marketing aligns with current global trends where small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) increasingly rely on digital tools to reach target consumers (Chaffey & Chadwick, 2019; Sharabati et al., 2024). The evidence from this study reinforces that digital marketing is not only a complementary tool but a core strategy to enhance competitiveness and ensure business continuity (Mudrika Aqillah & Dewi, 2024). WhatsApp and Instagram, as the primary platforms

used by Bakery XXX, represent accessible, low-cost, and high-engagement tools that bridge the communication gap between producers and customers — a finding consistent with Li et al. (2021), who emphasized that social media marketing strategies enhance relational interaction and customer loyalty.

The implementation of digital marketing at Bakery XXX demonstrates how WhatsApp facilitates personalized communication and transaction convenience. The platform's features—status updates, broadcast messages, and direct chats—allow continuous engagement and foster trust with consumers. Lin et al. (2021) found that businesses leveraging such platforms gain measurable business value through improved responsiveness and customer relationships. Similarly, the use of Instagram at Bakery XXX functions as both a promotional and interactional channel. By utilizing InstaStory, hashtags, and influencer collaborations, the bakery enhances visibility, consistent with Laradi et al. (2024), who noted that leveraging social media capabilities directly contributes to business success. This finding also echoes the results of Wu et al. (2024), who empirically demonstrated that SMEs using structured digital marketing strategies exhibit improved performance outcomes in terms of sales and customer engagement.

From the marketing mix perspective, Bakery XXX aligns with the 4P model—product, price, place, and promotion—as described by Ofiana (2022). The bakery's product diversification and attractive packaging correspond to findings by Saputri and Prihadini (2021), who observed that creative product presentation enhances perceived quality and purchase intention. Affordable pricing strategies are consistent with Novyanti (2023), who noted that balanced pricing in food businesses increases competitiveness and customer retention. Additionally, the bakery's strategic physical location combined with online accessibility strengthens its position in both offline and digital markets, supporting Tyasari and Patrikha (2023), who emphasized that hybrid visibility between physical and online presence optimizes sales performance. Promotion through Instagram and WhatsApp further enables dynamic two-way interaction, a practice also highlighted by Nurasyiah and Fadli (2023) as essential for building loyal consumer relationships in MSMEs.

However, challenges encountered by Bakery XXX—including rising competition, delivery delays, and market saturation—reflect the broader obstacles faced by MSMEs in the digital age. Lestari and Ramadani (2022) and Sri Astuti and Putri (2024) reported that limited digital literacy, resource constraints, and competitive saturation often hinder optimal marketing performance. These issues are also consistent with findings from Jung (2023), who identified that digital marketing innovation requires strong internal marketing capability to translate online activities into performance gains. The problem of delivery delays and customer dissatisfaction at Bakery XXX demonstrates how operational efficiency directly influences perceived service quality, reinforcing the importance of digital integration in logistics and communication (Nur Habibah Dwi Astuti et al., 2023).

Despite these challenges, Bakery XXX's adaptive solutions—maintaining product quality, improving service, and strengthening promotional strategies—demonstrate resilience and innovation typical of thriving MSMEs. Maintaining quality as a core differentiation strategy reflects the insight of Synthia Sumartini (2022), who found that consistent product standards and digital presence together sustain business growth. Moreover, Rahmi Yuliandari et al. (2023) observed that applying digital marketing systematically can significantly enhance brand visibility and attract new customers, supporting the bakery's experience of increased sales following social media adoption. Such practices resonate with Sagita and Wijaya (2022), who emphasized that continuous promotion and online engagement are essential for maintaining consumer interest in competitive food markets.

The experience of Bakery XXX also reflects the transformation of marketing toward AI-enhanced and data-driven approaches. Islam et al. (2024) highlighted that generative AI is reshaping digital marketing by enabling personalized content and predictive analytics, which small businesses can leverage to optimize online campaigns. Although Bakery XXX has not yet adopted AI tools, its current use of social media analytics (through Instagram insights and consumer feedback) reflects early stages of digital intelligence integration. Future strategies could expand toward AI-assisted marketing for better targeting, automation, and customer segmentation.

Additionally, the results highlight that effective digital marketing requires managerial commitment and long-term orientation. Putri et al. (2024) found that digital marketing adoption in firms depends on management's ability to align online strategies with business goals. Similarly, Rahman and Octavianto (2017) emphasized that SMEs must develop adaptive digital ecosystems to sustain competitiveness. Bakery XXX's experience supports these findings—its consistent use of WhatsApp and Instagram illustrates how smaller enterprises can achieve competitive advantage through continuous online engagement, even with limited resources.

Overall, this study reinforces previous evidence that digital marketing significantly influences the growth and sustainability of small businesses in Indonesia. The findings align with the research of Wu et al. (2024) and Sharabati et al. (2024), confirming that digital transformation enhances marketing effectiveness and business performance. The case of Bakery XXX shows that simple yet consistent digital marketing strategies can yield substantial results in brand awareness, customer loyalty, and sales growth. This indicates that digital marketing adoption among MSMEs is not merely a technological adaptation but a strategic necessity for long-term competitiveness and resilience in the evolving digital economy.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that digital marketing plays a vital role in driving business development and sustainability in the modern era. The findings show that the adoption of digital marketing strategies—particularly through social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram—has significantly improved sales performance, customer engagement, and brand awareness. The use of digital channels enables businesses to expand market reach, interact directly with consumers, and strengthen brand positioning in a competitive marketplace. For small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), this approach provides an efficient and affordable way to compete with larger companies while maintaining customer loyalty.

The integration of digital marketing elements such as product innovation, pricing strategy, distribution, and promotion strengthens overall marketing performance. Digital media platforms not only serve as tools for promotion but also as instruments for building long-term customer relationships. By utilizing the analytical features available on social media, businesses can understand consumer behavior, measure campaign effectiveness, and adjust their strategies accordingly. This dynamic approach contributes to continuous improvement in marketing effectiveness and supports the development of a sustainable business model.

The study also identifies several challenges faced by businesses in implementing digital marketing. These include intense competition, logistical constraints, inconsistent delivery performance, and limited digital literacy among business owners. Such challenges highlight the importance of developing both technical and managerial capabilities to ensure the success of digital marketing strategies. Strengthening digital literacy, enhancing creative marketing skills, and improving service reliability are key steps to optimize the benefits of digital marketing implementation.

From a managerial perspective, the results emphasize the importance of continuous innovation and adaptation to technological changes. Business owners are encouraged to explore the use of digital tools for analyzing customer data, improving communication strategies, and maintaining high service quality. Consistent engagement with customers through social media can foster brand loyalty and long-term relationships. Furthermore, optimizing digital marketing requires strong organizational commitment, effective resource management, and strategic vision aligned with market trends.

This research provides valuable insights into how digital marketing can enhance business development, particularly for MSMEs operating in highly competitive environments. The results demonstrate that digital marketing is not merely a promotional tactic but a comprehensive business strategy that integrates communication, sales, and customer relationship management. Through proper planning and execution, businesses can transform digital platforms into a sustainable source of growth and competitive advantage.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations in terms of scope and methodology. The analysis focuses on a single business case, which may not fully represent all sectors or industries. Future research could include a larger sample size or multiple case studies to provide broader and more generalizable findings. Quantitative or longitudinal studies could also explore the long-term effects of digital marketing on financial performance, customer loyalty, and brand sustainability.

In conclusion, digital marketing has become an essential component of modern business success. It offers opportunities for innovation, market expansion, and customer engagement, while also presenting challenges that require continuous learning and strategic adaptation. Businesses that effectively combine traditional marketing principles with digital innovation will be better positioned to thrive in an increasingly digital economy. The ability to leverage digital technology strategically will determine the sustainability and competitiveness of businesses in the future.

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