
IMPLEMENTATION OF PRODUCT PROMOTION STRATEGIES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC THROUGH DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS

Riza M. Yunus

Universitas Majalengka, Indonesia

Email: yunusriza@gmail.com

Abstract

The emergence of a pandemic causes the need for changes in marketing strategies. This is because, without any changes, the effectiveness of the usual marketing strategy will be significantly reduced. This study intends to determine how promotional methods are used in the purchasing decision process using digital marketing during the Covivirus-D19 pandemic. This research will employ a qualitative descriptive methodology. The data used in this study are derived from numerous research outcomes and earlier studies that are still relevant to this study's topic. The results of this study found that the changes made in changing the promotion strategy from conventional to digital were quite positive. The advantages are the practical nature of marketing, smaller operating expenses, and a faster response to consumers.

Keywords: *Promotion Strategy, Digital Marketing, Marketing, Purchase Decision.*

A. INTRODUCTION

Internal company elements such as strategic management (promotion) done by the firm or the company's external environment, such as government rules and government policies, can influence the purchase of a product in modern business. Moreover, a covid-19 pandemic currently renders all elements of the economy unorganized and chaotic (Ahmad et al., 2017). In a case such as this, especially during the covid-19 pandemic, many corporations are compelled to replace their management. As is the case with the reorganization of product advertising techniques employed by corporations deemed less effective during the worsening COVID-19 pandemic (He & Harris, 2020).

Product marketing is one method by which firms attempt to increase the sales of manufactured goods. Promotion is a means of directly or indirectly informing, referring, and reminding consumers about a sold product or brand. In addition to improving product sales, promotions aim to transmit information, position the product, and give value-added services (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017).

Product promotion will automatically display information about products, both in general and specific information. Usually, the information presented in the advertisement is a description of the product, such as the use of the product and the advantages and disadvantages of the product. In addition to providing information about the product, the information presented in the promotion is also made as attractive as possible to influence consumers, especially market share, which aims to attract consumers' attention in purchasing the products offered or promoted (Brzozowska & Bubel, 2015). In product promotion, apart from providing product information, the promotion also aims to position the product. In this case, advertising can be successful if promotional activities can place the product into a brand of mine (Rymaszewska et al., 2017).

In the current COVID-19 pandemic, many companies have suffered material and non-material losses. Several companies and SMEs have also laid off massive layoffs to save the company, and some have gone out of business. In this case, an appropriate promotional strategy is needed to address the deteriorating situation. At this time, companies trying to survive in a

difficult situation are still trying to “how to make products that have been produced can be sold” to the public (Huang & Farboudi Jahromi, 2021). This is aimed at minimally minimizing the company’s losses, namely losses from the burden side that has been issued to carry out the production. The company employs a promotional plan that affords it a good opportunity to sell its products, for instance through internet marketing, and it anticipates that digital marketing will be the optimal technique during the COVID-19 pandemic (Gao et al., 2018).

The organization has evaluated digital marketing in terms of the benefits it can receive and the convenience it provides to consumers. In addition to the benefits obtained by companies using digital marketing, such as reducing marketing burdens because companies only use online media to promote their products, consumers also benefit from the fact that they do not need to leave their homes to see the products they are interested in, thereby reducing their risk of exposure to the covid-19 virus (Dumitriu et al., 2019). Digital marketing is an effort made in terms of marketing through the use of internet-connected devices, digital media, and a variety of marketing methods with the goal of keeping companies in contact with consumers through online communication channels. Websites, blogs, social media (Instagram, WhatsApp, Line), interactive audio-video (YouTube, video), interactive audio (Podcast, SoundCloud), and display ads are examples of digital marketing access points (Kannan, 2017).

Through the brief explanation above, the researcher wants to see how the implementation is carried out in carrying out product promotion strategies when purchasing decisions through digital marketing implementation when the COVID-19 pandemic occurs in Indonesia.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Marketing Concepts

Marketing is a managerial process that enables individuals or organizations to obtain what they desire and require by developing, offering, and exchanging things of value with other parties, or all actions associated with the distribution of goods or services from producers to consumers (Milanova & Mass, 2017). This marketing strategy tries to attract new customers by providing higher value, setting appealing prices, distributing items or services simply, promoting successfully, and retaining existing customers while sticking to the customer satisfaction principle (Katsikeas et al., 2019).

The marketing notion asserts that to achieve corporate goals, one must integrate marketing operations more effectively than competitors in order to define and serve the needs and desires of marketing objectives. In this case, the marketing concept focuses on satisfying consumer needs through products and everything related to the creation, exchange, delivery, and consumption of the products offered (Ananda et al., 2016).

There are at least four pillars in the marketing concept. The four pillars include Market Target, Customer Needs, Integrated Marketing, and Profits Through Customer Satisfaction. Of the four pillars of the basic marketing concept, marketing here is oriented from the outside. This concept begins by defining the market well, focusing on customer needs, integrating all activities that will affect customers, and generating profits through customer concentration (HR & Aithal, 2020).

Before determining the target market, the company must group or divide the market into different groups of buyers and may require different products and marketing strategies, this is called market segmentation. The next step is to determine the target market, after deciding the target market means evaluating the effectiveness of each segment and then selecting one or more market segments to serve. The way to define the target market is by developing the size and attractiveness of the segment and then selecting the desired target segment (Lei & Moon, 2015). There are two activities used in determining the target market, namely:

- a. Market segment evaluation
 - 1). Segment size and growth, such as income and lifestyle of each segment.
 - 2). An attractive segment structure in terms of profitability, threats from substitute products, and threats from strong and aggressive competitors.
 - 3). Targets and available resources, such as human resources (Rahman, 2016).
- b. Selecting a segment
Selecting a segment means determining one or more segments that have high value for the company and then determining which segments and how many can be served by the company (Rezaei et al., 2015).

Next is customer needs, which are the same as human needs. In this case, customer needs can be classified according to several aspects: the level of importance, nature, time, and subject. According to the level of significance, customer needs are divided into three, namely primary needs (main needs), secondary (complementary needs), and tertiary needs (needs for luxury goods) (Chen et al., 2015). According to its nature, customer needs can be divided into two: physical needs (needs related to the customer's physical), for example, food, and spiritual needs (needs related to the customer's psychological), such as vacations. According to time, customer needs are divided into current needs (needs that cannot be postponed) and future needs (non-urgent needs that are immediately met). And according to the subject, customer needs can be classified into individual, collective, or group needs (Konu, 2015).

In integrated marketing, there are two key tenets: first, numerous marketing activities communicate and deliver value. Second, when marketing operations are coordinated, their overall influence is maximized. The last marketing concept is profit through customer satisfaction, which means that if customer satisfaction is met or the company can meet customer expectations through the products offered, satisfaction is the profit earned by the company (Keller, 2016). This is very different from sales, sales will only focus on material profits (measured in money), but what is meant by profit in marketing is consumer (user) satisfaction arising from the product. This is because, in addition to pleasing consumers of their products, customer satisfaction will give life to the company and consumers to believe in the company. In short, sales are only focused on the company's short-term goals, and vice versa, marketing is oriented to the company's long-term goals (Otto et al., 2020).

Marketing is a managerial process that enables individuals or organizations to obtain what they desire and require by developing, offering, and exchanging things of value with other parties, or all actions associated with the distribution of goods or services from producers to consumers (Eloranta & Turunen, 2016). This marketing strategy tries to attract new customers by providing higher value, setting appealing prices, distributing items or services simply, promoting successfully, and retaining existing customers while sticking to the customer satisfaction principle (Kumar & Reinartz, 2016).

2. Promotion Product

Typically, promotional activities are a crucial aspect of marketing management. The advertising will inform consumers that the company is launching new items that will influence their purchasing decisions. Promotional activities are activities used by companies to disseminate information to be disseminated and address consumers (Andrews et al., 2016). Promotion is the coordination of all efforts begun by the seller (producer) to establish numerous channels of information and persuasion in order to sell products or promote a concept. In contrast, promotion is a one-way flow of information or persuasion intended to direct a person or organization toward an exchange-generating action in marketing (Maina & Afande, 2015).

In this case, the promotion type is usually one reason consumers buy a product. Sometimes, the things presented and promised in the product are nonsense, but not all products do such promotions. To address things that are not desirable, consumers are very careful in

buying products, especially consumers who will analyze and seek information about the product first as a way to respond to unclear promotions and promotions that can harm consumers. In this case, the sentences used in advertisements are usually persuasive sentences that aim to invite consumers to buy the products offered (Knittel et al., 2016).

3. Buying Decision

Buying decisions are problem-solving activities carried out by individuals in selecting behavioral alternatives that can be chosen and are considered the most appropriate actions in buying by first going through the stages of the decision-making process. In the process before deciding to buy there are several stages in the purchase decision, namely:

a. Problem recognition (Problem Recognition)

In the first stage, before consumers buy a product, they will naturally feel what product they want or need. After consumers recognize or understand what products they need, they will look for the characteristics of these products, starting from the advantages and disadvantages, whether this product follows what is required, and whether this product positively impacts consumers (Ashman et al., 2015).

b. Information search

After consumers find what products are needed, consumers will automatically search for information about these products both actively and passively. In this case, what is meant by an active search for information is by making visits to stores to make comparisons regarding price and product quality. Meanwhile, consumers will get information from newspapers, television, radio, internet, and magazines for passive information seeking. After consumers get all the information about the product they want to buy, they will reconsider the product and are assisted with the information obtained (Rossanty & Putra Nasution, 2018).

c. Alternative evaluation

In this case, after finding the required information about a product, the consumer will evaluate the available alternatives to the product from the information obtained. In essence, evaluation is the beliefs and attitudes influencing consumer buying behavior. There are two stages in the alternative evaluation process: setting purchase objectives and assessing and selecting alternative purchases based on their objectives (Nuttavuthisit & Thøgersen, 2017).

d. Purchase Decision (Purchase Decision)

After the three stages have been carried out, the next step is to decide whether consumers will buy, judging by the type of product, product form, brand, seller, and quality. If the consumer has made a purchase of a product and is satisfied, it is possible that the consumer will make another purchase of the product (Van Weelden et al., 2016).

e. Post-Purchase Behavior

In the last stage, after consumers buy a product, consumers can automatically classify the level of perceived satisfaction. Based on this level of satisfaction, consumers will make another comparison of the product purchased with other similar products. This can be related to product prices, quality, benefits, and compatibility with consumers (Wang et al., 2018).

4. Digital Marketing

Digital Marketing is a modern form of marketing that represents a new hope and breakthrough for the firm and is anticipated to have a good impact on the organization. Digital marketing enables companies to engage directly with potential consumers regardless of time and place constraints. Digital marketing is one of the best strategies to combat and reduce

clutter and engage directly with customers (digital marketing). According to Saifuddin, digital marketing is the use of electronic technology, particularly in the form of information technology, to conduct all business processes, such as purchasing and selling products, services, and information, raising demand, and providing customers with a digital touch (Herhausen et al., 2020).

Thus, it can be stated that digital marketing is one of the promotional activities and market research conducted online using digital media and numerous techniques, including social networks. This is due to the fact that the virtual world may connect not only individuals with technology, but also people with other people from around the world (Redjeki & Affandi, 2021).

C. METHOD

The type of research used in this research is descriptive qualitative research using literature or literature study focused on explaining the research results obtained by the researcher. The method used in this study is a secondary data collection method. The secondary data retrieval of this research is through books on marketing, theses, and scientific journals and websites relevant to this research and have the same dependent and independent variables as the title chosen by the researcher.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Previous Research Regarding the Implementation of Promotional Strategies in the Purchasing Decision Process and Digital Marketing

There are a number of discussions and analyses about the implementation of promotional methods in the purchasing decision process and digital marketing in the existing literature, particularly in scientific journals. Some of them are, first, research conducted by Bagas Aji Pamungkas and Siti Zuhroh with the title of research: The Effect of Promotion on Social Media and Word Of Mouth on Purchase Decisions (Case Study at Bontacos Kedai Jombang). The results of this study are promotions using social media and word of mouth artificially and simultaneously affect purchasing decisions, and promotion strategies using social media are considered to be quite effective marketing strategies for Bontacos Shops and are supported by positive word of mouth that can attract consumers to make purchases at Bontacos shops.

Web Series Marketing Communication Through Digital Traveloka is a research conducted by Eka Prastianto, Farhan Julian, and Dini Safitri. This study discusses the optimization of social media as a digital marketing communication medium for Traveloka as a service application that supports the travel business in Indonesia. The findings of this study indicate that the online market in the digital era possesses numerous advantages. In addition to being able to reach consumers more quickly and promote or introduce products to the public, there is no market limit to reach all corners of the globe that are connected to the internet, and in this era of globalization, accuracy and speed of service are the top priorities for consumers.

Next is the Culinary Business Marketing Strategy Using Influencers Through Instagram Social Media which was researched by Made Resta Handika, Agus Fredy Maradona, and Gede Sri Darma. There are several conclusions drawn by the researchers in the research, namely the researchers formulating the reasons underlying “the transfer of marketing strategy from conventional methods to Instagram marketing strategies”. The first reason for changing this marketing technique is that technical advancements have made consumers more likely to utilize Instagram. The second argument is that social media marketing (Instagram) can lower marketing expenditures. By leveraging influencers, it is easier to improve Instagram marketing and positively effect business growth, which is the third reason.

Research conducted by Afan Nurcahyo regarding the Role of Digital Marketing and Competitive Prices on Indihome Subscription Decisions is a study that analyzes the role of digital marketing on Indihome subscription decisions. This study provides results where digital marketing (digital marketing) significantly affects purchasing decisions. To clarify the reason digital marketing has a significant influence on purchasing decisions, namely the existence of digital marketing, customers can obtain information about prices, promos, advantages, facilities, and requirements from the official Indihome Fiber web page through search sites, Indihome Fiber advertisements on the internet, and other web sites, through social networks such as Facebook, email, via social media WhatsApp or telegram.

2. Product Promotion Through Digital Marketing During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Covid-19 is a pandemic that is attacking all countries in the world and continues to spread, especially Indonesia, at this time (covid-19 the pandemic), all Indonesian people are required to practice social distancing and carry out PSBB without exception, as well as companies. The impact of government policies impact on breaking the chain of covid-19, companies, and the community is very much felt. The company can only program activities from gadgets, and some of its production team have had to be laid off indefinitely because this pandemic is still uncertain when it will end. For the community, this pandemic has a direct impact on income that used to be sufficient to become a shortage due to lack of income, but the need for goods cannot be reduced, and consumers also have difficulty obtaining the goods they need.

In responding to conditions like this, the company must revamp its marketing strategy to answer consumer problems in getting the products they need. The strategy referred to by the company is a promotional strategy through digital marketing. Digital marketing is promoted by utilizing gadgets such as applications and the web to connect consumers and producers (companies). Promotions can be conducted through five channels in digital marketing for businesses, namely:

- a. Website
A website or web is an informational page accessible via the internet from anywhere in the globe as long as the connection is maintained.
- b. Social media
Social media is an online medium via which users can share, engage in, and produce text, photos, video, and online streaming information. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube are the prominent social media platforms employed in this instance. In addition to serving as an intermediary for chatting, video sharing, and meeting friends, this social media can also be used to promote products by uploading them.
- c. Online advertising
Customers are attracted to websites where online advertising is displayed. With this internet media, it is easier for businesses to promote themselves by placing adverts on websites that offer ad space.
- d. Discussion forums
A forum discussion is a collection of integrated and network-connected online forums that contain data, photos, animations, sounds, and videos.
- e. Mobile application
Mobile application is an application created specifically for smartphones and tablets. With the advancement of mobile, it is now possible to acquire all information and conduct all transactions via mobile. With a system that is integrated and updated in real-time, it will be easier to sell digital products using text, graphics, animation, video, and audio. On the other side, this will make it easier for consumers to find the needed products and lessen the company's operational strain.

E. CONCLUSION

During the COVID-19 epidemic, organizations have shifted from conventional to digital marketing efforts. This is a great development. In this instance, not only does it benefit consumers, but it also benefits the corporation. These advantages include realism in marketing, a reduction in the company's operational burden, particularly in the budgeted expenses for the promotion process, and a faster response to all consumer-related matters.

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