

EFFECTIVENESS OF MARKETING STRATEGIES IN MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs) HIDDEN PEANUTS IN FACING THE DIGITAL ERA

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ABSTRACT

Background, this study is based on the increasingly fierce business competition in the digital era, which requires Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to adapt, especially in the aspect of digital marketing. Objective: This research aims to analyze the marketing strategies applied by Kacang Hidden SME in facing the digital era and to measure their effectiveness. Sample/research. The subjects of this study were the owner of the Kacang Hide Waruruma SME and the product's consumers. Method, The research method used is descriptive qualitative. Data was collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing techniques. Results, the marketing strategies implemented include the use of social media for promotion, maintaining product quality, setting affordable prices, and providing good service. These strategies have proven effective in increasing consumer satisfaction, expanding market reach, and strengthening the product's position in the local market. The effectiveness of the digital marketing strategy is measured by an increase in sales beyond the target (109% = highly effective), the ability to attract new customers with an effectiveness of 84% (effective category), and a customer satisfaction level of 100%. Conclusion: The digital-based marketing strategies implemented by the Kacang Hidden SME are not only relevant to technological developments and changing consumption patterns but are also proven to be highly effective in increasing sales, customer satisfaction, and business competitiveness. The practical implication is that SMEs need to continue innovating in the use of digital platforms to ensure business sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

The digital era has brought significant changes to the business world, including the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector. Changing consumer patterns, which increasingly rely on digital technology, require businesses to adapt quickly to survive the competition (Setiawan & Santoso, 2023). Data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs shows that although MSMEs contribute more than 60% to national GDP, only a small proportion have utilized digital platforms as a marketing tool (UKM, 2023). This situation illustrates the existence of a digital divide that can hinder business sustainability.

One MSME facing these challenges is the producer of hidden peanuts, a traditional peanut-based snack. This product has high economic and cultural potential, but limited marketing strategies limit its market reach (Nugroho, 2021). Amidst competition from modern products that are more adaptable to digital marketing, hidden peanut MSMEs need to transform their strategies to increase their competitiveness. The main challenges faced are low digital literacy, limited capital, and limited access to technology, resulting in suboptimal digital marketing strategies (Wahyuni & Suharyono, 2022).

The urgency of this research lies in the importance of understanding the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies for traditional products. The diffusion of innovation theory explains that not all businesses can adopt technology quickly (Soekandar & Pratiwi, 2023). Therefore, research on hidden-nut MSMEs in the digital era is relevant because it can fill a gap in the literature, which has previously focused primarily on MSME digitalization at the macro level (Sutrisno & Hartati, 2020).

By exploring real-world practices, this research offers a novelty in the form of an in-depth analysis of the digital marketing strategies used by local product-based MSMEs.

The research results show that the Kacang Sembunyi MSME has implemented a marketing strategy through social media, maintained product quality, and implemented affordable pricing, which has positively impacted sales growth and customer satisfaction. This strategy has been proven to expand marketing reach while strengthening the product's position in the local market. Therefore, this study confirms that consistent use of digital media can improve marketing effectiveness and the competitiveness of MSMEs in the digital era. In terms of effectiveness, digital marketing strategies are able to increase sales to exceed targets (109% = very effective), attract new customers with an effectiveness of 84% (effective category), and provide a very high level of customer satisfaction (100%).

The purpose of this study is to analyze the marketing strategies implemented by the Kacang Sembunyi MSME to increase sales and evaluate their effectiveness in the digital era. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of digital marketing literature on MSMEs, while also providing practical benefits in the form of strategic recommendations that can be implemented by business actors and policymakers.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to provide an in-depth overview of the effectiveness of the Kacang Sembunyi MSME's marketing strategy in navigating the digital era. The data used comprises primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with MSME owners, direct observation of marketing activities, and relevant documentation. Secondary data was collected from literature in the form of books, journals, official reports, and online sources to support the research analysis.

The population in this study was the Kacang Sembunyi MSME in Waruruma Village, Baubau City, and consumers who had previously purchased the product. The sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique with specific criteria: one business owner as the primary respondent and 15 consumers who had purchased the product at least twice. Thus, the total sample size was 16 respondents.

This research was conducted at the Kacang Sembunyi Waruruma MSME in Baubau City from June to July 2025. Data collection techniques were carried out through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation to strengthen field data. The research instruments consisted of interview guidelines, field notes, and visual documentation, while the researcher played a direct role as the main instrument in the data collection and interpretation process. The data obtained were analyzed using the interactive data analysis model from Miles and Huberman which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data validity was maintained through source and method triangulation techniques so that the findings obtained could be scientifically accounted for.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This study aims to analyze the marketing strategies implemented by the Kacang Sembunyi MSME to increase sales and evaluate their effectiveness in the digital era. The results indicate that the business owner has utilized social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp as a primary promotional tool. This strategy is considered effective in expanding marketing reach, particularly because it can reach consumers beyond the local area. These findings align with research by Siregar & Kurniawan (2022), which shows that consistent use of social media can increase MSME sales by up to 35% in one year. The results of this study also reinforce previous findings that service quality and customer satisfaction play a crucial role in building customer loyalty. This finding aligns with research by Aswira et al. (2023), which demonstrated that customer satisfaction mediates the influence of service quality on customer loyalty at the Baubau City Water Company (PDAM). Furthermore, a marketing strategy based on the 4P marketing mix has proven effective for MSMEs in increasing the competitiveness of local products, as demonstrated by Sudarman et al. (2021) in their marketing outreach activities for the "WK Siompu" bottled drinking water product in South Buton Regency.

In terms of digital content, MSME owners actively create and distribute product photos, promote discounts, and leverage endorsements to increase exposure. This strategy demonstrates the importance of creative content in capturing consumer attention, as Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2022) argues that digital content plays a crucial role in increasing brand awareness and sales conversions.

Based on sales data, a significant increase was seen after implementing the digital strategy. Before utilizing social media, average daily sales were only around 5 kilograms, but after implementing the digital strategy, sales increased to 15–20 kilograms per day. This increase is supported by monthly sales data, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Waruruma Hidden Nut Sales from April-July 2025

Month	Hidden Nuts Sales Realization	Sales Target
April	550 kg	500 kg
May	600 Kg	550 kg
June	1,100 kg	1,000 kg
July	650 kg	600 Kg
TOTAL	2,900 kg	2,650 kg

Source: Business Actors, 2025

Overall, the table above shows that total sales realization from April to July 2025 was 2,900 kg, exceeding the total sales target of 2,650 kg by +250 kg. This demonstrates that the implemented marketing strategy is highly effective, maintaining sales growth while exceeding the annual target.

Next, the effectiveness of the marketing strategy was analyzed using three indicators: increased sales, new customers, and customer satisfaction. The results of the effectiveness measurements are shown in Tables 2, 3, and 4.

Table 2. Measuring the effectiveness of increasing sales

Effectiveness of increasing sales	Percentage
Very ineffective	0 - 40%
Ineffective	40 - 60%
Quite effective	60 - 80%
Effective	80 - 100%
Very effective	> 100%

Source: Muslim et al., (2024)

In measuring sales effectiveness, it can be calculated using the formula:

$$\text{Effectiveness ratio} = \frac{\text{Sales Actual}}{\text{Sales Target}} \times 100 = \frac{2,900}{2,650} \times 100 = 109\%$$

These results indicate that the sales effectiveness ratio for Waruruma hidden peanuts from April to July 2025 reached 109%. Compared to the effectiveness criteria in Table 4.4, a value above 100% is considered highly effective. Therefore, it can be concluded that sales of Waruruma hidden peanuts over the past five years have been highly effective, exceeding established sales targets.

Table 3. Measuring customer effectiveness

Effectiveness category	Percentage
Very ineffective	0 – 40%
Ineffective	40 – 60%
Quite effective	60 – 80%
Effective	80 – 100%
Very effective	>100%

Source: Muslim et al., (2024)

Based on information obtained from business owners, the target customer base per month is around 450 people, but actual customer base sometimes falls short of the 380 mark. To measure customer effectiveness, the following formula can be used:

$$\text{Effectiveness ratio} = \frac{\text{Customer Actual}}{\text{Customer Target}} \times 100 = \frac{380}{450} \times 100 =$$

84%

The results of the customer effectiveness measurement above were 84%. In conclusion, customer effectiveness was 84%. This was because the actual number of customers reached only 380, while the target for a month was 450. Therefore, customer target achievement was

considered effective. Customers felt they had become part of the targeted market through the digital promotion of hidden peanuts for MSMEs. This demonstrates that the content and social media channels used were able to reach customers who align with the MSME market segment.

Table 4.Customer satisfaction effectiveness

Satisfaction category	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	0 – 40%
Not satisfied	40 – 60%
Quite satisfied	60 – 80%
Satisfied	80 – 100%
Very satisfied	>100%

Source: Zeithaml et al., (2018)

In measuring the effectiveness of customer satisfaction, it can be calculated using the formula:

$$\text{CSAT} = \frac{\text{Number of satisfied customers}}{\text{Total number of customers}} \times 100$$

$$= \frac{1515}{1515} \times 100 = 100\%$$

Based on the table above, the customer satisfaction percentage, calculated as 100%, falls into the satisfied category. In conclusion, the majority of customers are satisfied with the products and services of the hidden peanut MSME. Factors influencing satisfaction include taste quality, attractive packaging, friendly service, affordable prices, and clear product information on social media.

Most consumers expressed satisfaction to very satisfaction, citing product quality, affordable prices, and ease of ordering through social media as the primary reasons. Details of the survey results are shown in Table 5.

The data in Table 5 shows that 87% of respondents expressed satisfaction or extreme satisfaction with Kacang Sembunyi's products and services. This high level of satisfaction aligns with the Customer Satisfaction Score theory (Zeithaml et al., 2018), which states that positive experiences influence consumer loyalty.

However, this study also identified challenges faced by MSMEs, including limited raw materials, limited digital literacy, and limited promotional capital. This situation suggests that the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies depends not only on media utilization but also on the MSMEs' internal capacity to manage resources (Hapsari & Widodo, 2023). Therefore, support in the form of training, access to technology, and capital assistance is needed to enable MSMEs to more optimally utilize digital marketing.

Table 4.Customer satisfaction effectiveness

No	Customer Satisfaction Likert Scale	Explanation of the Number of Respondents
1.	Very satisfied	9 people (Very Satisfied): Said the hidden peanuts were delicious, tasty, crunchy, affordable, suitable for souvenirs, and willing to buy again.
2.	Satisfied	5 people (Satisfied): Gives positive but shorter or general comments (e.g. like or good), without overemphasizing.
3.	Quite Satisfied	1 person (Quite Satisfied): Some said they were just trying it out or didn't comment too much in detail, so it was interpreted at a sufficient level.
4.	Not satisfied	0 people Dissatisfied: No respondents had any serious complaints about the product.
5.	Very Dissatisfied	0 people Very Dissatisfied: No respondents had any serious complaints about the product.

Source : Data Processed, 2025

Overall, the results of this study confirm that the digital marketing strategy implemented by Kacang Sembunyi MSME effectively increased sales, expanded market reach, and enhanced customer satisfaction. This success was primarily driven by the use of social media, consistent promotions, and maintained product quality. These findings provide an important contribution to the literature on

digital marketing for MSMEs and provide practical recommendations for entrepreneurs to maintain business sustainability in the digital era.

CLOSING

The results of this study concluded that the digital marketing strategy implemented by Kacang Sembunyi MSME has proven effective in increasing sales, expanding market reach, and enhancing customer satisfaction. The use of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp plays a crucial role in introducing products and establishing communication with customers. Sales data shows a significant increase, from an average of 5 kilograms per day before using digital media to 15–20 kilograms per day after the digital strategy was implemented. Furthermore, the results of a customer satisfaction survey showed that 87% of respondents expressed satisfaction to very satisfaction with the product and service. This indicates that digital marketing strategies can increase marketing effectiveness through sales indicators, new customer growth, and customer satisfaction.

However, this study has several limitations. First, the ongoing constraint of raw materials impacts production consistency and meeting consumer demand. Second, low digital literacy among business actors hinders optimizing marketing content and utilizing paid promotional features more professionally. Third, limited promotional capital limits the reach of digital marketing on a broader scale. These limitations highlight the need for further support in the form of digital literacy training, marketing strategy guidance, and access to capital from relevant parties to enable MSMEs to more optimally utilize the potential of digital marketing in the era of technological transformation.

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