

## Optimization of Online Marketing Strategies in The Middle of The Covid-19 Pandemic in Improving MSME's Sales

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### Abstract

Marketing strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic became a challenge or problem for micro, small and medium enterprises that caused a decline in sales levels, which is our basis for conducting this research. This study aims to increase sales returns by using online marketing strategies amid the Covid-19 pandemic. This study uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. Data collection techniques used in this study were observation, interviews, and documentation. Omahadiahsby utilizes social media for online marketing strategies. The social media platforms used by Omahadiahsby to increase its sales include Instagram, Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok. The results of this study indicate that the online marketing strategy amid the Covid-19 pandemic carried out by Omahadiahsby is considered very effective and efficient, this is evidenced by an increase in the number of sales in June-October 2020, which is Rp. 31,375,000, - compared to the strategy of Marketing that still uses the offline sales method in January-May 2020 is only Rp. 23,250,000,-. Researchers suggest that micro, small and medium enterprises in Omahadiahsby use online marketing strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond to increase the number of sales. Not only that,

**Keywords:** Strategy, Online Marketing, Sales, Covid-19 Pandemic, MSMEs

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## 1. Introduction

The current Covid-19 pandemic, which is almost troubling the community, requires all people to always stay at home, and maintain a distance, so many activities must be done at home, such as school from home, working from home, and so on. This pandemic also has an impact on workers, namely more and more who are laid off or laid off for an indefinite time. On the other hand, due to economic growth in Indonesia during this pandemic, which is experiencing a crisis, many business actors have gone out of business. However, many business actors spin their business ideas to survive during the current pandemic and start opening new Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The businesses that have been established are also diverse, some are engaged in culinary, fashion, beauty, services, medical devices, and so on. In attracting the attention of consumers, the business that was initiated also requires them to follow the trends that exist in today's society.

One of the businesses that have been affected by the pandemic is the Omahadiahsby business, which is a business that we are currently researching. Omahadiahsby is a business that has been operating before the Covid-19 pandemic, to be precise in January 2020. Omahadiahsby is a business that is engaged in the service of making celebratory gifts such as birthdays, proposals, weddings, graduations, and so on. Before Covid-19, this business used an offline sales system including word of mouth, distribution of brochures, exhibitions, and so on. To receive orders they only use the Whatsapp application.

The Covid-19 pandemic has seriously hampered their marketing system. The PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restrictions) makes people stay at home and restrict activities, especially meeting with many people. Many celebrations or events have been postponed due to this pandemic, so the marketing in this business has decreased greatly and the profits have also decreased. Tighter competition and unfavorable conditions make business actors have to optimize their business, including in terms of marketing or marketing. Business actors are required to find and implement new and better marketing strategies to use during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Based on the explanation that has been presented, the authors conducted research on optimizing online marketing strategies amid the Covid-19 pandemic sales to MSMEs. David (2011: 18-19) states that strategy is a means to achieve shared long-term goals. The business strategy includes diversification, geographic expansion, acquisitions, product development, and so on. Strategy in the world of business or business plays an important role in achieving the goals or vision and mission of the business, both short and long goals.

Strategy is a comprehensive plan which explains how the company's process in achieving its vision with the mission that has been made previously, according to Rangkuti (2013: 183). So strategy in business is a means that plays a very important role in achieving short or long goals based on the mission set. In the current situation, Omahadiahsby requires to change its business strategy, especially its marketing strategy. Increasing knowledge of market share or consumers including behavior, loyalty, and consumer profiles, improving services to make it easier for them to enjoy Omahadiahsby services without having to meet in person.

*E-Marketing* is electronic communication technology, especially the internet that plays a role in the marketing process. The development and planning of digital technology in

attracting consumers by fulfilling the role of digital marketing strategies for internet media is an important matter and leads to traditional communication and electronic communication, according to Chadwick, Chaffey, Mayer, and Johnston (2006: 9). Online marketing or called E-marketing is one of the components in e-commerce that is in great demand by business actors, namely the strategy of the manufacturing, distribution, promotion, and pricing of goods and services for market share on the internet or other digital tools, according to Boone and Kurtz (2005). In a book written by Evans (2012) entitled Social Media Marketing, it is stated that social media is a combined process of disseminating, shaping, destroying, and changing information by paying close attention to the truth for the truth of it.

A book entitled Marketing Principles written by Basu Swastha (1980) stated that sales refer to knowledge about the seller having a personal influence in inviting others to buy goods or services provided, in other words, selling is a process of persuading consumers to buy goods or services. provide goods or services to consumers. Moekijat (2011: 488) also argues that selling is an activity to find buyers, provide influence and provide instructions so that buyers can adjust their needs to the products offered and reach an agreement at a price that benefits both parties. With the optimization of the new marketing strategy, Omahadiahsby expects sales volume to return to normal or increase. Sales volume is a sales achievement that occurs in a certain period of a business in the quantitative form in the form of numbers and so on.

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises are business activities that can expand job opportunities and provide various kinds of economic services to the community, which play a role in the process of equity and increase people's income, encourage economic growth and create a stable national economy. MSMEs are regulated in Law no. 20 of 2008, which was ratified on July 4, 2008, in Jakarta. MSME business actors can take advantage of online marketing strategies in determining the market. This is because it can save costs in business such as brochure printing costs, sales salary costs, and so on. And in this way, consumers will feel closer to business actors so that business actors can also conduct consumer assessments such as consumer characteristics and behavior to develop business strategies.

*Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19)* is a disease caused by a type of virus that previously existed and is currently reappearing, namely the Sars-Co V-2 virus, which was affected because the virus was in Wuhan City, China on December 31, 2019. Symptoms caused by the Covid-19 virus 19, namely disorders of the acute respiratory system, fever with a body temperature above 38°C, cough, flu, muscle pain, and diarrhea. The Covid-19 virus can be transmitted directly through physical contact, through splashes of liquid from saliva when sneezing and coughing, so it is advisable to always wear a mask and keep a distance from each other as a form of breaking the chain of spreading the Covid-19 virus.

With very easy transmission, everyone must be aware of this virus, starting from activity restrictions that can delay or eliminate non-urgent events. This makes entrepreneurs very confused and many are out of business because they are faced with a situation like this with minimal business provisions. This virus has also greatly impacted Omahadiahsby's business because the absence of existing events or celebrations means fewer people are preparing gifts for their loved ones. With this, the business actors of Omahadiahsby must rack their brains to carry out the right business strategy, especially in terms of marketing.

Based on the description described above, there is a research review that is considered close and can be a reference for the author.

The following are some studies that are used as references in this study, including research conducted by Kithinji (2014) regarding the performance of using digital marketing for MSMEs, Mokhtar et al. (2016) show that organizational factors and the technological environment that have a significant effect on internet adoption by MSMEs, Eni Widhajati (2017) explain that, trendy packaging, a good level of product quality and marketing are very important in increasing sales, and research conducted by Dwi Ageng Setyawan et al. (2020) stated that, marketing carried out on social media was quite effective on MSMEs. Some of the previous studies that serve as references, we explain further in Table 1:

Table 1. Previous Research

<b>Name</b>	<b>Study</b>	<b>Results</b>
Kithinji, LW (2014)	<i>Internet Marketing and Performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Nairobi Country</i>	The study found that the use of internet marketing provides the possibility for companies to communicate with their products that have a positive impact on their performance. Companies can improve customer relationships by using internet marketing and promoting their products and tracking sales more easily.
Mokhtar NF, Zuha RAH, M Abu SAH (2016)	<i>Applying Technology Organization and Environment (TOE) Model Social Media Marketing Adoption: The Case of Small and Medium Enterprise in Kelantan, Malaysia</i>	This study proves that organizational factors and the technological environment have a significant effect on the adoption of social media marketing by MSMEs.
Eni Widhajati (2017)	Online Marketing Strategy to Increase MSME Sales at PLTU MSME Tulungagung.	This study found several obstacles to MSMEs, such as business actors who have not fully used online sales, the products offered have not met the standards, and the product quality not being good which makes MSMEs less able to face competition.
Dwi AS, Nurul IS, Iza AK, Diana ES, Izza S, Nanik K (2020)	Optimization of Social Media on Marketing in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises	This research proves that promotions carried out through social media are quite effective. This is supported by the renewal of product displays such as logos, business cards, brochures, and so on.

Based on the sources of research previously conducted and described above, this study refers to the research of Eni Widhajati (2017) and Dwi Ageng Setyawan et al. (2020) because it approaches the aim of this study.

## 2. Research Methods

This study uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. Qualitative methods can produce and process descriptive data, such as interviews, documentation, and with the MSME actors. Sugiyono (2009:21) states that the descriptive method is a method used to describe or analyze a result but is not used to make broader conclusions. In this study, data collection techniques used the method of observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation is the activity of observing objects and details to obtain information as research material.

Interviews are conversational activities of two or more people, to obtain detailed information from direct sources. While documentation is a way of collecting data or documents in the form of books, archives, files, numbers, and the like in order to obtain the evidence in research.

The data analysis design in this study is a comparison of the number of offline sales from Whatsapp before the Covid-19 pandemic with the number of online sales to various social media during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The marketing optimization that we use is to use social media as a sales method. The social media we use are Whatsapp, Instagram, Lazada, Shopee, Tiktok, and Tokopedia. The steps we use to analyze the data are research on the number of digital users in Indonesia, research on the number of uses of social media platforms in Indonesia, the number of offline sales and WhatsApp, the number of online sales to various social media, and the comparison of offline sales and WhatsApp with online marketing.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Omahadiahsby is a service company that serves sale gifts needed for various celebrations, such as birthday gifts, wedding gifts, and others. This business is located in Sidoarjo, East Java. Omahadiahsby is a business that was established before the Covid-19 pandemic and is one of the businesses affected by the pandemic, namely experiencing obstacles in attracting customer interest. When starting the business in January 2020, marketing and receiving orders for Omahadiahsby only went offline, namely distributing brochures, making banners, word of mouth, and supported by the Whatsapp application. During the pandemic, Omahadiahsby business actors rotated marketing ideas so that sales turnover rose again.

Marketing that is done conventionally only produces minimal results in sales. This is because conventional methods cannot expand marketing reach. So entrepreneurs must seek broader marketing strategies, such as various social media.

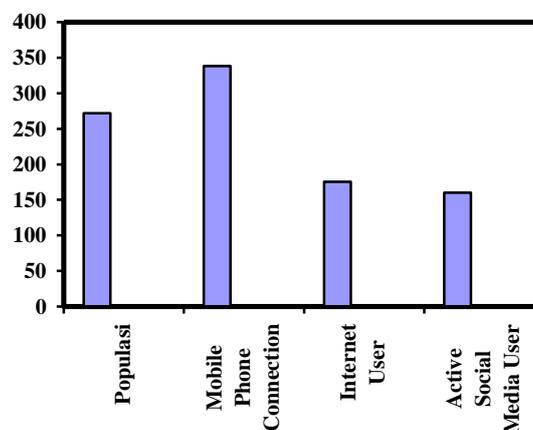


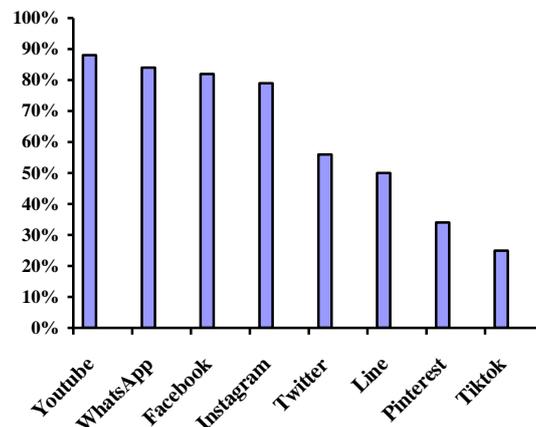
Figure 1. Graph of Number of Digital Users in Indonesia

Source: wearesocial.com

Based on the picture above, the number of social media users in Indonesia at the beginning of 2020 reached 160 M (59%) of the human population in Indonesia, which was 272.1 M with an urbanization percentage of 55%. This is a great opportunity for business actors who want to introduce their products and intensify their marketing strategies during the current pandemic, especially Omahadiahsby. Marketing through social media is more helpful because social media provides a faster and more effective consumer response in marketing products. With a relatively cheaper price and the information that is disseminated

can be quickly accepted by consumers, this is an opportunity for micro, small and medium enterprises.

The implementation of the online marketing strategy carried out by Omahadiahsby is research on platforms that have more and more active users. So that when the marketing strategy is carried out, the results obtained will be good. Figure 2 shows that the several social media platforms readily used by the people of Indonesia.



**Figure 2. Graph of the Number of Indonesian Social Media Platform Users**  
Source: wearesocial.com

In the picture above, there are 8 social media platforms with the most users at the beginning of 2020, namely Youtube (88%), WhatsApp (84%), Facebook (82%), Instagram (79%), Twitter (56%), Line (50%), Pinterest (34%) and Tiktok (25%). With this data, the online marketing strategy for Omahadiahsby business is focused on only 5 social media platforms, namely WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Tiktok.

The first online marketing to focus on is the Instagram platform. The initial step taken is to open a new Instagram account, after successfully registering an Instagram account and then completing the information on the profile bio to make it easier for consumers to make purchases, the bio profile on Instagram also has its charm, namely by providing clear information and words. Attractive words will provide added value to the buyer for this business. The information contained in the bio profile is the name of the Omahadiahsby account, interesting words that will be obtained when placing an order at Omahadiahsby, as well as a link containing the order contact at Omahadiahsby. Filling out feeds by uploading interesting photos and videos is done after completing the information in the bio, photos and videos displaying the products for sale which are taken in detail, neat, luxurious, or ,the current designation, namely displaying images aesthetically and providing captions in uploads. By uploading photos and videos, consumers seem to be able to see and feel how luxurious it is if they have this Omahadiahsby produc, so that taking photos and videos cannot be arbitrary. Writing captions on uploads should also not be arbitrary, by using good copywriting it'il influence consumers to buy the product. Instagram can also make it easier for Omahadiahsby to communicate with consumers and make the relationship between this business and consumers very warm, this can be done by uploading stories on Instagram in the form of interesting topics or materials that cause their response to this account, with a large number of consumer responses, the insight on Instagram is also greater. Because the greater the insight on the Instagram account, the greater the reach that will be obtained. The larger the reach, the more people see the content that has been created on the Omahadiahsby account, so that new followers will increase.

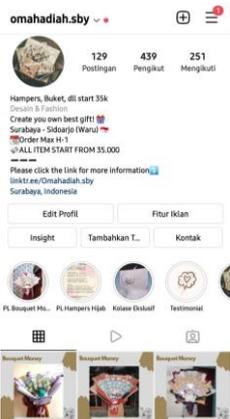
With a process that is almost the same as Instagram, marketing on Facebook and Twitter is also carried out. Creating a new account and completing the information in the bio is also the first step in this platform. Uploading an attractive main photo and cover photo is the second step, the main photo and cover photo in the form of a logo from Omahadiahsby which has been changed in this strategy, this is because the old logo is considered less attractive. Followed by the next step, namely uploading photos and videos. Just like on Instagram, uploaded photos and videos must be attractive with captions that can make consumers feel they have to own the product. Adding friends and always growing your account is step four and so on.

Omahadiahsby orders are accepted on the Whatsapp platform. By providing a link as a liaison for the Omahadiahsby Whatsapp account, it makes it easier for consumers to consult about the products they will order. The Whatsapp system which has to store numbers to see the status between the two parties can provide good value for this strategy. By storing the numbers of both parties, it will create a close relationship with consumers, so that it can make it easier for consumers to re-order Omahadiahsby products. Making enough statuses every day is also able to increase their memory of Omahadiahsby products. This is supported by improving the quality of services provided to consumers. The quality of service provided must also be satisfactory, such as replying to messages quickly,

Considering that there is a lot of marketing done through the Tiktok platform, Omahadiahsby also participates in marketing its products on Tiktok. According to wearesocial.com, Tiktok, which is only used by 25% of Indonesians, has turned out to be a place for marketing many products, this was proven after research was conducted on the sale of products marketed through Tiktok. According to kompasiana.com, the short video format, which is only 60 minutes long, and the production and consumption of content that occurs easily and quickly, make Tiktok not a legit application anymore, this application is starting to be seen as a social media platform that has the business potential The initial step taken for marketing through the Tiktok platform was the creation of a new Omahadiahsby account, followed by filling in important information in the bio and displaying the Omahadiahsby logo on the main photo of the Tiktok account. The content on the Tiktok Omahadiahsby platform contains video footage of decorating and processing orders, ranging from processing snack bouquets, flower bouquets, polaroid bouquets, hamper boxes, photo mosaics, collages, and illustrations. This gives the impression that with low prices they have gotten luxury products, so this is one of the attractions for consumers.

The following is the online marketing to various social media that has been carried out at our Omahadiahsby, detailed in Table 2:

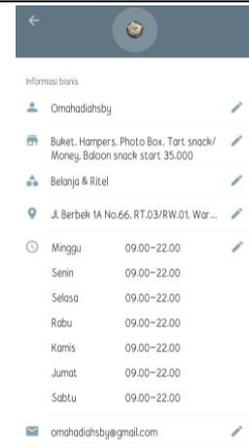
Table 2. Forms of Online Marketing Strategy

Social media	Social Media Account	Social media	Social Media Account
Instagram		Facebook	

Twitter



WhatsApp



Tiktok



Logo Change



Source: Oma Prize Surabaya

In January - May 2020 Omahadiahsby still uses conventional methods in marketing its products. With the limitations that we meet with many people, Omahadiahsby business actors use technology to market their products, online marketing strategies are intensified starting in June 2020. During the Covid-19 pandemic, carrying out online marketing strategies was considered very appropriate and effective, this was evidenced by the increasing number of sales at Omahadiahsby even though amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

We present the increase and comparison of the number of sales at Omahadiahsby in Table 2, Table 3, and Graph 3:

Table 3. Total Sales offline and Whatsapp

Period	Product name	Unit	Price per unit	Amount
January - May 2020	Flower Bouquet	60	IDR 35,000	IDR 2,100,000
	Snack Bouquet	75	IDR 35,000	Rp2,625,000
	Polaroid Bouquet	33	IDR 35,000	Rp1.155.000
	Hampers Box	87	IDR 35,000	IDR 3,045,000
	Photo Mosaic	85	IDR 55,000	IDR 4,675,000
	Photo Collage	65	IDR 55,000	IDR 3,575,000
	Photo Illustration	90	IDR 55,000	Rp.4.950.000
	Decorative Services	45	IDR 25,000	Rp1.125.000
	<b>Total</b>			<b>Rp.23,250,000</b>

Source: data processed by the author

Table 3. Number of online sales to various social media

Period	Product name	Unit	Price per unit	Amount
June- October 2020	Flower Bouquet	105	IDR 35,000	Rp3,675,000
	Snack Bouquet	96	IDR 35,000	Rp.3.360.000
	Polaroid Bouquet	55	IDR 35,000	Rp1,925,000

Hampers Box	115	IDR 35,000	IDR 4,025,000
Photo Mosaic	103	IDR 55,000	IDR 5,665,000
Photo Collage	98	IDR 55,000	IDR 5,390,000
Photo Illustration	107	IDR 55,000	IDR 5,885,000
Decorative Services	58	IDR 25,000	Rp1.450.000
Total			Rp31,375,000

Source: data processed by the author

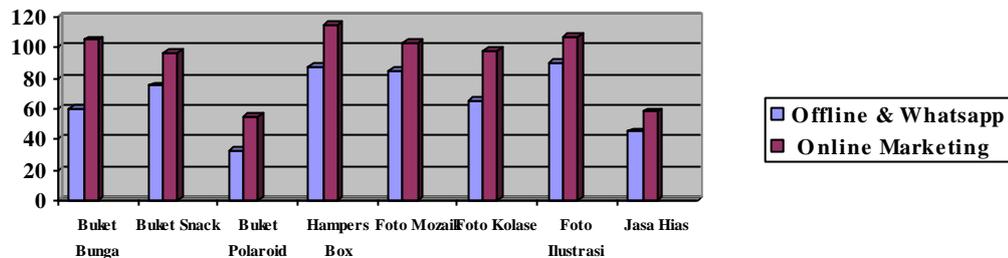


Figure 3. Offline & Whatsapp Sales Comparison Chart with Online Marketing

Source: data processed by the author

Based on the tables and graphs above, it can be seen that there was an increase in sales from social media using online marketing. Before doing online marketing the amount of income generated from sales in January-May 2020 was Rp. 23,250,000, - while when doing online marketing the amount of income from sales in June-October 2020 was Rp. 31,375,000. This indicates that there will be an increase in the number of sales in June-October 2020 or when using online marketing strategies. Of course, the online marketing strategy is considered to have been optimized. Kotler and Armstrong (2012:76) state that promotion is an activity designed to convey the benefits of the product offered to consumers as the target of the product to buy it.

Given that consumers will seek broader information before deciding to buy a product and compare a product with other products, as stated by Tjiptono (2012) that, a process where consumers know the problem and seek information about each particular product or brand and evaluate each problem and then lead to a purchase decision. Where consumers will find information about Omahadiahsby products and will compare the ingredients, prices, and quality of these products with other products through testimonials given by other consumers. With this, it is necessary to develop a marketing strategy to improve consumer purchasing decisions which will have an impact on the number of sales.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the discussion above, it can be concluded that the new marketing strategy at Omahadiahsby, namely online marketing is effective and efficient, this is evidenced by the significant increase in the number of sales, which is Rp. 31,375,000, - compared to the number of sales using offline marketing. who only get Rp. 23,250,000, -.

Micro, small and medium enterprises can increase creativity and always carry out marketing innovations by updating packaging and expanding marketing to increase the number of sales so that consumers always come to buy the products offered by the micro, small and medium enterprises of Omahadiahsby.

### Limitations and recommendations for further research

This research should be continued to obtain evidence that not only the 5 social media Instagram, Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, and Tiktok can be a place for online marketing strategies, but this research must end until the calculation of the increase in the number of sales using social media Instagram, Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, and Tiktok. This is because there are problems with information related to existing data in the company and online marketing methods at Omahadiahsby which only use these 5 platforms.

The researcher hopes that there will be further research on online marketing strategies that use other social media platforms with research methods that are the same or different from the methods that the researchers use, to obtain evidence that online marketing carried out in the current era is very effective and efficient, so that the number of sales in the current era is very effective and efficient. MSMEs are increasing and online marketing strategies have been optimized.

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