

DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL MARKETING TECHNOLOGY TO INCREASE SALES IN THE MSMEs OF THE NEERA PALM SUGAR PALM OIL BUSINESS IN PERBAUNGAN DISTRICT MELATI II VILLAGE



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Abstract

The marketing of MSMEs products, neera palm sugar, and palm oil in the Perbaungan District is considered to be inefficient. The reason is that the MSMEs owners of neera palm sugar, and palm oil in Perbaungan District do not yet have optimal capabilities in managing digital marketing technology as a tool to market their products. This research aims to know the knowledge of MSMEs business actors neera palm sugar palm oil, regarding sales based on digital marketing to increase sales of neera palm sugar palm oil. The research method used is a qualitative research method using a qualitative descriptive survey method. The data source used is the results of direct interviews with respondents as well as some relevant literature used as a secondary data source. The results of the study show an efficient way for MSME players to know the urgency of using digital marketing technology as a marketing tool through direct socialization and practice in using the marketplace.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, MSMEs, Neera Palm Sugar Palm Oil, Sales

INTRODUCTION

The development of this globalization era has changed several views, such as according to Siregar (2019) “Digitalization is a process of changing the nature of what was originally in a physical and analog form to a virtual and digital form”. This condition can have an impact on various sectors so it has both positive and negative sides from the existence of technological developments. One sector that has experienced an impact from this technological development activity is MSMEs. The existence of technology provides many conveniences for humans in carrying out various activities and other important businesses. This development system can bring changes in the civilization system so that it has a positive impact on the sustainability of the system being run. Over time, the digital era also has a positive impact if it can be managed properly (Ningrum Desy, 2021). The emergence of challenges and obstacles in certain fields such as socio-culture, security, defense to information technology and politics will certainly have a strong correlation with the existing marketing system. Developments in technology systems besides having an impact on the economic sector will also have a direct impact on the education system as well as the transportation system.

Technological sophistication has become a close part of people’s lives so that its existence can be said to be a basic human need today. People’s daily life depends on technological needs which will give a little impression or message that can be related to people’s needs. This condition is a sign that technology has a major influence in the digital world. Both will have an important impact which in the economic sphere will provide benefits for business managers as well as in efforts to market their products. Currently, marketing efforts for a product are very effective only by utilizing technological sophistication (Pradiani, 2017).

The nature of sales as a form of activity as well as a method to influence individually so that in the end there is a delivery or purchase of the services or goods being offered. The agreement between the two actors, namely the seller and the buyer, can be determined by price or other systems, both in cash and online payments (Musliha & Adinugraha, 2022). The sales system that is carried out also deals directly with consumers and conversations that come directly from purchases. This is to make it possible if the transaction system is carried out in order to continue purchases that are relevant to the

needs of companies or MSMEs. The payment system used also does not rule out the existence of payment terms as well as price negotiations. So, from that it can be seen that MSME actors still use conventional marketing, supposedly in the era of digital technology MSMEs actors utilize online marketing to increase sales of palm sugar, palm sugar, palm sugar business.

Updates to digital-based marketing systems or digital marketing as a phenomenon to make it easier for consumers to find out about a product while providing opportunities for marketing itself to expand traditional marketing functions (Adina Dwijayanti, 2021). Digital marketing can be the main media in developing existing digital systems so that this function does not only have limitations but also opens the knowledge side to MSME users to monitor the stages in expanding market share or consumer networks. The use of digital marketing for most MSMEs will make these MSMEs have added value in their marketing so that it can be said that using digital marketing will certainly make this marketing system more relevant to today and can increase the competitiveness of MSMEs which is more positive.

The advantages possessed by digital marketing are indeed more diverse when compared to conventional marketing methods. These differences include a product marketing system that can be further improved to reduce marketing costs. This marketing process also makes it easier for consumers to provide or monitor a variety of consumer needs by hearing suggestions or criticisms from consumers only with social media. Meanwhile, the other side that benefits consumers in using digital marketing media is that consumers can find information in advance about the product to be purchased so that time efficiency can be fulfilled (Dedi, & Shandy, 2018)

The definition of MSMEs or Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises is a form of business that primarily has a role in maintaining the economic defense of a country. The existence of MSMEs has been positively assessed by the state or government because the existence of MSMEs can subvert many businesses that have gone bankrupt with various cases that have caused this to happen. In addition, several small and medium-scale businesses also have the ability to carry out export activities and can generate profits for the companies themselves as well as the country (Niode, 2009). However, the management of MSMEs can hamper the managerial system due to the incompetence of managers in

minimizing the risk of losses in marketing operations. The skill system that is implemented must also be in accordance with the conditions that occur. If the MSME uses digital marketing as a promotional tool, it must be optimized so that it can be used on an ongoing basis (Suci, 2017). Calculations regarding the amount of digital marketing seen from the perspective of prospective customers are considered to have the potential to increase the amount of profit earned. This marketing activity really helps expand market share because digitalization along with the industrial revolution era requires efficient time so that sales increase.

Neera palm sugar palm oil itself is one of the needs that is much needed by the community. The demand for sugar continues to increase from year to year which cannot be optimized through the level of sugar production on a national scale (Utami, 2008). The calculation of sugar production continues to increase by taking into account the availability or capacity of raw materials. Sugar can be one of the products marketed through online media. This is because sugar has a long shelf life and is not easily brittle when sent or distributed via expeditions.

Melati II Village is a village located in Perbaungan District with the majority of its population has a business in the palm sugar processing neera palm sugar palm oil. Many of the people of Melati II village started their businesses in 2010 where neera palm sugar palm oil processing at that time still used conventional methods and was easy to run. The raw material for this production is palm sap water which goes through a tapping and scraping process so that the process can produce sugar (Afrianti et al., 2018). The existence of oil palm in the Perbaungan District area has indeed gone through quite a long stage with the replanting of oil palm plants in Serdang Bedagai Regency. The amount of oil palm in the Perbaungan District area is carried out at the replanting stage with a magnitude of 5% of the total 100% of the oil palm plantation area. However, from the replanting system which comes from non-replanting trees as well.

Table 1
MSME Data from the Melati II Village Office, Perbaungan District

Name of MSME Actor	Business Address	Year of Business Establishment	Sales system
Mr Bahri	Coconut Village	2013	Still Conventional
Mr Sunardi	Langsat hamlet	2011	Still Conventional
Mr Rebin	Pala hamlet	2015	Still Conventional

When viewed from the marketing process in sales carried out by MSME players in Melati II Village, Perbaungan District to three residents, namely Mr. Bahri, Mr. Sunari and Mr. Rebi, it can be seen that they are still using conventional methods. Based on the increase in digital marketing which has great potential in increasing income capacity and meeting the level of competitiveness of other competitors, this can be controlled very well. When viewed from the survey that has been conducted, information is obtained that neera palm sugar palm oil SMEs have minimal use of digital marketing so that sales cannot be said to be optimal. This phenomenon is due to the lack of public knowledge, especially SMEs in digital marketing operations (Saraswati & Hastasari, 2020).

Based on an interview between MSME actors and Mr. Bahri from a resident of Melati II Village, Kelapa Hamlet, that he founded his neera palm sugar palm oil business around 2013 and is still using conventional marketing for its sales system. And from interviews with MSME actors, Mr. Sunardi and Mr. Rebin from residents of Melati II Village, Langsat and Pala Hamlet, also have not used a sales system using digital technology. Because he doesn't know or doesn't understand digital technology sales, he still uses conventional sales.

Alternative processes that are carried out in overcoming problems or problems in the development of digital marketing technology can be increased in sales by utilizing a well-structured concept so that other solutions emerge which have synergy with long-term goals in the process of increasing sales from the production of neera palm sugar palm oil. It is necessary for MSME players to learn about the development of digital technology to market their sales. This activity provides many advantages for MSMEs in the era of globalization so that the sales system saves on promotion costs as well as labor (Nabila et al., 2021)

This research is intended to find out knowledge about MSME business actors neera palm sugar palm oil, on sales based on digital marketing to increase sales of neera palm sugar palm oil. Because of this, it is necessary to provide an explanation or outreach about knowledge of digital technology developments in marketing sales to MSMEs in Perbaungan. Because there are MSME actors located in Perbaungan Melati II who do not understand about marketing their sales through digital marketing technology. In addition, the businesses run by MSME actors are not keeping up with technological developments in

the digitalization era, this study aims to describe the development of digital marketing technology in marketing palm sugar palm sap products to increase sales of neera palm sugar palm oil SMEs in Perbaungan.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Digital Marketing Technology

Technological developments accompanied by innovations and creations that are carried out can affect changes in the system that is carried out. According to Hosein (2009: 53), the use of information system technology tools is defined that the greater the use of receiving a new system/technology, the greater a person's desire to use his time in using the new system (Siti aisyah, 2023). Previously, the conventional system that was run was considered more difficult to develop because the pattern that was run was still manual. However, at present, several technological tools that are implemented as well as the instruments are making straightforward changes with the existence of a modern system so that some customs or habits that have been around for a long time can be changed to become more modern. All of the technological components can turn the intensity of the human perspective or perspective into a more comprehensive and broader one. The cause of this reason is because modern society has proximity in functional terms to telecommunication networks or the internet (Chaffey, D., Mayer R., Ellis-Chadwick, F. and Johnston, 2006). The activity of utilizing digital marketing is prioritized through a social media element so that the processes and steps that are carried out can add to the network of customers or consumers to market a product. This system can be a bridge for an MSMEs to increase competitiveness against competitors or other MSMEs.

The presence of digital technology, especially digital marketing, has made changes to humans in carrying out daily activities such as acting, communicating as well as making decisions. Marketing activities carried out are also always related to digital technology. This naming can be used for everything related to a digital basis in a marketing system which has undergone a change from conventional to digital. This system is used to meet the needs of the community in their daily actions. The existence of digital channels which have a wider portion of daily benefits (Fawaid, 2017).

The existence of developments in information as well as technology that makes demands on the public to take advantage of the existence of the internet so that it is considered easier to be accessed and influenced by the internet. This development system that is run can be influenced by various activities which can be related to transactions and money circulation. The world as a field to expand communication that can provide many demands for society as an effort to continue to establish connections and approaches to the internet. The sophistication of technological tools also directly affects the trade sector which can be in the form of money circulation phenomena to trading systems and transactions. If before, Transaction activities are carried out using the conventional method through direct hand-to-hand challenges or face-to-face, but currently technological developments have made this method another choice with long distances. The presence of these technological developments indirectly also affects the existence of an IT system which adds a competitive attitude among other sales systems. The existence of a digital technology marketing system adds to the desire of an MSMEs to increase innovation and creation.

Small and Medium Enterprises of Neera Palm Sugar Palm Oil Business

Plant commodities in Indonesia are very diverse, one of which is plantation commodities which have a very important role in the economy in Indonesia. one of them is palm oil (*Elaeis Guineensis* Jacq) which has become the prima donna of the world export market and contributes to foreign exchange from the non-oil and gas sphere. The oil palm rejuvenation process itself is carried out to provide maximum results in the processing of the oil palm fruit itself, but pre-rejuvenation, the oil palm can be taken for the raw material for making sugar. The existence of brown sugar is very helpful for people who have difficulty getting white sugar so they get alternative products in the form of brown sugar on the market.

The North Sumatra region is one of the areas that has great potential in the plantation sector, one of its superior products is palm sugar, the sap of palm oil. Melati II Village in Perbaungan District is the center of production for the palm sugar, palm sugar, and palm sugar MSME industry managed by the community. The lengthy processing process from sap water to palm sugar sap of palm oil bears sweet fruit when the resulting product is acceptable to all consumers. Business actors experience regeneration in

managing this business and at the same time have the need to move places in search of sap water. The process of taking oil palm trees to be tapped is around 50 to 100 trees with an estimated volume of sap water reaching 5 liters to 7 liters per tree.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used is a qualitative research method. The nature of this qualitative research is observation in which the role of a researcher provides a detailed and clear explanation of the technology development system in digital marketing in accordance with case studies that are oriented or reflected back through journals or other relevant and supportive references. Meanwhile, the primary data sources processed in this study came from the results of respondents' answers, namely the MSME actors of neera palm sugar palm oil in Melati II Village, Perbaungan District.

This research process is carried out directly or online or in a network by collaborating and communicating with experts and is intended to obtain primary data as well as secondary data from 2017 to 2023 in Melati II Village, Perbaungan District. The time of the research itself is carried out continuously and in stages so that maximum research results can be obtained by paying attention to planning as well as research so that the research results can be explained and concluded. The interview activity which was in the form of a research part was carried out from February 2023 until completion.

The research uses a qualitative descriptive survey method in which data acquisition is later through interviews to observation and documentation. The processed data was obtained from an interview system that was carried out until data reduction and data presentation ended with a conclusion. This study has 5 types of informants, namely: a. The community around Melati II Village named Mr. Andy syahputra, b. Secretary to the Melati II Village Office, c. Business Actor Mr. Bahri, d. Business Actor Mr. Sunardi, e. Business Actor Mr. Rebin. As for the process of data analysis carried out with reference to the processing of the results of the respondents' answers also pay attention to the results of observations carried out on an ongoing basis and do not rule out other answers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Technological development that has not been optimally carried out by MSME entrepreneurs of neera palm sugar palm oil in Perbaungan District does require great attention in practice. Some of the factors that have caused the slowdown in technological development in palm sugar palm sugar SMEs have been mentioned, namely the lack of understanding possessed by MSME owners in managing digital technology as a medium for marketing their products. This is a major problem that requires a solution as a positive form of developing MSME businesses in neera palm sugar palm oil in order to get a wider market and sales are considered to be more efficient.

Socialization

Socialization activities in this context are said to be activities that are useful for providing important information to MSME actors in using digital technology as a marketing tool. This socialization aims to provide a lot of insight regarding the urgency of using digital technology in the era of globalization so that sales of neera palm sugar palm oil in Perbaungan District can increase. This socialization itself is carried out by a team that has competence in the field of digital marketing so that the communication carried out by the two parties can be communicative and obtain positive results. Several figures who have great opportunities to provide knowledge and insight in the field of digital marketing are students, MSME activists as well as the government. This socialization activity discussed the urgency of digital technology as a marketing tool at this time, then mentioned a number of applications that could be used to reach the market easily such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook to e-commerce that people are familiar with such as Shopee to TikTokshop and Tokopedia. After that, it is necessary to provide information about the stages carried out and the practice carried out when the training is in progress. The hope of this activity is to provide understanding to all MSME actors who still use conventional marketing media and word of mouth so that they are more active in studying other types of marketing that are more relevant to the times. Instagram, Facebook to e-commerce that are familiar to the public, such as Shopee to TikTokshop and Tokopedia. After that, it is necessary to provide information about the stages carried out and the practice carried out when the training is in progress. The hope of this activity is to provide understanding to all MSME actors who still use conventional marketing media and word of mouth so that they are more active in

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Direct Digital Technology Utilization Training

After carrying out socialization activities, extension or outreach figures have a direct obligation to practice regarding the management of digital technology as a marketing tool. This training activity is carried out intensively and directly using telecommunication devices such as cellphones. This is to make it easier for MSME actors to get experience managing selected applications directly. Later, if you encounter any problems during the training, you can immediately ask the instructor. In addition, extension agents are also required to communicate providing information regarding solutions to some of the obstacles that may be encountered in using social media or these applications.

The efficiency of each application or social media as a tool for promoting products is considered the same, but the obstacles that may be experienced will vary from each application (LY Siregar & Nasution, 2020). The phenomenon that is very easy to find today is the large number of consumer behavior which has begun to shift to using digital technology as a tool for obtaining information and selling. Community actors SMEs palm sugar palm sap in Perbaungan District should have kept up with the times so that it can provide benefits to expand market share so that sales also increase. The rise of online shopping is a process where consumers directly buy goods or services from sellers in real-time, without direct service intermediaries with sellers (Puspita, 2016).

One form of implementing social media in carrying out marketing activities is utilizing marketplace features which can be directly related to potential customers. Visible competitiveness can also be used to offer customers a product and can provide overall feedback. Linkage with the existence of a modern marketing system will help MSME owners in developing market share so that visitors or customers can find out about the company or MSME (Pradiani, 2017).

Of the three respondents who have given their admission that the current marketing system is still conventional. This condition impedes the expansion of market share because only a limited number of regions know about this business. This situation makes business owners do not have the opportunity to expand the market. The use of digital marketing has an impact on almost the majority of MSMEs (Imsar et al., 2023). Most digital marketing aims to achieve several goals, including increasing market share and increasing sales revenue. During a pandemic which limited the mobilization of consumers and sellers did not cut off the possibility of sales continuing. This is because the use of social media applications helps increase sales (Mhd. Chairul Abdi, Andri Soemitra, 2022). Like Social Media platforms, there is a significant impact on small business performance. Several authors identify, and measure social media returns in terms of sales performance or social marketing ability contribution (Gumilang, 2019). According to MSME owners, they feel the benefits of using digital marketing in marketing their products. Associated with increased sales. From the results of interviews with MSME owners, it was stated that sales using conventional methods were still experiencing obstacles. Following are the results of the interview with Mr. Bahri:

“So far marketing activities are still carried out using conventional methods with people who have already subscribed. In addition, buyers often come because they get information from other customers who are suitable for ordering palm sugar, palm sap from me. So indeed, the distribution of this product is very limited so that the income earned is stagnant at that and that’s it”.

The social media impact obtained is more related to the SME sales and marketing process, such as the relationship between companies and customers, companies and stakeholders, companies and business partners, and relationships between companies and business partners. Nothing in the article explains that the use of social media has an effect on increasing MSME sales. Apart from increasing sales, digital marketing also has other impacts, such as repurchasing their goods by consumers. Socialization activities can make it easier for MSME actors to carry out sales activities properly (Lubis et al., 2023).

The potential possessed by social media is very helpful for all MSME actors when they are going to market a product. The existence of social media in the form of this application can provide assistance from instant messaging to presenting social networking

sites that offer offers on how to interact to connect and establish communication with other individuals. The purpose of this application is to circulate and initiate information in online form regarding various user experiences as well as potential users as an effort to consume brands and products. Apart from that, social media mainly functions to involve the community in playing a role in increasing marketing activities. The business concept that discusses people engagement really guides the creation of profits so it is necessary to implement social media within the scope of MSMEs. One of the MSMEs that has a great opportunity to take advantage of the existence of social media is the MSMEs of neera palm sugar, palm oil, Perbaungan District. Integration of the use of social media in the marketing of palm sugar palm sap palm sugar will later be seen from the following phenomena:

The usual decline in marketing is of a high magnitude.

This phenomenon will be seen if you minimize the cost of printing brochures to print several flyers in order to get consumers with a wider market share. Marketing which is currently used with conventional methods only reaches the closest environment so it is felt to be lacking in increasing competitiveness with other MSMEs. This condition can be predicted by one of the MSME actors in palm sugar, palm sap in Perbaungan District, as the result of an interview with Mr. Rebin as follows:

“I also think that updating the marketing system by using brochures that are affixed to walls or poles in public places will the funds come from, so if someone innovates to provide information about marketing patterns using social media, this is perfect for reducing marketing costs but still realizing the desire to promotion with a wider environment”.

Creating a continuous marketing distribution pattern

The marketing system is meant by not breaking the relationship or communication network that has been built through the conventional to continue with the digital system. Marketing that was previously carried out using conventional methods such as word of mouth cannot be stopped but this is a medium for disseminating information to customers that the marketing system being carried out is also coupled with online features. This can attract consumers to order online only so that the time and effort spent is minimal.

Socialization activities carried out as a form of continuing the existence of social media as a promotional tool must also be well optimized by the MSME actors themselves. Efforts to increase the competitiveness of MSMEs can be a way to improve the welfare of the population evenly because the existence of a unique digital marketing strategy will increase the work done for the community at large. This network expansion is to add advantages that can be carried out by all MSME actors. Many MSMEs feel that if communication is carried out by two parties, namely suppliers and customers, it can bring about effectiveness as well as efficiency to meet good and optimal marketing standards (Naimah et al., 2020).

The transaction process has also become easier and cheaper because you only have credit or quota to be able to communicate. Respondent or MSME business actor neera palm sugar palm oil of Perbaungan District, Mr. Rebin, has a great desire to use digital tools as a form of digital marketing, as shown by the following interview results:

“Even though I am currently constrained by my ability to play a mobile phone, there is great hope for me to be able to operate a mobile phone as a marketing tool for the production of palm sugar, palm sap. For the problems experienced, maybe just the signal strength. But let me join the training if there is one”.

The constraints mentioned by the respondent are related to the availability of an internet network but do not rule out the possibility of alternative solutions in this case by using a wifi network which can later be used simultaneously so that MSME players can easily operate social media as a form of digital development. Implementation of a digital marketing strategy can provide an attractive promo so as to increase sales and be able to meet the market and compete with competitors. Marketing activities carried out can play an important role in reaching a wider market so that increased competitiveness can be seen clearly and clearly. Mr. Sunardi also knows the advantages of using e-commerce as the following interview results:

“I often see people shopping online, they say there are lots of discounts and bonuses, so I'm interested, for example, my product can enter an online store and be seen by many people, and then it's considered cheap, it actually adds to my income”.

This statement is in line with cashback and discounts which have an important role in increasing consumer interest in shopping. The benefits that can be obtained from the communication system as well as efficient promotion costs can be considered for using this marketing system. The interviews conducted with Mr. Sunardi as MSME actors in palm sugar palm sap can be said to increase the confidence of stakeholders and those in authority in organizing socialization and training, as the results of the following interviews show:

“If you look at the potential to use social media itself, it doesn't exist yet because you can't afford it, but if you are given the knowledge to practice it, you are very willing. Maybe you have to save first, yes, to support training by having an Android cellphone, but yes, it seems comparable to an increase in income while at the same time matching or even outperforming other MSMEs”.

The socialization program that is highly expected by the community can be an important event to change the mindset and methods carried out by MSMEs of palm sugar to sap of palm oil in Perbaungan District. Marketing efficiency carried out with digital media can reduce promotion costs but also raise efficiency in carrying out promotional activities to make it more concise. Digital marketing also raises other phenomena such as approaches to promotional activities so as to facilitate ongoing communication. MSME actors in palm sugar, palm sap, are not yet active in using social media as a tool to improve the promotion process, but their great persistence can be a consideration for activating online marketing for these MSMEs. This condition allows MSME actors of palm sugar palm sap in the Perbaungan District to obtain increased sales. This requires the attention of stakeholders who can provide facilities to the community to find out how far digital technology can prosper the community, especially in the economic sector through the sale of MSME products.

CONCLUSION

MSME actors neera palm sugar palm oil in Perbaungan District has a great desire to be able to increase sales. However, this is not in sync with the facts on the ground that digitalization has not been utilized optimally by these MSME actors. Marketing carried out by MSME actors in neera palm sugar, palm oil, is still limited by the existence of

conventional methods, so it does not provide an opportunity to expand market share on a large scale. This is due to the limited ability of MSME players to understand the operation of the marketplace or social media as a marketing tool. Therefore, there is a need for socialization as well as direct practice regarding the operation of social media and marketplaces as a marketing tool. This is to make it easier for MSME actors to get experience managing selected applications directly. The phenomenon that is very easy to find today is the large number of consumer behavior which has begun to shift to using digital technology as a tool for obtaining information and selling. Like Social Media platforms, there is a significant impact on small business performance. One of the MSMEs that has a great opportunity to take advantage of the existence of social media is neera palm sugar palm oil. Efforts to increase the competitiveness of MSMEs can be a way to improve the welfare of the population evenly because the existence of a unique digital marketing strategy will increase the work done for the community at large.

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