

Community of Women Entrepreneurs: The Role of Competitive Advantage in Improving Marketing Performance

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Abstract: The research aims to empirically analyze the influence of digital marketing on marketing performance with product competitive advantage as a mediating variable in the community of women creative industry entrepreneurs in Pedurungan District, Semarang City. The research sample used was 117 people obtained using the census method sampling technique. Data collection was carried out by survey using a questionnaire. The relationship model between variables will be analyzed using path analysis through the SPSS version 26 program. Based on the test results, the results show that digital marketing has a significant and positive effect on marketing performance and competitive advantage as a mediating variable capable of mediating the influence of digital marketing on marketing performance in the community of industrial women entrepreneurs. creative in Pedurungan District, Semarang City.

Keywords: Women's Community, Creative Industry, Digital Marketing, Competitive Advantage, Marketing Performance

Abstrak: Penelitian bertujuan menganalisis secara empiris pengaruh media sosial terhadap kinerja pemasaran dengan keunggulan bersaing produk sebagai variabel mediasi pada komunitas wanita pengusaha industri kreatif di Kecamatan Pedurungan Kota Semarang. Sampel penelitian yang digunakan sebanyak 117 orang yang diperoleh dengan teknik pengambilan sampelnya metode sensus. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan survei menggunakan kuesioner. Model hubungan antar variabel akan dianalisis dengan menggunakan analisis jalur melalui program SPSS versi 26. Berdasarkan hasil pengujian diperoleh hasil bahwa media sosial berpengaruh signifikan dan positif terhadap kinerja pemasaran dan keunggulan bersaing sebagai variabel mediasi mampu memediasi pengaruh media sosial terhadap kinerja pemasaran pada komunitas wanita pengusaha industri kreatif di Kecamatan Pedurungan Kota Semarang.

Kata Kunci: Komunitas Wanita, Industri Kreatif, Medsos, Keunggulan Bersaing, Kinerja Pemasaran

Marketing performance pertains to the outcomes and efficiency of a company's or organization's marketing endeavors. This encompasses any activities directed towards promoting the company's products, services, or brands, along with initiatives to attract customers and boost sales. The assessment of marketing performance involves the use of diverse metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) customized to the company's specific marketing goals and strategies.

In different contexts, numerous factors influence marketing performance, with social media being a notable contributor (Fadhillah et al., 2021). Social media plays a crucial role in product marketing, serving as a platform on the internet where users can present themselves, engage, collaborate, share, communicate with others, and establish virtual social connections (Zahay, 2021). According to a survey-based analysis, the percentages of the most active users on various social media platforms are as follows: YouTube 88%, WhatsApp 83%, Facebook 81%, and Instagram 80%. Data analysis results reveal a positive and significant correlation between social media usage and company performance (Kannan dan Li, 2017).

Examining social media usage in Indonesia, it is evident that social commerce (s-commerce) has substantial potential in supporting trade and creation processes. Nevertheless, despite this potential, the incorporation of social media into commercial activities, particularly in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), remains relatively low. Prior research by Fadhillah et al. (2021), Tafesse & Wien (2018), Chatterjee & Kumar Kar (2020), Priyanto et al. (2020), Herlina et al. (2022), Kartika (2021), Khamaludin et al. (2021), Munir et al. (2021), James et al. (2021), and Daud et al. (2022) asserts that social media impacts marketing performance in diverse contexts. However, contrasting viewpoints are presented by Pandey et al. (2020) and Tairas, D. R. (2020), suggesting that social media does not influence marketing performance.

De Almeida, et al (2016) argue that addressing the conflicting findings in research requires adopting a contingency approach. This approach reveals that the relationship between variables being studied is influenced by other conditional factors, allowing these variables to serve as mediators. In light of inconsistent results from prior studies, it becomes evident that competitive advantage can mediate the impact of social media on marketing performance. Competitive advantage, in this context, refers to conditions or factors that set a company, product, or service apart from competitors, adding value and establishing a stronger market position. These factors encompass innovation, product quality, production efficiency, marketing strategy, competitive pricing, superior customer service, and various other aspects that distinguish an entity in the marketplace. Notably, product innovation is underscored as a significant factor in shaping competitive advantage, as emphasized by Peruta, A., & Shields, A. B. (2018).

The study's objective is to present empirical evidence regarding the influence of social media on marketing performance, with competitive advantage acting as a mediating variable. This investigation focuses on the community of women creative industry entrepreneurs in Pedurungan District, Semarang City.

Marketing performance involves assessing and gauging the outcomes of a company's marketing endeavors. This evaluation can be conducted through various methods and indicators, contingent upon the goals and strategies employed in marketing. Common factors used to measure marketing performance include:

1. Increased Sales: A notable indicator is the growth in the volume of product or service sales, which can be attributed to diverse marketing strategies such as advertising, sales promotions, or online marketing efforts.
2. Increased Brand Awareness: Evaluation can also be based on heightened brand recognition among consumers, fostering greater trust and interest as more individuals become familiar with and remember the brand.
3. Customer Retention: Retaining existing customers is indicative of robust marketing performance. Loyal customers who make repeat purchases underscore the effectiveness of the marketing strategy in maintaining customer loyalty.
4. Market Participation: The company's market position relative to competitors serves as a performance measure. A rise in market share or the acquisition of market share from competitors signifies effective marketing strategies.
5. ROI (Return on Investment): Calculating the return on investment is crucial for evaluating performance. This involves comparing marketing expenses with the revenue generated, offering insights into the efficiency of the marketing activities.
6. Digital Marketing Conversion: For companies engaged in digital marketing, such as online advertising or social media efforts, the conversion of online interactions (e.g., ad clicks leading to purchases) is a significant metric for measurement.
7. Customer Feedback: Assessing customer feedback, including online reviews, surveys, or in-person interactions, provides valuable insights into how customers respond to products or services.
8. Customer Acquisition Costs: Measuring the cost of acquiring new customers aids in assessing the efficiency of marketing strategies. Lower customer acquisition costs generally indicate better marketing performance.

Regular planning, execution, and evaluation of marketing strategies are essential to ensure that marketing performance aligns with objectives and can be adjusted as needed.

Social Media is a powerful tool for effectively promoting products through direct engagement with the audience. Various social media platforms cater to different marketing needs:

1. Facebook: - Boasting the world's largest user base, Facebook is suitable for a wide range of products. - Create a business page, share content, conduct polls, and leverage paid advertising for extended reach.
2. Instagram: - Particularly effective for visually-oriented products like fashion, cosmetics, or food. - Utilize features like Instagram Stories, IGTV, and Instagram Shopping to enhance user engagement.
3. Twitter: - Useful for disseminating concise information and participating in industry conversations. - Increase visibility by using relevant hashtags and retweets.
4. LinkedIn: - More suitable for B2B marketing or professionalism-related products. - Utilize content posting, advertising, and participation in relevant groups.
5. Pinterest: - Ideal for products with strong visual elements, such as interior design or handmade products. - Create appealing boards and direct users to your website.
6. YouTube: - Perfect for products that benefit from video explanations or demonstrations. - Develop tutorial content, product

reviews, or unboxing videos to capture attention. 7. TikTok: - Popular among the younger generation, TikTok offers a short video format for creative and engaging campaigns.

General tips for effective social media product marketing: 1. Know the Target Audience: - Understand the target audience and tailor content to match their interests and needs. 2. Use High-Quality Images and Videos: Visual content garners more attention, so ensure images and videos are of top-notch quality. 3. Create Shareable Content: Develop content that users will want to share, such as funny, informative, or inspirational content, to expand reach. 4. Engage Users: Foster consumer participation with content like quizzes, questions, and sweepstakes. 5. Analyse Performance: Utilize social media analytics to track campaign performance and make adjustments to the strategy as needed. Additionally, combining multiple platforms can enhance the overall effectiveness of a marketing campaign. Regularly update strategies based on evolving trends and changes in consumer behavior on social media.

Competitive advantage encompasses the elements or circumstances that set apart a company, product, or service from rivals, offering additional value and bolstering a more robust market position. This advantage is derived from factors like innovation, product excellence, efficient production, strategic marketing, competitive pricing, superior customer service, and other distinguishing features that make the entity stand out. The benefits of a competitive advantage include rapid business expansion, customer loyalty, a culture of innovation, and enhanced operational efficiency. To attain a competitive advantage, several steps can be taken. Firstly, thorough market research is essential to gain profound insights into the market and competitors. Second, fostering innovation by developing distinctive or superior products or services is crucial. Third, refining operational efficiency by streamlining internal processes to reduce costs and enhance quality is paramount. Fourth, implementing effective marketing strategies is essential to cultivate a robust brand image. Fifth, a focus on understanding and meeting customer needs, ensuring satisfactory service is imperative. Sixth, establishing robust collaborations and partnerships with suppliers, partners, and customers contributes to a competitive edge. Employing one or a combination of these strategies provides a foundation for achieving a competitive advantage in a challenging market environment.

Methods

The study employs three key variables: Social Media (MS), Competitive Advantage (CA), and Marketing Performance (MP). The operational definitions and indicators for Social Media (SM) and Marketing Performance (MP) are adopted from Chatterjee & Kumar Kar (2020), while those for Competitive Advantage (CA) are adopted from the Rakic, M., & Rakic, B. (2015). Social Media (SM) encompasses indicators such as a) promoting products on social media, b) supporting business marketing activities, and c) demonstrating superior use compared to competitors (Chatterjee & Kumar Kar, 2020). The Competitive Advantage (CA) variable includes indicators such as a) the product's

greater value, b) differentiation from others, and c) not easily replaceable. Marketing Performance (MP) is reflected in indicators such as a) sales growth, b) sales volume, and c) customer growth.

The measurement scale utilized employs a two-pole scale generating responses in the form of interval-scale data. The scale ranges from 1 to 5, where a rating of 1 signifies poor performance, and 5 indicates excellent performance. The initial survey results revealed that the questionnaire statement items underwent testing and successfully met the criteria for validity and reliability. This testing phase involved 20 respondents from the community of women creative industry entrepreneurs in Pedurungan District, Semarang City. Following the confirmation of validity and reliability, the survey questionnaire was then distributed to a larger research sample comprising 117 individuals, constituting both the population and the sample.

The validation test indicated that the Pearson correlation coefficient values for all indicators exceeded the standard threshold of 0.30. This suggests that the statement items met the requirement for measurement accuracy. Subsequently, the statement items underwent testing for reliability assumptions. Reliability, in this context, ensures that the statements consistently yield dependable responses when presented repeatedly to the community of women creative industry entrepreneurs in Pedurungan District, Semarang City.

The reliability testing involved assessing the Cronbach's Alpha value, which exceeded 0.6, affirming that the statement items in the questionnaire fulfilled the reliability assumption. Consequently, it was concluded that the statement items met both validity and reliability criteria. The valid and reliable questionnaire was then redistributed to the community of women creative industry entrepreneurs in Pedurungan District, Semarang City, aiming to gather supporting data for hypothesis testing.

To analyze the research models with various indicators and relationship paths, researchers employed the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) analysis tool. This method was deemed suitable for testing research models while considering data distribution assumptions. The analysis encompassed testing the structural model, assessing model accuracy, conducting hypothesis testing, and exploring direct and indirect effects, as outlined by Hair et al. (2020).

Furthermore, the study incorporated the Sobel test to analyze the mediating role of product social value variables, strengthening the relationship between social media marketing and marketing performance.

Results and Discussion

The testing of the outer model is conducted based on the outer loading value and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for three key indicators: Social Media variables

(SM), Competitive Advantage (CA), and Marketing Performance (MP). Here is a summary of the outer loading factors:

- a) Indicators related to promoting products (SM1.1) and supporting MSME businesses (SM1.3) play a significant role in forming the SM formative, with the ability to use social media (SM1.2) also supporting SM latent variables effectively. These three indicators exhibit appropriate variation to constitute SM, with an AVE value of 0.899, signifying that the variation in these indicators can represent 89,9 %.
- b) Customer indicators involving comments and reviews on social media (CA1.1), sharing product information with others (CA1.3), and enhancing attachment relationships with MSMEs (CA1.2) make the highest contribution to forming the reflective indicators of CA. These indicators exhibit the right variation to reflect CA, and the AVE value of CA is 0.823, indicating that the three-dimensional variations can effectively constitute and represent CA.
- c) Indicators related to sales growth (MP1.1), sales volume (MP1.2), and growth in the number of customers (MP1.3) are valid and contribute significantly to KP, as their outer loading factor values exceed 0.7. The AVE value of KP is 0.802, demonstrating that the variation in these three variables adequately represents the MP variable.

This research investigated the practicality of the metrics employed in constructing variables through both formative and reflective methods. Specifically, the social media variable was developed using a formative approach, while indicators for competitive advantage value and marketing performance variables were reflective, encompassing both variables. Assessing variables constructed in formative and reflective manners necessitates the examination of distinct constructs. Criteria such as reliability, convergent validity, lack of correlation, and significant weight must be satisfied when evaluating indicators forming formative variables. Conversely, assessing indicators reflecting variables involves criteria such as reliability, validity, appropriate indicator variance, and the absence of multicollinearity.

The analysis findings indicated that the CA and MP indicators met the standard values for internal reliability and unidimensionality, with CA and D.G. rho values exceeding 0.7. Internal reliability signifies that CA and MP indicators consistently represent their latent variables, while unidimensionality suggests a robust association among indicators, manifesting a significant concept of the latent variable. All Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were below 5, indicating non-correlation among the indicators. Additionally, evaluating reflective indicators of latent variables necessitates fulfilling convergent validity requirements.

The CA and MP indicators exhibit an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value exceeding 0.5, ensuring that all indicators capture more than 50% variance of the latent variables. The three dimensions of CA demonstrate a variance of approximately 93,4 %, signifying the latent variable CA. Similarly, the three MP indicators exhibit a

variance value of 91,3 %, representing the MP variable. Evaluating the indicators that formatively shape SM involves testing for reliability, collinearity, convergent validity, and the significance of weight values.

All SM indicators have outer loading factor values exceeding 0.7, meeting the standard for convergent validity. These formative indicators effectively represent the SM variable. The weight dimension values of the three SM indicators fall within the lower and upper confidence interval values, indicating the significance of all indicators in the formative construction of SM. This study concludes that the three indicators formatively shape MS, having successfully passed tests for reliability, collinearity, convergent validity, and weight significance values. All indicators aptly reflect CA and MP, meeting requirements for reliability, validity, indicator variance, and collinearity testing.

The research model illustrates the relationship between the impact of social media (SM) on marketing performance (MP), mediated by the value of competitive advantage (CA). The Goodness of Fit (GoF) value assesses the overall accuracy of both outer and inner models, with the standard value set at 0.70. With a GoF value of 0.98 from the outer model, this study concludes that the indicators utilized exhibit strong associations and effectively represent the latent variables. Additionally, the GoF value of 0.99 from the inner model indicates a robust relationship between social media marketing, competitive advantage, and marketing performance.

This study demonstrates that the elements promoting products (SM1.1), the capability to utilize social media in comparison to competitors (SM1.2), and the support of business by social media (SM1.3) collectively constitute the social media construct. Each of these three indicators significantly contributes to social media, with factor loading values exceeding the standard threshold of 0.70. The AVE value of MS, measuring 0.819, signifies the precise formation of the social media variable by these indicators.

The three product-related indicators, emphasizing value (CA1.1), distinctiveness (CA1.2), and irreplaceability (CA1.3), hold greater significance than others and are not easily replaceable, highlighting the advantages of distinctiveness. These indicators exhibit a substantial absolute contribution, as their loading factor values surpass the benchmark of 0.80. The AVE value of CA, at 0.93, confirms the accurate formation of the product perception value variable by these three precise indicators.

Indicators related to increased sales growth (MP1.1), surpassing sales volume of competitors (MP1.2), and customer growth collectively represent variables indicative of marketing performance (MP1.3). These three indicators exhibit a substantial contribution to forming marketing performance, with factor loading values exceeding the standard threshold. The AVE value of 0.80 indicates the accurate formation of the marketing performance variable by all three indicators.

The data processing results, employed for hypothesis testing at a significance level of ten percent (alpha of 0.10), affirm that enhanced social media presence corresponds

to improved marketing performance. This study provides evidence supporting the assumption that social media positively influences competitive advantage.

Additionally, a higher level of competitive advantage corresponds to an enhanced level of marketing performance. The Q2 value, exceeding zero, signifies the predictiveness of the relevant Latin variable model path based on the employed constructs. The impact is discernible from the f^2 value, with the most pronounced influence observed in the association between SM and CA variables (0.807), surpassing the influence of SM on CA (0.557) and CA on MP (0.562). The relational equation among latent variables is expressed as follows:

$$MP = 0.557SM + 0.562CA$$

$$CA = 0.804SM$$

This underscores the substantial impact of competitive advantage on marketing performance, revealing noteworthy coefficients in the relationships among the variables SM, CA and MP.

Analysis of the Impact of Social Media on Marketing Performance:

The initial hypothesis regarding the influence of social media on marketing performance was confirmed. This outcome aligns with earlier studies by Chatterjee & Kumar Kar (2020), Priyanto et al. (2020), Herlina et al. (2022), Kartika (2021), Khamaludin et al. (2021), Munir et al. (2021), and James et al. (2021), suggesting that a more effective use of social media positively affects marketing performance within the community of women entrepreneurs in the creative industry in Pedurungan District, Semarang City. These entrepreneurs leverage social media to support marketing initiatives that aim to attract customers and drive product purchases. Social media emerges as an efficient platform for disseminating marketing content that resonates with customers, with the expectation that these activities will stimulate customer purchases.

For women entrepreneurs in the creative industry in Pedurungan Sub-district, Semarang City, social media proves instrumental in promoting products to customers and expanding their reach to potential consumers. The utilization of promotional content and consumer testimonials is a common strategy among these entrepreneurs to foster business growth. Furthermore, the flexibility of conducting business from home, coupled with the assistance of social media and online shopping applications, is highlighted. This discovery reinforces the notion that women entrepreneurs in the creative industry in Semarang City's Pedurungan Sub-district, who adeptly use social media to promote their products, exhibit enhanced marketing performance (Narayanawamy & Heiens, 2022). Notably, good marketing performance, as reflected by increased sales, superior sales volume compared to competitors, and customer growth, is emphasized in this context.

Social media is identified as a significant determinant, accounting for 35% of the variation in marketing performance, assuming changes in the competitive advantage variable. The study underscores that a stronger social media presence correlates with a more robust competitive advantage for products. This aligns with earlier research by Ancillai et al. (2019), Zhang et al. (2017), Matarazzo et al. (2021), indicating that social media fosters an active relationship between the community of women creative industry entrepreneurs in Pedurungan District, Semarang City, and their customers. In this context, the community utilizes social media to share testimonials, enhancing interaction and customer appreciation (Sari, D. M. F. P., & Indriyani, N. K. R. (2022)).

The findings reinforce the idea that social media enables the community of women creative industry entrepreneurs in Pedurungan Sub-district, Semarang City, to establish a competitive advantage by emphasizing the unique and irreplaceable nature of their products. Furthermore, social media transforms marketing activities, making them more interactive and effective, transcending geographical boundaries. The integrated communication system within social media solidifies the bond between the community and customers, thereby enhancing social interaction. The implication is that social media marketing has the potential to elevate competitive advantage by positioning products as more valuable, distinct, and less easily replaceable than others in the market.

Effective social media presence can contribute to a 63% increase in competitive advantage, as revealed by this study. The research demonstrates a positively influential relationship between competitive advantage and marketing performance, aligning with Eleonora (2013) findings that competitive advantage positively impacts sales and profitability. Sudarti & Hidayah (2022) further support this by indicating that competitive advantage enhances marketing performance. The implications of these findings suggest that a competitive advantage, characterized by distinctive product indicators that are valuable, unique, and not easily substituted, supports the enhancement of marketing performance.

The study emphasizes that the competitive advantage of products, derived from indicators of distinctiveness, is fostered through the interaction between customers and the community of women creative industry entrepreneurs in Pedurungan District, Semarang City, particularly on social media platforms. Indicators highlighting a product's irreplaceability attract both existing and new customers, leading to increased sales volume and profits. The active engagement of the community of women creative industry entrepreneurs in Pedurungan Sub-district, Semarang City is further amplified as satisfied customers share information about the high competitive advantage with their friends and social networks. The study concludes that variations in the competitive advantage's value can account for a 36% variation in marketing performance.

The impact of social media on gaining a competitive advantage is more significant than its influence on the relationship between social media and marketing performance, as

well as the link between competitive advantage and marketing performance. This research emphasizes that an improved integration of social media and competitive advantage leads to increased marketing performance among female entrepreneurs in the creative industry in the Pedurungan District of Semarang City.

The study introduces a noteworthy discussion on the mediating role of competitive advantage, which enhances the association between social media and marketing performance. This is supported by the Sobel t-value (8,66), surpassing the critical t-table value (2,97). The findings underscore the role of competitive advantage as a reinforcing mediating factor, strengthening the connection between social media and marketing performance. Marketing performance, measured by metrics such as customer growth, increased sales, and return on capital, benefits from the synergy between social media and competitive advantage (Chatterjee & Kumar Kar, 2020; Hendra & Seminari, 2022).

The research posits that utilizing social media for product marketing enhances engagement and interaction within the community of female entrepreneurs in the creative industry in Pedurungan District. Information sharing, akin to propagation and viral marketing concepts (Aral & Walker, 2011), becomes a valuable tool. When customers share product information obtained through social media, the community benefits, stimulating electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) (Caridà & Colurcio, 2013; Rollins et al., 2014). This word-of-mouth marketing extends as customers pass on promotional content to their networks, creating a viral effect through social media platforms (Yankova & Ozuem, 2017).

The community of female entrepreneurs in Pedurungan District optimizes the use of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook for product promotion, sharing consumer testimonials, providing outlet location information, and distributing purchase vouchers. Social media has evolved into a platform for social commerce (Larson, 2009; Rollins et al., 2014), enabling efficient promotion of products, introduction of new products, and influencing consumers to share and promote products. Overall, the study highlights the transformative role of social media in enhancing the marketing performance of women in the creative industry in Semarang City's Pedurungan District.

Conclusion

Social media plays a crucial role in enhancing competitive advantage, particularly within the community of women creative industry entrepreneurs in Pedurungan District, Semarang City. The positive impact is evident in various aspects. Firstly, by utilizing social media for promotional content and sharing product information, a communicative space is created. This engagement encourages customers to provide favorable reviews of the culinary products generated by the community. This collaboration with customers as partners contributes to the enhancement of independence and a competitive edge.

A strong competitive advantage correlates with improved marketing performance. Establishing a competitive edge through social media positively influences marketing

outcomes. When customers share product information within their social circles, it leads to the viral spread of product value, subsequently boosting sales volume and overall growth. The community of women creative industry entrepreneurs in Pedurungan District, Semarang City, indirectly involves consumers by encouraging them to share promotions with others.

Social media marketing directly contributes to sales performance. By promoting products through social media, the community of women creative industry entrepreneurs in Pedurungan District can reach a wider customer base, resulting in increased volume and profit growth. The positive relationship between social media and competitive advantage significantly impacts marketing performance for these entrepreneurs.

In summary, the interplay of social media and competitive advantage has a favorable effect on marketing performance within the community of women creative industry entrepreneurs in Pedurungan District, Semarang City. Competitive advantage acts as a mediator, enhancing the relationship between social media influence and overall marketing success for this group of entrepreneurs.

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