MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES:
ONLINE RETAIL IN PANDEMIC COVID-19
(Qualitative Descriptive Study on Instagram Account @Mlijo.Online.Mjk)

Eka Widi Triwulanandari dan Syaifuddin Zuhri
Communication Studies Program FISIP UPN “VETERAN” East Java, Surabaya
e-mail: Eka widitriwulanandari@gmail.com, Saifuddin.upn@gmail.com

Abstract
The purpose of this study is to find out how the marketing communication strategy is carried out by @mlijo.online.mjk on Instagram accounts in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method which aims to describe or describe qualitatively the marketing communication strategy carried out by @mlijo.online.mjk on Instagram accounts in the era of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Based on the results of the analysis of the Marketing Communication Strategy on the @mlijo.online.mjk Instagram Account in the Middle of a Pandemic, it can be concluded: From the results of this study indicate that the marketing communication strategy carried out by @mlijo.online.mjk is effective by conducting a SWOT analysis, STP, and the 4P promotion mix (product, price, place, promotion) proved that the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk was able to use marketing communication strategies in the midst of a pandemic.

Keywords: Marketing Communication Strategy, SWOT, STP, and Promotion Mix

1. PENDAHULUAN

The COVID-19 pandemic spread very quickly throughout the world, including in Indonesia in March 2020. This virus is a new type of zoonotic disease, which was first discovered in China, precisely in Wuhan City. COVID-19 is a dangerous virus for public health, causing various changes in the state order, forming a new pattern of life in society.

President Jokowi finally inaugurated Large-Scale Social Restrictions on March 2 to June 2020 due to the increasing spread of COVID-19 in Indonesia by tightening again and implementing the Work From Home system. In the midst of the implementation of the PSBB, a phenomenon emerged, namely economic growth in Indonesia decreased by 2.07%, while annual economic growth was 2.19% (BPS.go.id). In terms of business actors, it decreased by 36.7% (the sales of MSMEs did not exist), 26.6% (the sales of MSMEs fell by 60%), 4.5% (experienced stable sales), 3.6% (experienced increased sales in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic) (KOMPAS, 2020). With Work From Home, the Information and Communication Business Field has increased by 10.39%, the advantage is that cellular provider data can increase for the use of social media, Zoom Meetings to support marketing activities of MSME actors in East Java to boost the economy.

With this, many people decide to look for solutions and even switch professions such as becoming MSME players offline or online, becoming part of an online motorcycle taxi partner to deliver food or goods. This of course limits the community's space for movement and has a huge impact on the world economy in East Java, including the city of Mojokerto which has a poor population of 10.57%.

Considering that Mojokerto City is a trading city, some areas such as Mojokerto, Trowulan, Mojosari, Pacet, and others sometimes shop in Mojokerto City to fulfill needs that they do not get in their respective areas. In line with this, as many as 64,000 MSME players play an important role in the economic recovery of the city of Mojokerto. Indirectly, they are forced to continue to innovate to create new things in order to survive selling their products but still reach consumers in the COVID-19 era. In this case, According to the Mayor of Mojokerto City, Hj. Ika Puspitasari,
sophistication and rapid technological developments can help MSME actors affected by COVID-19 by utilizing digital platforms.

In this case, according to data from the Mojokerto City BPS, the growth in the purchasing power of the people of Mojokerto City has also changed. In early 2018, people's purchasing power increased by 2.6 million, while during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, people's purchasing power decreased, ultimately causing many business actors to experience a decline in income. At the same time, the Mayor of Mojokerto places a high priority on the food needs of his people. Although many business actors have gone bankrupt, there is still one opportunity that can be a hope to boost the economy, namely through Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). MSMEs that grow and develop well are MSMEs that have understood and implemented going digital. In the midst of PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restrictions), a phenomenon emerged, namely the transformation of MSMEs from offline to online, one of which was using social media in the midst of a Pandemic. The influence of online sales had an effect on sales of 62.9% (Sholeh & Huda, 2019). In this Pandemic era, there is a Mojokerto City Government program where MSME players can sell go digital, on several products such as; souvenirs, crafts, drinks, food, and staples, namely mlijo online.

This was experienced by one of the online retail business actors who supported the Mojokerto City Government program, with the account name Instagram@mlijo.online.mjk and the number of followers reached 946 on February 18, 2021. The account is managed personally, namely a young man majoring in Visual Communication Design (DKV). According to this mlijo owner, they use Instagram because social media is visual-based so that it attracts consumers and in terms of Instagram features can support their business in the Pandemic era. According to the mlijo owner, the number of followers is still relatively small because some consumers also communicate through the WhatsApp application.

Their business is relatively new, namely the first posting of their Instagram account took place on April 23, 2020. According to the owner, their Instagram has the advantage of being able to attract consumers by posting creative and informative Instagram feeds, neat and hygienic product packaging, affordable prices, there are many promos and bonuses, free shipping if you shop at the price they set, and can be trusted by the people of Mojokerto City who have bought it many times or have subscribed. This clearly has a positive impact on the economy of the City of Mojokerto itself. Regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the economy, this phenomenon has caused many people in Mojokerto City to open opportunities to take advantage of their gadgets, namely by online marketing activities on Instagram social media as a marketing communication medium in the COVID-19 pandemic era.

With this, the authors are interested in exploring marketing communication strategies and focusing on marketing strategies carried out by online retail store owners in Mojokerto, namely the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk with 946 followers and 54 posts. Then the writer will analyze using SWOT analysis, STP analysis, and promotion mix. This is considered important, because online retail business actors in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic must pay attention to the steps above. The author assumes that this is considered capable of providing a competitive advantage for online retail business actors in the midst of a pandemic. The people of Mojokerto City are also very careful in ordering various basic ingredients in the Pandemic era, namely paying attention to cleanliness, freshness, and packaging of a product.

2. RESEARCH METHODE

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method which aims to describe or describe qualitatively the marketing communication strategy carried out by @mlijo.online.mjk on Instagram accounts in the era of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The research location is the place where the research is conducted. In this case, the research location is where the author captures the actual state of the object under study to
obtain the necessary data or information. Based on the statement submitted in the previous chapter, the location in this study was determined to be on Jalan Empunala No. 370, Mojokerto City, East Java.

**Conceptual Definition**

**Promotional Mix**

Morissan (2010:16), promotion is the coordination of all efforts initiated by the seller to build various channels of information and persuasion to sell goods and services or introduce an idea. goods and services and introduce an idea. According to the mliwo owner, they have implemented a marketing mix in the Pandemic era, as follows:

1. **Product**
2. **Price**
3. **Place**
4. **Promotion**

**SWOT Analysis**

SWOT analysis can identify opportunities and can minimize threats that occur in @mliwo.online.mjk marketing. According to the mliwo owner, a SWOT analysis is very necessary, because marketing activities in the Pandemic era are carried out in a detailed and structured manner. The following are the steps used by the mliwo owner in analyzing using SWOT, as follows:

1. **Strength**
2. **Weakness**
3. **Opportunities**
4. **Threat**

**STP Analysis**

STP analysis is an effective method used after SWOT analysis in @mliwo.online.mjk marketing activities to form a communication strategy for their online retail store. Some of the STP methods applied by @mliwo.online.mjk, consisting of Segmenting, Targeting, and Positioning on their Instagram social media, are:

1. **Segmenting**
2. **Targeting**
3. **Positioning**

**Data analysis technique**

Data analysis is a series of stages in a research that is produced by researchers through a data analysis process and determined procedures so that their validity can be accounted for. In this case, it can be obtained from observations, interviews, field notes, and literature studies, by arranging them into various patterns, choosing which ones are important and which ones will be studied, and drawing conclusions so that they are easily understood by oneself or others. (Herdiansyah, 2010:158)

**3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

1. **SWOT Analysis (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat)**

Based on the observations of the researchers, the researchers found that in formulating a marketing communication strategy, the Instagram account @mliwo.online.mjk can find out how the current market situation is using SWOT analysis which aims to identify opportunities and can minimize threats that occur in @mliwo.online marketing. mjk in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic.
The Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk has paid attention to the environment in the Pandemic era both internally and externally. The following is the distribution of SWOT based on the results of interviews on the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk according to the theory of Rangkuti (2008) in (Sulistiani, 2014:6), among others:

a. **Strength:**
   1. Based on the observations of researchers, the strength of @mlijo.online.mjk can be seen from the product quality which is hygienic, clean, no dirt on the product, fresh, and grade B quality (no caterpillars, no blisters, and others).
   2. Product innovation by providing standard supermarket product packaging.
   3. Product variants in the form of various basic ingredients such as vegetables, fish, meat, fruit, spices, and kitchen spices.
   4. Competitive product prices, namely @mlijo.online.mjk products directly from the first hand, namely farmers.
   5. Strategic location, namely in Tanjung Market and currently switching to using social media in the era of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

b. **Weaknesses:**
   1. Lack of use of social media as a means of promotion, namely only using Instagram social media as a marketing tool.
   2. Lack of fulfillment of market needs related to mlijo product specifications.
   3. Lack of Human Resources (HR).
   4. Still using the pre-order system a maximum of 12 hours before the delivery of mlijo products, meaning that it cannot meet consumer needs at all times.

c. **Opportunities:**
   1. Since the current condition is the COVID-19 Pandemic, the existence of mlijo can be switched by using Instagram social media in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic as a marketing tool.
   2. Meeting basic needs online in the midst of a fluctuating pandemic.
   3. Develop systems and products out of town.

d. **Threat of Instagram Account @mlijo.online.mjk in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic:**
   1. Business actors who use the same marketing concept, namely there are business actors who carry out marketing activities through social media due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
   2. Uncertain market changes, namely the COVID-19 pandemic which causes sales to be made online.
   3. The emergence of new competitors who switch to using social media in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Based on the results of interviews and observations, the researchers found that the strengths and opportunities strategy carried out by the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk was by improving online services in meeting the basic needs of the community in the midst of a pandemic. Then for the weakness and opportunities strategy, namely by increasing promotional activities through Instagram social media in the midst of a Pandemic. Then the strength and threats strategy carried out by the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk, namely by increasing consumer affinity for online shopping for basic commodities in the midst of a pandemic. weakness and threats strategy. What is done by the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk is by improving the quality of service through Instagram social media in the midst of a Pandemic.

2 **STP Analysis (Segmenting, Targeting, Positioning)**
STP analysis (segmenting, targeting, positioning) in this study, researchers also found market segmentation on the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk in the midst of a pandemic as follows:

Table 1 Segmenting @mlijo.online.mjk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEGMENTING</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographical</td>
<td>Mojokerto City Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic</td>
<td>By age: 24-35 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By gender: female consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By occupation: busy consumer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychographic</td>
<td>Consumers with an upper-middle class lifestyle, namely shopping as needed in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Based on knowledge: the average consumer knows the existence of @mlijo.online.mjk in the midst of a Pandemic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Based on attitude: the average consumer is loyal to @mlijo.online.mjk.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of demographics, researchers found that the target consumers of mlijo are young people (24-35 years). Then, this mlijo targets consumers who are mostly female, namely young mothers who understand social media. In terms of psychographics, it is in accordance with the target market desired by mlijo, namely the average mlijo consumer shopping according to their daily needs in the midst of a pandemic. In terms of positioning, researchers found that currently the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk focuses on meeting the basic needs of the upper middle class community, offline to online. In the current era of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the people of the City and Regency of Mojokerto can place orders daily, weekly, and even monthly with a pre-order system. Therefore, based on the results of the study, researchers found that the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk currently focuses on product quality in the midst of a pandemic.

3. Marketing Mix (product, price, place, promotion)
   a. Product

   Based on the observations of the researchers, the researchers found that in addition to providing various basic ingredients with grade B product quality and packaging, such as in supermarkets, they also offer a deposit service for various products on the market in the form of needs desired by consumers. So, consumers don't need to go to the market and visit different stores to fulfill their desired needs so that consumers become more practical and don't have to bother going out of the house, especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk also uses a logo on their packaging and is the hallmark of @mlijo.online.mjk.

   ![Figure 1 Instagram Account Logo @mlijo.online.mjk](image)

   Logo is the power of a brand in the form of an image or just a sketch with its own meaning, and is a characteristic of a company, region, organization, institution, and other things that aim to be easily remembered by the audience as a substitute for the real name (Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2008). According to one of the informants in this study, the representation of the logo on the product @mlijo.online.mjk is as follows.

   **Informan 1 (Owner):**
   
   The @mlijo.online.mjk logo is a representation of the various types of products sold, ranging from vegetables, fruit, fish and meat. The mlijo online mj logo has a concept consisting of a
combination of 2 types of logos, namely the "gram" logo and the "type" logo. The “gram” logo means confirming the product variants being sold, while the “type” logo means the verbal identity of the @mlijo.online.mjk brand. Then, there is an additional green dot in the “type” logo area as a sign that @mlijo.online.mjk is always active online serving consumers (customers) and potential customers. The green color was chosen because it has a fresh and cold impression on every product that consumers will order.

From this statement it is evident that a logo used by @mlijo.online.mjk is very important to facilitate product introduction to consumers and to receive the image of mlijo products. Then, there is a "green dot" logo indicating that the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk is active to serve consumer needs in the midst of a pandemic.

b. Price

Based on the researcher's observations, before creating a price for the product, the seller must determine the strategy that will be used in the midst of the Pandemic. Before @mlijo.online.mjk creates prices on their products, they have to compare prices against other mlijo's. The results of research conducted by @mlijo.online.mjk show that the price of mlijo in housing is actually more expensive when viewed from the quality of the product and packaging. Based on the observations of researchers, researchers found that currently the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk has competitive product prices when viewed from product quality and packaging compared to other mlijo.

c. Place

Based on the researcher's observations, it shows that when creating a marketing strategy related to the @mlijo.online.mjk target market, it must be mapped based on the desired target range in the midst of a Pandemic. Therefore, the researcher found that the distribution channel for the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk was aimed at reaching the target consumers in the City and Regency of Mojokerto.

d. Promotion

1. Advertising

Based on the observations, the researchers found that the promotions carried out by the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk currently are maximizing Instagram social media as advertising promotions as follows:

![Figure 2 Photo Ads dan Video Ads on feeds Instagram](image_url)

When deciding to advertise, it is necessary to have a promotional method as accurate as possible to upload consumer interest, both in delivering messages or message content on Instagram social media (Hermawan, 2012: 52). Based on the results of the researcher's observations, it shows that Instagram can make it easier for @mlijo.online.mjk in presenting staple products through Instagram Photo Ads and Video Ads so that consumers can know the existence of @mlijo.online.mjk in the midst of a Pandemic. This is one of the marketing communication strategies in advertising through photo Ads and video Ads by using the Instagram Geotagging (location marker) and Hashtag (#) features.
2. Personal Selling

Based on the results of the researcher’s observations, the researchers found that direct sales made by the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk with current consumers are using word of mouth sales. Therefore, based on the results of the study, it shows that consumers know the existence of @mlijo.online.mjk from their close relatives. So that personal sales carried out by the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk make the consumer need not be ashamed to answer their curiosity about a product starting from the advantages and disadvantages of the @mlijo.online.mjk product itself (Hermawan, 2012: 52).

3. Sales Promotion

Based on the results of the study, it shows that sales promotion for the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk is currently not carried out directly, such as in the Market. However, in this Pandemic era, @mlijo.online.mjk can take advantage of sales promotion strategies based on the holiday season or celebration of major holidays such as the month of Ramadan. This time is used to make discount promos or mlijo surprise promos. The mlijo surprise promo during the month of Ramadan can be in the form of giving free shipping, giving marjan syrup, to giving fruit to break the fast. The researcher found that the @mlijo.online.mjk sales promotion strategy was appropriate to attract large numbers of consumers through Instagram and WhatsApp social media, without using cash or cashless. This is a form of direct persuasion in the Pandemic era so that consumers make transactions immediately (Hermawan, 2012:52).

4. Public Relations

Based on the observations of the researchers, the researchers found that the community relations carried out by @mlijo.online.mjk at this time were holding social service activities at locations that the mlijo team had agreed to to help people in need. As a publicist at @mlijo.online.mjk, researchers found that the right way to give an attractive impression and increase trust in consumers is by inviting consumers to communicate closely through WhatsApp social media as friends, not only as admins. Marketing communication strategy to maintain the image of @mlijo.online.mjk in the midst of the Pandemic, the mlijo admin himself provides education to consumers regarding recipes and provides ready-to-cook packages on Instagram feeds.

5. Direct Marketing

Based on the observations of the researchers, the researchers found that direct marketing carried out by @mlijo.online.mjk was through gadgets, to be precise, sales were made using WhatsApp social media. In this case, the direct marketing strategy carried out by the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk is to use text messaging activities, namely marketing through WhatsApp and these activities are carried out to support personal selling activities (Hermawan, 2012: 52). This strategy is carried out to consumers @mlijo.online.mjk in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic not to use third parties (distributors or resellers) in their marketing. Based on the results, the researchers found that the direct marketing strategy at @mlijo.online.mjk can be said to be effective, because the mlijo owner also intervenes directly in the field. The point is, if there are consumers who make transactions with large nominal amounts, then this is done so that there is no misunderstanding between the @mlijo.online.mjk owner and the rest of the team.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis of the Marketing Communication Strategy on the @mlijo.online.mjk Instagram Account in the Middle of a Pandemic, it can be concluded as follows:

1. From the results of this study indicate that the marketing communication strategy carried out by @mlijo.online.mjk effectively by conducting a SWOT analysis, STP, and the 4P promotion mix (product, price, place, promotion) is proven that the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk is able to use marketing communication strategies in the midst of a Pandemic.
2. The results of this study indicate that the SWOT analysis of the Instagram account @mlijo.online.mjk is carried out effectively, including:
   a. SO Strategy (strong and opportunity): improve online services in meeting the basic needs of the community in the midst of a Pandemic
   b. WO strategy (weak and still has opportunities): increase promotional activities through Instagram social media in the midst of a Pandemic
   c. ST Strategy (strong and threatened): increase consumer affinity for online shopping for staples in the midst of a Pandemic
   d. WT strategy (weak and threatened): improve service quality through Instagram social media in the midst of a pandemic.

3. The results of this study indicate that segmenting, targeting and positioning are carried out effectively and have a very important role because this strategy can distinguish one @mlijo.online.mjk from online mlijo in other Mojokerto cities. The results of the STP are:
   a. Segmenting (geographic, demographic, psychographic, behavioral):
   b. The average consumers of Mojokerto City and Regency who are busy working, are aged 24-35 years. Using social media Instagram and WhatsApp in shopping for basic goods as needed in the midst of the Pandemic.
   c. Targeting: upper middle class consumers.
   d. Positioning: focusing on meeting basic needs through Instagram.

4. Promotional mix strategy includes:
   a. advertising: using Instagram Photo Ads and Instagram Video Ads and using the Geotagging feature (location monitoring), Hashtag (#) on product uploads.
   b. personal selling: using the method of word of mouth (mouth to mouth).
   c. in terms of sales promotion: through social media Instagram and WhatsApp during holidays or celebrations of major holidays such as the month of Ramadan.
   d. In terms of public relations: conducting social service activities at locations determined by the mlijo team before the pandemic. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the marketing communication strategy carried out was intense communication through WhatsApp to provide education to consumers regarding recipes and providing ready-to-cook packages.
   e. In terms of direct marketing: using text messaging activities, namely marketing through WhatsApp.

5. SUGGESTION
It is hoped that @mlijo.online.mjk can improve marketing communication strategies through Instagram social media by creatively updating Instagram feeds, frequently updating stories, making quizzes or games on Instagram stories involving followers from @mlijo.online.mjk.

Acknowledgement
The author would like to thank @mlijo.online.mjk who has provided the news as the subject of this research. The author would also like to thank the lecturers of the East Java UPN “Veteran” communication study program who have provided direction and opportunities to conduct this research, as well as to the reviewers of JOSAR (Student Academic Research Journal) Balitar Islamic University Blitar.
REFERENCE
Books
Feriyanto, Andri, Endang Shyta Triana. 2015. KOMUNIKASI BISNIS "Strategi Komunikasi dalam Mengelola Bisnis". Kebumen: MEDIATERA.

Non Books:
https://doi.org/10.33366/optima.v3i1.1253


**Internet:**


