

HALAL PRODUCT MARKETING STRATEGY FOR CULINARY MSMES IN SIDIKALANG CITY, NORTH SUMATRA

Ninka Mala Maha¹, Utari Evy Cahyani², Idris Saleh³

^{1,2,3}UIN Syahada Padangsidimpuan (Sharia Business Management, FEBI, UIN Padangsidimpuan)

ninkamaha56@gmail.com¹, utari@uinsyahada.ac.id², idrissaleh@uinsyahada.ac.id³

Abstract

This study examines the marketing strategies used by culinary MSMEs in Sidikalang City, North Sumatra, to promote halal products. The background of this study is the challenges faced by MSMEs in convincing Muslim consumers of the halalness of their products in areas where the majority of the population is non-Muslim. This study aims to identify the marketing strategies used and how they are implemented to increase the growth and sustainability of halal culinary businesses. The Research method used is a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted using the SWOT framework to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by MSMEs in marketing halal products. The results of the study show that MSMEs implement various marketing strategies, such as using halal certification to increase credibility, promoting through social media, engaging Muslim communities, and adopting competitive pricing and location strategies. The long-standing obstacle faced is the low level of consumer understanding of halal certification and the differences with non-Muslim business actors. This study is expected to provide insights for MSMEs on increasing the effectiveness of halal product marketing strategies, as well as serve as a reference for related parties in supporting the development of halal MSMEs in Sidikalang City.

Keywords: Marketing Strategy, Halal Products, MSMEs, Sidikalang City, SWOT Fintech.

A. INTRODUCTION

Sidikalang, North Sumatra, Indonesia, is a city known for its predominantly non-Muslim population, thus presenting challenges in developing marketing strategies for halal products. Several issues face MSMEs in Sidikalang City, one of which is the hesitation of potential Muslim consumers to purchase halal products from Muslim businesses due to numerous scams, such as non-Muslim entrepreneurs trying to wear hijabs to attract Muslim customers. Therefore, Muslim MSMEs need strategies to convince Muslim consumers to purchase halal products (Patrisius Rahabav, 2023). Halal products are currently a dominant market segment and face growing demand. Indonesia, with one of the largest Muslim populations in the world, plays a crucial role in increasing halal products. A marketing strategy is a method or step a company takes over the long term to maintain its marketing position and generate profits. A marketing strategy can be seen as a foundation for developing a company-wide plan. Given the problems within a company, planning is essential to serve as a guideline for each company segment in implementing its vision and mission (Ahmad & Muslimah, 2021).

To achieve optimal results, a marketing strategy has a broad scope within the field, including strategies for dealing with competition, pricing, product, and service. Marketing plays a crucial role in achieving business success; therefore, a marketing strategy is essential in every industry, especially small businesses. The goal is to understand consumers' needs and desires so that the products or services produced are suitable for them. This will then make the product or service sell itself. In a broader sense, marketing seeks to elicit a response to an offering. The desired response from customers to products, services, events, and other objects creates not only short-term transactions but also long-term relationships with customers, distributors, and suppliers. (Afandi & Siswoyo, 2021).

B. METHOD

This type of Research was conducted using qualitative Research methods. Qualitative Research methods are used to understand phenomena in a natural and in-depth social context. Qualitative Research is descriptive and analytical. Descriptive in qualitative Research means describing and explaining the events, phenomena, and social situations being studied. Analysis means interpreting, interpreting, and comparing Research data (Albito Anggitao & Johan Setiawan, 2018). Therefore, it can be concluded that qualitative Research is a Research technique that uses narratives or words to explain and describe the meaning of each phenomenon, symptom, and specific social situation. In qualitative Research, the researcher is the key instrument for understanding and interpreting each phenomenon, symptom, and specific social situation. Therefore, researchers need to master theory to analyze the gap between theoretical concepts and facts. Using this method will provide an overview of how halal culinary MSMEs in Sidikalang City market their halal products (Machmud et al., 2023).

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. General Overview of Culinary MSMEs in Sidikalang City

Sidikalang City is a predominantly non-Muslim city, with 24.99% Muslims and 75.01% non-Muslims. The large number of non-Muslim entrepreneurs presents challenges for culinary MSMEs in marketing halal products. Interviews and observations revealed that many Muslim entrepreneurs face difficulties in convincing Muslim consumers about the halal status of their products (Sri Fatmawati, 2022). This is due to cases of non-Muslim entrepreneurs masquerading as Muslims to attract Muslim customers. MSMEs operating in the halal culinary sector in Sidikalang City include various types of businesses, such as meatball stalls, traditional cakes, Padang satay, martabak, toast, and fried food vendors. Several entrepreneurs who participated in this study stated that they must have a strong marketing strategy to compete and maintain the trust of Muslim consumers.

2. Vision and Mission of Sidikalang City MSMEs

The Dairi Regency Government, which includes Sidikalang City, can provide an overview of the direction of MSME development in the region. The Integrated Business Service Center for Cooperatives and MSMEs (PLUT-KUMKM) in Dairi plays a crucial role in supporting MSMEs in Sidikalang. They focus on mentoring and empowering MSMEs to encourage business independence, mastery of information technology, increased competitiveness, and flexibility in adapting to market changes. With this vision and mission, it is hoped that MSMEs in Sidikalang City can develop independently, innovatively, and competitively, in line with the development direction of Dairi Regency (Latifah Hanim & Ms. Noorman, 2028).

3. Organizational Structure of MSMEs in Sidikalang City

The organizational structure supporting the development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Sidikalang City, Dairi Regency, involves several agencies and institutions that play a vital role in fostering and empowering MSMEs. The following is a general overview of this structure: The Dairi Regency Department of Industry, Trade, Cooperatives, and SMEs is responsible for fostering, developing, and empowering the industrial, trade, cooperative, and MSME sectors in Dairi Regency, including Sidikalang City. This primary function includes formulating and implementing regional policies in industry, trade, cooperatives, and MSMEs. The Dairi PLUT-KUMKM (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) is an institution that provides mentoring and consulting services for cooperatives and MSMEs. Its goal is to increase independence, mastery of information technology, competitiveness, and the ability of business actors to adapt to market changes. Services provided include training, business consulting, access to capital, and market information (Syarifuddin, 2022). Sidikalang City serves as a forum for business actors to collaborate and expand their business networks. Through platforms such as

Wiki Export, the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN) assists MSMEs seeking to enter the export market by providing information, training, and export-import business matching programs. The Sidikalang KPPN (State Treasury Office), as part of the Directorate General of Treasury, also supports MSMEs by disseminating financing programs such as Ultra Micro (UMi) (Rifqi Suprapto and Zaky Wahyuddin Azizi, 2020).

This program provides alternative financing for small businesses in need of working capital loans. With an organizational structure involving various agencies and institutions, it is hoped that MSMEs in Sidikalang City can develop more optimally through support such as coaching, access to capital, training, and expanded marketing networks.

4. Analysis of the 4P Marketing Strategy for Halal Culinary MSMEs Bakso Wirda Berutu in Sidikalang City

Based on an interview with Wirda Berutu, a halal meatball seller, about the challenges of marketing halal meatball products in Sidikalang, a predominantly non-Muslim market, the following is a 4P marketing strategy to attract customer interest, especially Muslim customers, and to compete with other culinary MSMEs. Responsible. Because this is very important to build the trust of Muslim consumers in the midst of a non-Muslim majority (Putra, 2022). Muslim culinary MSMEs in Sidikalang, namely Wirda, must also offer a wider variety of halal products, such as meatballs, giant meatballs, tendon meatballs, tumpeng meatballs, and so on, because by offering many products, they can compete to attract a wider customer base, so that they can compete with other culinary MSMEs. Wirda Berutu's meatball business also sets a (worth it) price to attract customer interest, especially school children, and is likely to compete widely with similar products in the Sidikalang market. They also provide special discounts or promotions on Fridays and discounts for large purchases (Rosadi Ruslan, 2003).

Based on an interview with Wirda Berutu, they explained the pricing structure to consumers, provided a menu, and displayed prices on the wall to ensure customers felt they were receiving fair value for their products. My observations indicate that 70% of Wirda Berutu's meatball businesses operate in strategic locations, choosing locations easily accessible to consumers, such as near schools, residential areas, or busy centers. Interviews revealed that 50% of Wirda Berutu's meatball businesses also use online platforms to reach a wider consumer base, including home delivery for busy customers who are unable to visit in person due to rain or heat (Al Farisi, S., Iqbal Fasa, M., & Suharto, 2022). Based on observations and interviews with Wirda Berutu, she has provided education about the halal nature of her products through social media, brochures, and community events to alleviate concerns among Muslim consumers. By implementing this 4P marketing strategy, it is hoped that Wirda Berutu's meatball businesses can increase Muslim consumer trust and interest in the halal products they sell.

D. CLOSING

1. Conclusion

Based on Research on Halal Product Marketing Strategies for Culinary MSMEs in Sidikalang City, North Sumatra, it can be concluded that the marketing strategies implemented by halal culinary MSMEs include various approaches aimed at attracting customer interest, particularly Muslim consumers. The main strategies used include halal certification as a guarantee of product halalness, digital marketing through social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram to reach a wider market, competitive pricing strategies by offering affordable prices and attractive promotions, and selecting strategic business locations for easier access by consumers (Kim, H., & Hamid, S., 2019).

However, in its implementation, MSMEs still face various challenges, such as a lack of public awareness of the importance of halal certification, competition with established non-halal culinary businesses, fluctuations in raw material prices that affect price stability, and limited business capital, which is an obstacle to increasing production and expanding the business. Therefore, implementing more innovative and adaptive marketing strategies can help halal MSMEs to grow. The use of appropriate marketing strategies, such as strengthening branding, collaborating with Muslim communities, and utilizing digital technology in product promotion and distribution, has the potential to increase business competitiveness and expand market reach.

2. Suggestions

Based on the Research findings, halal culinary MSMEs are encouraged to enhance public awareness of halal certification and optimize digital marketing to expand market reach. Strengthening branding and collaboration with Muslim communities can also improve competitiveness. In addition, support from the government and related stakeholders, particularly in access to capital and business development programs, is essential to ensure the sustainability and growth of halal culinary MSMEs.

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