

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES FOR CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS IN DEKRANASDA SOUTH TANGERANG CITY

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Abstrak

Komunikasi digital telah menjadi elemen penting bagi keberhasilan dan keberlanjutan bisnis, khususnya di industri kreatif. Para pelaku usaha di sektor kreatif, khususnya yang tergabung dalam Dekranasda Kota Tangerang Selatan, menghadapi tantangan dalam memanfaatkan platform digital secara efektif untuk pemasaran, pencitraan merek, dan pelibatan pemangku kepentingan. Pergeseran cepat menuju digitalisasi telah menciptakan peluang sekaligus tantangan bagi usaha kecil dan menengah (UKM) dalam mengadopsi dan menerapkan strategi komunikasi yang efektif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi strategi komunikasi digital yang dapat meningkatkan kapasitas wirausahawan kreatif dalam mengoptimalkan platform digital. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif dengan menggunakan teknik pengumpulan data seperti wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipan, dan analisis dokumen. Melalui metode tersebut, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi kendala utama dalam adopsi digital, mengusulkan model strategi komunikasi yang efektif, dan mengevaluasi dampaknya melalui diskusi kelompok terarah (FGD) dengan para pemangku kepentingan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pelatihan komunikasi digital strategis dan kerangka pemasaran terstruktur secara signifikan meningkatkan jangkauan dan kinerja bisnis wirausahawan kreatif. Temuan penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengetahuan teoritis dan aplikasi praktis, serta menawarkan rekomendasi untuk meningkatkan literasi komunikasi digital dan implementasi strategi di sektor industri kreatif.

Kata kunci: Komunikasi Digital; Industri Kreatif; Strategi Digital; Kewirausahaan; Keterlibatan Pemangku Kepentingan.

Abstract

Digital communication has become a vital element for the success and sustainability of businesses, especially in the creative industry. Entrepreneurs within the creative sector, particularly those associated with Dekranasda South Tangerang City, face challenges in effectively leveraging digital platforms for marketing, branding, and stakeholder engagement. The rapid shift towards digitalization has created both opportunities and challenges for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in adopting and implementing effective communication strategies. This research aims to explore digital communication strategies that can improve the capacity of creative entrepreneurs in optimizing digital platforms. The

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study employs a qualitative-descriptive approach using data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. Through these methods, the research identifies key obstacles in digital adoption, proposes an effective communication strategy model, and evaluates its impact through focus group discussions (FGDs) with stakeholders. The study concludes that strategic digital communication training and structured marketing frameworks significantly enhance the outreach and business performance of creative entrepreneurs. The findings contribute to both theoretical knowledge and practical applications, offering recommendations for improving digital communication literacy and strategy implementation in the creative industry sector.

Keywords: Digital Communication; Creative Industry; Digital Strategy; Entrepreneurship; Stakeholder Engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Background. The creative industry plays a crucial role in economic growth by fostering innovation, providing employment opportunities, and enhancing cultural identity. In Indonesia, the creative economy has been recognized as a key driver of economic development, contributing significantly to GDP and job creation. The rise of digital platforms has transformed how businesses operate, particularly for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) engaged in creative industries. Digital communication enables entrepreneurs to reach broader audiences, engage with customers, and promote their brands more effectively.

Despite its importance, many creative entrepreneurs face significant challenges in adopting and utilizing digital communication tools. The lack of digital literacy, insufficient technological infrastructure, and inadequate knowledge of digital marketing strategies hinder their ability to maximize the benefits of digital transformation. The digital divide, which reflects disparities in access and usage of digital technologies, has become an ongoing issue that affects the growth and sustainability of small creative enterprises.

Dekranasda South Tangerang City serves as a pivotal organization in supporting local creative entrepreneurs. The institution provides platforms for knowledge sharing, skill enhancement, and business networking. However, the rapid shift towards digitalization has presented new challenges that require urgent attention. While some entrepreneurs have successfully adapted to digital marketing techniques, others still struggle to implement even the most basic digital communication strategies. Research indicates that businesses that integrate structured digital marketing strategies experience improved customer engagement, increased revenue, and stronger brand recognition (Dewi & Putra, 2022). However, recent surveys suggest that over 60% of creative entrepreneurs in South Tangerang City face barriers such as limited digital knowledge, insufficient resources, and ineffective digital marketing strategies (Haryanto, 2023).

With the increasing dominance of online consumer behavior, businesses that fail to establish an effective digital presence risk losing their competitive edge. Consumers are turning to digital channels such as social media, websites, and e-commerce platforms to interact with brands, seek information, and make purchasing decisions. Therefore, equipping creative entrepreneurs with the necessary digital

communication skills and strategies is vital in ensuring their sustainability and growth in an ever-evolving digital landscape.

This study aims to investigate the digital communication strategies that can enhance the competitiveness of creative entrepreneurs. It explores current digital practices, identifies challenges, and proposes solutions tailored to the unique needs of creative entrepreneurs in Dekranasda South Tangerang City. Through this research, we seek to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on digital communication and its application in the creative industry while offering practical recommendations for entrepreneurs seeking to optimize their online presence.

The creative industry plays a crucial role in economic growth by fostering innovation, providing employment opportunities, and enhancing cultural identity. In Indonesia, the creative economy has been recognized as a key driver of economic development, contributing significantly to GDP and job creation. Dekranasda South Tangerang City plays a vital role in supporting local creative entrepreneurs by facilitating networking, providing business support, and assisting in market expansion.

Despite these efforts, many creative entrepreneurs struggle to adopt digital communication tools effectively. A lack of digital literacy, limited technological infrastructure, and inadequate digital marketing knowledge hinder their ability to reach broader markets and sustain their businesses. Digital transformation is no longer optional; it is a necessity for businesses to thrive in today's competitive environment. According to Dewi & Putra (2022), businesses that integrate digital marketing strategies experience enhanced customer engagement, increased revenue, and stronger brand recognition. However, recent surveys indicate that over 60% of creative entrepreneurs in South Tangerang City face barriers such as limited digital knowledge, insufficient resources, and ineffective digital marketing strategies (Haryanto, 2023).

This study seeks to investigate digital communication strategies that can enhance the competitiveness of creative entrepreneurs. The research explores current practices, identifies challenges, and proposes solutions to improve the digital capabilities of entrepreneurs in Dekranasda South Tangerang City.

Focus of The Problem. The research addresses the following key questions:

1. What are the existing digital communication practices of creative entrepreneurs in Dekranasda South Tangerang City?
2. What challenges hinder the effective adoption of digital communication strategies among creative entrepreneurs?
3. How can a structured digital communication strategy enhance the market competitiveness of creative entrepreneurs?

Research Objectives.

1. To assess the current state of digital communication adoption among creative entrepreneurs.
2. To identify key obstacles hindering the utilization of digital platforms.
3. To develop a strategic framework that improves digital communication capabilities and enhances business performance.

Research Benefits.

Theoretical Benefits. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions in the following ways:

1. Expanding knowledge in the field of digital communication, particularly in how digital marketing strategies enhance the capacity of creative entrepreneurs, thereby enriching existing literature on digital communication in business development.
2. Providing insights into the impact of social media on consumer behavior, decision-making processes, and the factors influencing engagement in digital business environments.
3. Offering a comparative analysis of various digital communication strategies used by creative entrepreneurs, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each approach in driving business growth.

Practical Benefits. This research is expected to offer practical benefits, including:

1. Providing guidelines for creative entrepreneurs in designing and implementing effective digital communication strategies to enhance market reach, customer engagement, and brand visibility.
2. Serving as a reference for business practitioners in evaluating and improving their digital marketing strategies by benchmarking against industry best practices and identifying areas for improvement.

Helping marketing professionals understand emerging digital trends, audience preferences, and the most effective marketing techniques to maximize audience reach and engagement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Importance of Digital Communication in the Creative Industry. Digital communication plays a pivotal role in the growth and sustainability of businesses, particularly in the creative industry. In today's digital era, businesses are increasingly leveraging digital platforms to build brand awareness, engage with customers, and expand their market reach. Effective digital communication enables creative entrepreneurs to showcase their products and services to a global audience, eliminating geographical limitations and reducing marketing costs (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Branding, customer engagement, and market expansion are the three primary aspects that benefit from digital communication. Research shows that businesses utilizing a well-structured digital marketing strategy experience higher customer retention, improved brand loyalty, and increased revenue (Nugroho & Lestari, 2020). By effectively using digital marketing tools such as search engine optimization (SEO), pay-per-click (PPC) advertising, and targeted content creation, businesses can enhance their online presence and visibility (Kotler et al., 2021).

Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and LinkedIn have become essential marketing channels for creative entrepreneurs. These platforms enable businesses to connect with their target audiences through visually appealing and engaging content, fostering customer relationships and brand affinity (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). Additionally, influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful strategy in modern digital communication. Partnering with social media influencers allows businesses to tap into established audience bases and build credibility and trust with potential customers (Brown & Hayes, 2018).

Given the rapid evolution of digital technology, creative businesses that fail to adopt digital communication strategies risk falling behind their competitors. Digital communication not only enhances

brand visibility but also provides businesses with valuable consumer insights through data analytics, enabling them to refine their marketing strategies for better engagement and conversion rates (Ryan, 2017).

Challenges in Digital Communication for SMEs. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), particularly those in the creative sector, face multiple barriers when adopting digital communication strategies. These challenges often hinder their ability to leverage digital tools effectively, reducing their competitiveness in the market.

Limited Digital Literacy: Many entrepreneurs lack the necessary digital skills to effectively manage digital platforms. A study by Dwivedi et al. (2020) highlights that SMEs often struggle with understanding advanced digital marketing techniques, limiting their ability to implement and optimize online campaigns effectively.

Resource Constraints: Budget limitations prevent SMEs from investing in professional digital marketing services. Unlike large corporations with dedicated marketing teams, SMEs often rely on self-taught methods or trial-and-error approaches, which may not yield optimal results (Gong et al., 2019). This financial constraint makes it difficult for SMEs to compete in the increasingly saturated digital marketplace.

Low Engagement Rates: Many businesses struggle to create compelling content that resonates with their audience. Consumer preferences are constantly evolving, and SMEs often lack the expertise to craft engaging, high-quality content that attracts and retains customers (Hootsuite & We Are Social, 2022). Additionally, inconsistent posting schedules and ineffective engagement strategies contribute to lower online visibility and customer interaction.

To overcome these challenges, SMEs must adopt strategic approaches that focus on capacity building, technological investment, and continuous adaptation to changing digital trends. Governments and industry stakeholders also play a crucial role in supporting SMEs through digital literacy programs, funding assistance, and mentorship opportunities.

Best Practices in Digital Communication Strategies. Several digital communication strategies have been identified as best practices for SMEs looking to enhance their online presence and customer engagement. These strategies focus on leveraging modern digital tools while maintaining authenticity and creativity in their approach.

Content Marketing: Creating engaging and valuable content tailored to the target audience is a fundamental aspect of digital communication. High-quality blogs, videos, infographics, and user-generated content help businesses educate, entertain, and build trust with their audiences (Pulizzi, 2014). A well-structured content strategy not only increases organic traffic but also establishes businesses as thought leaders in their respective industries.

Social Media Optimization: Utilizing platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok enhances brand visibility and customer interaction. Consistent posting, visually appealing graphics, and storytelling techniques help businesses capture audience attention and foster engagement (Zarrella, 2019). Social media algorithms favor content that encourages interactions, such as likes, comments, and shares, making engagement-driven strategies essential for online growth.

Interactive Engagement: Encouraging customer participation through live sessions, Q&A forums, and feedback loops strengthens customer relationships and fosters brand loyalty. Studies indicate that brands that actively engage with their audiences through personalized responses and interactive features experience higher conversion rates and customer retention (Smith & Zook, 2016). Interactive content such as polls, contests, and live product demonstrations also boosts audience participation and visibility.

In addition to these strategies, leveraging digital analytics tools to track performance metrics is crucial for refining and optimizing digital communication strategies. Businesses should continuously monitor engagement rates, website traffic, and conversion data to identify areas for improvement and adapt their approaches accordingly (Chaffey, 2020). By implementing best practices in digital communication, SMEs can establish a strong online presence, connect with their target audiences, and achieve long-term business success.

Marketing Communication Concept. Marketing communication is, in principle, the "Spearhead" for organizations to introduce, influence, encourage, and direct the decision-making of the audience (consumers) about the product, brand, and name of the organization so that the audience acts by the organization's goals. Terence A. Shimp (2003) said that "marketing communication is an important aspect of the overall marketing mission as well as a determinant of marketing success. In the last decade, the marketing communication component in the marketing mix has become increasingly important. It has even been claimed that marketing in the 1990s was communication, and communication was marketing. The two are inseparable".

Marketing communication is not only used by large organizations such as companies but also by small organizations such as event organizing committees. Marketing communication in this context is intended so that the target audience is informed about the event that is held, interested, registered, and participated in the event until the end. Social media marketing differs from traditional methods in that it focuses on two-way interaction between brands and consumers. According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), social media allows brands to communicate more interactively with their audience, build community, and create long-term relationships. Social media marketing communication accommodates multi-directional dialogue that allows for active interaction between the company and customers as well as consumer participation.

The theory of Social Information Processing, put forward by Joseph Walther, explains how technology-mediated communication can shape perceptions and relationships between individuals. In the context of social media, verbal cues and extended time in the exchange of information are key in building a positive impression among the audience.

Chris Heuer mentioned four important elements in social media marketing communication: context, communication, collaboration, and connection.

1. **Context:** describes how the story is packaged to be a compelling message.
2. **Communication:** involves the practice of sharing stories and listening to and responding to consumers.
3. **Collaboration:** emphasizes the importance of cooperation between business owners and consumers to achieve efficient results.

4. **Connection:** refers to the relationship that is built and maintained between the brand and the consumer.

Marketing communication on social media, especially Instagram and TikTok social media, can be carried out in the form of content feeds that combine photos, images, and writing, as well as video content of varying duration. These contents need to pay attention to the four important elements of social media marketing communication that have been mentioned earlier so that the marketing communication carried out effectively achieves its goals. In the context of digital marketing, AISAS Theory is a model designed to understand audience behavior in interacting with events or products. The acronym AISAS consists of five elements: Attention, Interest, Search, Action, and Share. This model emphasizes the importance of every stage that the audience goes through, from attracting attention to sharing their experiences after participating in an event.

METHOD

Research Design. This study employs a qualitative-descriptive approach to explore digital communication strategies relevant to creative entrepreneurs in dekranasda south tangerang city.

Data Collection Methods. The data collection methods used in this study include:

1. In-depth interviews: conducted with creative entrepreneurs, marketing professionals, and dekranasda representatives.
2. Participant observations: analysis of marketing activities and digital engagement practices.
3. Document analysis: reviewing social media content, and online business profiles.

Data Analysis. Data analysis involves thematic coding to identify key patterns in digital communication practices, challenges, and strategic solutions. The study ensures the validity of findings through data triangulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Current Digital Communication Practices. Findings indicate that most creative entrepreneurs primarily use social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok to promote their businesses. These platforms are utilized for brand awareness, customer interaction, and direct marketing. However, despite the widespread use of these platforms, many entrepreneurs lack a structured and consistent approach to digital communication.

Many creative businesses post content irregularly, often without a content strategy that aligns with their business goals. The absence of planned marketing campaigns and the underutilization of features such as analytics, customer engagement tools, and paid advertising hinder their ability to maximize their online presence. Furthermore, only a small fraction of entrepreneurs use data-driven insights to refine their communication strategies, making it difficult for them to measure the effectiveness of their digital marketing efforts.

While some businesses have recognized the importance of digital marketing and have adopted digital communication strategies, most still rely on organic reach, word-of-mouth marketing, and sporadic

online advertisements. The lack of digital skills and limited knowledge about optimizing search engines and paid promotions further constrain their ability to leverage digital tools for business growth.

Identified Challenges. Despite the growing need for digital transformation, creative entrepreneurs in Dekranasda South Tangerang City face several challenges in implementing effective digital communication strategies. The key challenges identified in this study include:

Limited Digital Literacy: Many entrepreneurs lack knowledge of digital marketing best practices. They struggle to create engaging content, optimize their social media presence, and use marketing tools effectively. The inability to analyze performance metrics and adjust strategies accordingly further impedes their growth.

Low Engagement Rates: Most businesses find it difficult to create interactive and compelling content that attracts and retains customer interest. Due to the lack of a structured content plan, engagement rates on social media remain low, limiting the effectiveness of digital campaigns.

Resource Constraints: Budget limitations hinder the adoption of advanced digital tools such as paid advertisements, customer relationship management (CRM) systems, and automated marketing software. Small business owners often rely on organic methods, which take longer to yield significant results.

Inconsistent Branding and Messaging: A lack of consistency in branding elements, tone, and messaging across different digital platforms results in fragmented communication, reducing brand recognition and customer loyalty.

Proposed Digital Communication Strategy. Based on these findings, a structured digital communication strategy is proposed to help creative entrepreneurs overcome these challenges and enhance their digital presence. The strategy consists of the following components:

1. **Training Programs:** Providing digital literacy workshops and hands-on training for creative entrepreneurs to improve their understanding of digital marketing fundamentals. This includes sessions on social media management, content creation, audience engagement, and data analytics.
2. **Content Development Framework:** Establishing a structured content plan to ensure consistency in branding, messaging, and frequency of social media posts. This framework includes a content calendar, storytelling techniques, and guidelines for optimizing posts for engagement.
3. **Influencer Partnerships:** Collaborating with local influencers and digital creators to expand market reach and increase brand visibility. Influencer marketing can help businesses gain credibility, attract new customers, and foster engagement through authentic content.
4. **Performance Analytics:** Encouraging the use of analytics tools such as Instagram Insights, Facebook Business Suite, and Google Analytics to track customer behavior, engagement rates, and campaign effectiveness. Regular assessment of these metrics will help businesses refine their strategies for better results.
5. **Omnichannel Marketing Approach:** Integrating multiple digital channels such as social media, email marketing, websites, and online marketplaces to create a seamless customer experience. This approach ensures that businesses reach their target audience through various touchpoints, maximizing their online visibility.

Impact of the Proposed Strategy. The proposed digital communication strategy was tested through a pilot implementation, which demonstrated significant improvements in various aspects of digital engagement and business performance.

1. **Increased Audience Engagement:** Businesses that adopted structured content strategies reported higher engagement rates, with an increase in likes, comments, shares, and direct messages from customers. Interactive content such as polls, quizzes, and behind-the-scenes videos contributed to stronger customer interactions.
2. **Enhanced Online Visibility:** Entrepreneurs who implemented a well-planned content strategy and collaborated with influencers experienced a notable increase in followers and website traffic. The use of targeted hashtags, keyword optimization, and engaging multimedia content played a key role in boosting visibility.
3. **Higher Conversion Rates:** Businesses that integrated performance analytics into their marketing efforts observed an improvement in lead generation and conversion rates. By analyzing customer behavior and engagement data, they were able to tailor their content to match audience preferences, resulting in increased sales.
4. **Stronger Brand Identity:** The adoption of a cohesive branding strategy across multiple digital platforms enhanced brand recognition and customer loyalty. Entrepreneurs who maintained a consistent tone, visual identity, and messaging saw a significant improvement in customer retention.

Sustainability and Growth: By continuously refining their digital strategies and leveraging analytics, businesses were able to sustain long-term growth. The ability to adapt to digital trends and technological advancements positioned these entrepreneurs for future success in an increasingly digital marketplace.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the importance of a well-structured digital communication strategy for creative entrepreneurs. While many businesses struggle with digital literacy, engagement, and resource constraints, implementing a strategic approach can help them overcome these barriers and achieve sustainable growth.

The proposed strategy emphasizes digital training, structured content planning, influencer collaborations, performance analytics, and an omnichannel marketing approach. By adopting these strategies, creative entrepreneurs can enhance their digital presence, increase customer engagement, and improve business performance.

Moving forward, policymakers, business support organizations, and educational institutions should provide continued support for digital literacy programs to empower entrepreneurs with the necessary skills to thrive in the digital economy. Future research should also explore the long-term impact of digital communication strategies on business sustainability and economic growth.

This study highlights the critical role of digital communication in supporting creative entrepreneurs. A structured approach to digital marketing can significantly improve business visibility, stakeholder engagement, and market competitiveness.

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that digital communication plays a vital role in improving the competitiveness of creative entrepreneurs. However, challenges such as limited digital

literacy, inconsistent content strategies, and budget constraints hinder their ability to fully leverage digital platforms. To address these issues, several key recommendations are proposed to enhance digital communication capabilities and foster business growth.

Specific Recommendations.

Digital Training Programs. Institutions, including government bodies, business support organizations, and educational institutions, should offer structured training programs aimed at improving entrepreneurs' digital communication skills. These programs should cover essential aspects such as:

1. Social media management and content creation strategies.
2. The use of analytics tools for tracking engagement and optimizing marketing efforts.
3. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques to increase online visibility.
4. Digital advertising strategies, including pay-per-click (PPC) and influencer marketing.
5. Crisis communication and reputation management in digital spaces.

Regular workshops and mentorship programs should also be established to provide ongoing support and ensure that entrepreneurs remain up to date with evolving digital trends.

While this study provides valuable insights into digital communication strategies for creative entrepreneurs, further research is needed in the following areas:

1. The long-term impact of digital communication strategies on business sustainability and revenue growth.
2. The effectiveness of various digital marketing channels in different creative industry segments.
3. The role of artificial intelligence and automation in enhancing digital communication for SMEs.
4. Consumer behavior trends and their influence on digital engagement strategies.

By addressing these areas, future research can contribute to the continuous improvement of digital communication strategies and support the evolving needs of creative entrepreneurs.

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