



THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON DIGITAL MARKETING, CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT, AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

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Abstract: The study aims to build a new model on the relationship between COVID-19 and digital marketing, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), and business performance. This is a conceptual study based on the results of empirical studies which investigate the COVID-19 variable on business performance mediated by digital marketing and CRM. The results of the study show that the COVID-19 pandemic has a negative impact on business performance. This incidence can be resolved if businesses can adapt by adopting digital marketing and building CRM. Hence, it is important for businesses today to adopt digital marketing and build CRM to improve business performance. In the future, it is also important to start to strategize on digitalization in all business functions, namely digital finance, digital operations, and digital human resources.

Keywords: business performance, COVID-19, customer relationship management, digital marketing.

1. Introduction

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak has spread throughout the world, reaching more than 215 countries (WHO, 2020). The COVID-19 outbreak was initially detected in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and further declared as a pandemic by World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020, leading to lockdowns in many countries (Jabbour et al., 2020; Ivanov, 2020). These massive changes impacted customer relationship management (CRM) (Choi, 2020; Sarkis et al., 2020), and also consumer behavior (Ernst & Young, 2020).

The Indonesian government has issued several regulations in dealing with the spread of the virus, which are then implemented through public policy. These regulations and public policies are expected to provide more concrete results and increase community participation more sustainably in overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic affects various existing sectors, including the business sector. Businesses in general experience problems in defending

themselves, especially if they want to improve their performance amidst the changing environment. One of the businesses that are experiencing threats due to the COVID-19 pandemic is the culinary business. The culinary business in general has experienced a decline in performance. This is caused by the decreased number of consumers and purchasing power of the market as a result of many people experiencing layoffs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, hence their income has decreased, and ultimately their purchasing power also decreased. Besides, business performance is also affected by the regulations made by the government. These regulations among other things, stipulate: businesses can only open for a shorter period and limitations to the capacity that can be filled. Other regulations issued for the wider community, namely physical distancing (Mahase, 2020; Wu et al., 2020), must always wash hands, use a mask regularly, and reduce direct contact with other people also affects the business field. These changes have an impact on the sales turnover, the number of coming customers, the number of transactions, and operating profits. Pandemic COVID-19 makes it difficult to meet

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consumer demand (Chang & Meyerhoefer, 2020). Previous research on business performance has been carried out by many researchers including Mathews et al. (2016); and Alarcon-del-Amo et al. (2018), researching export performance; furthermore, Yasa et al. (2020), explore the business performance from a financial standpoint. Other studies which measure the company performance comprehensively including financial and non-financial performance have also been carried out. In this study, business performance is seen from financial performance and non-financial performance, namely productivity, efficiency, profit, and customer satisfaction (Gu & Jung, 2013; Gruber-Muecke & Hofer, 2015).

The performance of the culinary business in Bali cannot be separated from the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has brought significant changes, such as COVID-19 has become a very easily spread disease, making consumers think it hard to come to restaurants (Bakalis et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). All of these conditions have an impact on business performance decline. The phenomenon of the effect of COVID-19 on organizational performance has been studied by several researchers, including Alonso (2020); Babatunde (2020); Shen et al. (2020); and Nkengasong & Mankoula (2020), which results show that the COVID-19 pandemic has a negative and significant impact on business performance. This means that the longer and more intense the COVID-19 pandemic, the greater impact will be caused on the decline of the business performance. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many companies have suffered losses (Goyal, 2020). Because of this phenomenon, it is necessary to think about a solution to overcome it. Hence, the solution that can be offered is to transform conventional marketing towards digital marketing (Alamaki & Korpela, 2020; Guenzi & Habel, 2020; Singh et al., 2019). This is supported by the finding that consumers prefer to shop online (Gao et al. al., 2020). Through the adoption of digital marketing, it is expected to be able to increase business performance. Likewise, the adoption of digital marketing can certainly build better CRM and further may cause an impact on improving business performance (Sofi et al., 2020).

Based on the existing background, this study aims to explain the role of digital marketing and CRM in mediating the influence of COVID-19 on the business performance of the culinary sector in Bali

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 COVID-19 Pandemic

Coronavirus infection is called COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease 2019) and was first discovered in the city of Wuhan, China at the end of December 2019. This virus spreads very quickly and has spread to almost all countries, including Indonesia, in just a few months. This has led several countries to implement policies to impose lockdowns to prevent the spread of the virus. In Indonesia, a large-scale social restriction policy was implemented to suppress the spread of this virus. Coronavirus is a virus that infects the respiratory system. In many cases, this virus only causes mild respiratory symptoms, such as flu. However, this virus can also cause severe respiratory symptoms, such as respiratory distress. This virus is transmitted through sputum droplets from the respiratory tract, for example, when in a crowded closed room with poor air circulation or direct contact with droplets.

SARS-CoV-2 virus or Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) belongs to the same group of viruses that cause Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and the viruses that cause Middle-East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). Even though it is caused by a virus from the same group, namely the coronavirus, COVID-19 has several differences from SARS and MERS, including in terms of the speed of spread and the severity of symptoms. The COVID-19 pandemic has finally reduced company productivity (Wang and Wang, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic also has an impact on the performance of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) (Zhang, 2020)

2.2 Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is a marketing activity or promotion of a brand or product using digital media or the internet. The goal of digital marketing is to attract consumers and potential consumers quickly. As we know, the acceptance of technology and the internet in



society is very wide, therefore it's no wonder that digital marketing activities are the main choice for companies. As a result, competition between companies exists to create interesting content to be displayed in their marketing cyberspace.

Experts in digital marketing have their definitions. According to Uchenna & Louis (2018), digital marketing is a marketing activity including branding that uses various media. For example, namely blogs, websites, e-mail, and various social media networks. Furthermore, Wendy et al. (2019), stated that digital marketing is a means of promoting goods or services using digital technology, especially using the internet. Digital marketing uses the development of the digital world to carry out advertising that is not directly heralded but has a very influential effect. The use of digital marketing by companies is increasing. This proves that digital marketing has many advantages and benefits that can be obtained (Labrecque et al., 2013; Lamberton & Stephen, 2016; Tuten & Solomon, 2015). There are several advantages of digital marketing compared to conventional marketing, including:

1) Speed of information spreads.

Marketing strategies using digital media can be done very quickly, even in seconds. In addition, digital marketing can also be measured in real-time and precisely.

2) Ease of evaluation.

By using online media, the results of marketing activities can be immediately known. Information such as how long the product was watched, how many people viewed the company's products, and what percentage of sales conversions were from each advertisement. After knowing such information, the company can then evaluate which advertisements are good and bad, to improve their next marketing period.

3) Wide reach of audience.

The next advantage is the wide geographic reach of digital marketing. Through digital marketing, information about a brand or product can be

spread throughout the world in just a few easy steps by using the internet.

4) Effective and low-cost.

Compared to traditional marketing, digital marketing is inexpensive and more effective. Up to 40% of budget costs are saved, according to Gartner's Digital Marketing Spend Report. Besides, the survey also shows that 28% of small entrepreneurs will switch to digital because it is proven to be more effective.

5) Building a brand.

Good digital brand marketing helps in building a good product brand name or company brand. The existence of cyberspace with the existence of product brands is very important because people will search online before buying products.

Types of digital marketing:

1) Website

Website plays a very important role in showing the professionalism of the company, helping consumers to find out about the company's business, efficient promotion, and easy business media (Deloitte, 2016).

2) Search Engine Marketing

Attempts to make company websites easy to find in search engine systems. Search Engine Marketing is divided into Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM). SEO is done generally with a longer time and is cheaper, meanwhile SEM is paid but faster (Lazaris et al., 2015). According to Jerath & Park (2014), consumers can search for information about products before making a purchase decision using Google, Yahoo, and Bing.

3) Social Media Marketing

Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter can be used for promotion because they can be done at minimal costs and even for free. This attempt may increase the company's brand. Social media marketing is now widely adopted



by SMEs in a dynamic business environment (Jones et al., 2014; Madukua et al., 2016) and its use continues to be intensified so that social media culture increases (Okundaye et al., 2019).

4) Online Advertising

Online advertising is a paid promotion media via the internet. This can get consumers more quickly and satisfactorily but is more expensive than the previous type. Promotion through online advertising forms positive consumer attitudes encourages consumers to have shopping intentions and finally decides to buy (Yang et al., 2013; Martins et al., 2019)

5) E-mail Marketing

Through e-mail marketing, companies can provide the latest information about their newest products or services.

6) Video Marketing

In this way, the company can immediately explain its business, explain the product and how to use it, and also can display customer testimonials. This marketing method has been widely adopted by companies following the trend where consumers enjoy watching marketing videos such as YouTube (Oh et al., 2017; Tellis et al., 2019).

2.3 Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Customer Relationship Management, abbreviated as CRM, is a customer relationship management strategy with companies that aims to manage good relationships with consumers or customers, collect all customer data, then record salesperson activities, especially in dealing with potential customers or those who have become regular customers (Tun-Chih et al., 2015; Santouridis & Veraki, 2017). Presenting CRM in the company is not only to build good relationships with customers but also to increase sustainable sales and earn a profit (AlQershi et al., 2020; AlQershi et al., 2018; Al-Nashmi & Al-Kholidy, 2016). If formulated in more detail, the existence of CRM helps a lot in providing various information needed regarding customers, customer

needs, and desires, which if fulfilled may increase profits for the business (Soltani et al., 2018; Lebdaoui & Chetioui, 2020; Aldoseri et al., 2019).

CRM is useful in increasing customer loyalty. All collected information about customers via SMS, e-mail, phone calls, websites, and social media, will be beneficial for the companies to understand customers consistently, to answer questions according to the customer needs, to easily find solutions to problems faced by customers, can even pay more attention to customers specifically. Automatic attention given can increase customer loyalty to the company's products and brands. Data collected through CRM can also be a provision for companies to make various improvements and improve service quality for the better (Lindgreen and Wynstra, 2005). Furthermore, efficient use of company budgets. The application of CRM in business may reduce marketing costs. This happens because every product issued has certainly found its market share. Therefore, the company does not need to conduct more surveys.

The use of CRM in running a business can improve service to customers in a way that streamlines the company's budget, therefore it is not wasted on customer service that is not on target. A systematic CRM scheme in targeting the services that need to be provided can have a great impact on increasing sales. The presence of the CRM application provides a lot of conveniences, especially in dealing with complaints from customers

2.4 Business Performance

The business performance of each company is influenced by many factors. Currently, what determines the company's business performance is the COVID-19 pandemic. Company performance is a complete display of the state of the company for a certain period of time, and is a result of achievement that is influenced by the company's operational activities in utilizing its resources (Sukaatmadja et al., 2017; Yasa et al., 2020; Sukaatmadja et al., 2020). Performance is a general term used for part or all of the actions or activities of an organization in a period concerning several standards such as past or projected costs, based on efficiency, accountability or management accountability.



Performance is the result of an evaluation of the work that has been done compared to the criteria that have been set together (Rai, 2008). According to Tari et al. (2007) and Yan et al. (2019), business performance can be seen from a financial and non-financial perspective.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 The Effect of COVID-19 on Business Performance

COVID-19 is a disease caused by the Corona Virus and is a disease that is easily transmitted (Mahase, 2020; Ivanov, 2020). The disease COVID-19 has been considered a pandemic by many countries (Wu et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic impacts the business world negatively (Goyal, 2020). The existence of this pandemic has caused many companies whose performance has decreased, and ultimately economic growth has declined (Khosla, 2020). With the COVID-19 pandemic, many things are detrimental to companies, such as very limited business opening hours, reduced production capacities, such as restaurants and retail businesses that can only accept consumers of 50 percent of normal capacity. All of this certainly has an impact on reducing the number of customers who shop. The longer the COVID-19 pandemic takes place, the lower the business performance will be (Mahesa, 2020). Previous study also showed that many hotels have closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Mahendra Dev, 2020).

3.2 The Effect of COVID-19 on Digital Marketing

COVID-19 is a disease caused by the Corona Virus and is a disease that is easily transmitted. In overcoming the spread, the government has issued a regulation to the people to maintain a physical distance. One solution that can be taken is to change shopping behavior from face to face to online shopping behavior. Likewise, the company has also changed its marketing strategy from conventional marketing to digital marketing. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic is encouraging businesses to adopt digital marketing. Digital marketing options also include, businesses can create website marketing, do search engine marketing, social media marketing, online advertising, e-mail marketing, and video marketing.

3.3 The Effect of COVID-19 on Customer Relationship Management

Changes in marketing strategies to digital strategies carried out by businesses due to the COVID-19 pandemic also encourage companies to start building good Customer Relationship Management (CRM). The COVID-19 pandemic is shown by the phenomenon that the distance between customers and companies, customers prefer to stay at home, customers doubt to come directly to the company. This is not an obstacle as long as the company builds a good CRM system. Customer relationships can now be built through the digital world. At any time, customers can contact the company and this is indeed important for the company to do. Therefore, the existence of COVID-19 is indeed able to encourage companies to build better CRM. Through the creation of CRM, companies can communicate with customers, maintain good relationships with customers, and feel close to customers.

3.4 The Effects of Digital Marketing on Customer Relationship Management

Digital marketing is a marketing strategy that uses the internet (Sing et al., 2020). The adoption of a digital marketing strategy by companies is a way to build mutual relationships with customers. Through website marketing, search engine marketing, online advertising, social media marketing, e-mail marketing, and video marketing, interactions occur between companies and customers. Customers get information about the company's products, submit complaints to the company, convey suggestions to the company; vice versa, the company can get to know customers better and may keep its customers loyal. This is the basis for companies to build a good CRM system. Thus, it can be said that the adoption of digital marketing can make the company's CRM system even better.

3.5 The Effects of Digital Marketing on Business Performance

The adoption of digital marketing by companies through many choices of digital marketing forms (website marketing, search engine marketing, online advertising, social media marketing, e-mail marketing,



and video marketing) can induce a sense of closeness on the customers to the company. Customers can access various company product information at any time, interact directly so that communication between the company and customers is getting better. This certainly makes customers feel more satisfied, have more trust in the company, and ultimately become loyal. Loyal customers are very important to improve the performance of sales transactions. Likewise, it has an impact on the achievement of the company's market share, and finally increases the company's profit.

3.6 The Effects of Customer Relationship Management on Business Performance

CRM is a company strategy to maintain long-term good relationships with customers (Gruber-Muecke & Hofer, 2015; Nkengasong & Mankoula, 2020). CRM is a company strategy to maintain good relationships with customers (Aldoseri et al., 2019) and CRM can make a company close to customers and may increase the sales turnover (Galvao et al., 2018; Marolt, 2018; Sukaatmadja et al., 2017). The better the CRM, the better improvement will be induced on the business performance, such as improving customer service and customer satisfaction (Shehzadi et al., 2020 and Khan & Hashim, 2020).

4. CONCLUSION

The explanation above regarding the relationship between the perception of the COVID-19 pandemic on the business performance achievements of the culinary sector business can be summarized as follows.

- 1) The COVID-19 pandemic has a negative impact on business performance. The longer and higher the incidence of the COVID-19 that occurs, the more reduction will be caused on the business performance.
- 2) The COVID-19 pandemic encourages small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the culinary sector to increasingly adopt digital marketing. The longer the COVID-19 pandemic, the higher the urge to adopt digital marketing.

- 3) The COVID-19 pandemic encourages businesses to build a good CRM strategy. The more severe the COVID-19 pandemic will push the culinary sector SMEs harder to build a good CRM.
- 4) The adoption of digital marketing also encourages SMEs to build CRM. The higher the adoption of digital marketing, the greater the push for SMEs to build CRM.
- 5) The adoption of digital marketing can improve business performance. The more intensively the culinary sector SMEs adopt digital marketing, the more increase on the business performance.
- 6) CRM that is built can increase business performance. An increase in the use of CRM as a business strategy may improve the business performance of SMEs, especially in the culinary sector.

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