

Enhancing Brand Awareness through Offline and Digital Communication: A Case Study of Andira Florist, a Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise

Andieninta Ayuning¹, Ananda Ashita¹, Nafisa Nur¹, Florian Asha¹, Alyshia Nabila¹

¹Program Studi Informasi dan Humas, Universitas Diponegoro, Indonesia

***Korespondensi, e-mail: andienintayu@students.undip.ac.id**

Abstract

The role of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) is strategic in supporting economic growth in Semarang City. However, the development of digital technology presents new challenges for MSMEs, particularly in terms of low brand awareness amid increasingly intense market competition. One MSME facing this challenge is Andira Florist, a flower sales business operating both offline and online. This study aims to identify the offline and digital communication strategies employed by Andira Florist to enhance brand awareness. A qualitative approach was adopted, utilizing in-depth interviews with the business owner and observations of promotional activities. The findings reveal that Andira Florist actively leverages social media, particularly Instagram, as its primary digital communication channel to introduce products and reach consumers. On the other hand, offline communication is maintained through direct customer service and collaborations with event vendors such as weddings or decorations. This integrated communication strategy is deemed effective in building brand image. The synergy between digital and face-to-face communication, along with consistent customer engagement, are key factors in enhancing brand awareness and ensuring the sustainability of SMEs amid market dynamics.

Keyword: Brand awareness, MSMEs, social media, Instagram

PENDAHULUAN

SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) are a strategic sector in Semarang City, contributing significantly to job creation and economic equality. One of the prominent SMEs in this sector is Andira Florist, a fresh flower shop in Semarang. With a focus on aesthetics and personalised service, Andira Florist has grown to become one of the leading providers of customised flower arrangements for various events, such as weddings, birthdays, and corporate events. However, facing increasingly intense competition, Andira Florist needs to adapt to the changing times. One important strategy that can support the sustainability of this business is

through strengthening brand awareness. In this regard, communication strategies play a crucial role, both through offline approaches such as bazaars and local events, as well as digital marketing to reach a wider audience (Haninun, 2024). A major challenge faced by Andira Florist is the limited availability of human resources and the minimal use of digital media. Compared to larger competitors such as Craftlabid, which has a much larger social media following, Andira Florist needs innovative communication strategies to increase its digital presence. This study explores how Andira Florist can maximise the potential of digital platforms to increase its competitiveness (Shakpuytri, 2024).

Additionally, Andira Florist needs to establish closer ties with the government to benefit from policies and support programs for SMEs. Through effective communication strategies, Andira Florist can leverage these opportunities to access funding, training, and regulatory ease (Chit et al., 2023). On the other hand, offline communication approaches remain relevant, particularly in building relationships with the local community. By actively participating in community events, Andira Florist can strengthen its presence in the local market. The integration of offline and digital strategies is believed to create synergy that strengthens brand awareness and increases customer loyalty (Staniewski et al., 2018). The importance of brand awareness as one of the main elements in the sustainability of SMEs. UMK Andira Florist requires communication to create mutually beneficial relationships between SMEs, customers, and the government. The strategies designed aim not only to enhance brand recognition but also to build a strong reputation in the market. It is essential for SMEs to optimally utilise communication media to achieve broader economic impacts (Staniewski et al., 2019).

Andira Florist is a micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) specialising in the sale and provision of fresh flowers. Established with the aim of adding a touch of natural beauty to various events, Andira Florist has become the go-to choice for many customers seeking flower arrangements for weddings, birthdays, corporate events, and other important occasions. Andira Florist continues to grow by offering a variety of fresh flowers and customised flower arrangement services tailored to customer needs. With a commitment to quality and excellent service, Andira Florist strives to build a reputation as one of the most trusted florist businesses. This success is not only supported by the quality of the products offered but also by effective communication strategies in building relationships with customers and business partners, including the government. As part of the SME community, Andira Florist continues to strive to develop its business by leveraging various opportunities available, including marketing, product innovation, and government support. However, digital development has also changed the way SMEs operate.

The advancement of digital technology, particularly social media, has provided significant opportunities for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to market their products on a broader scale. Instagram, as one of the most popular visual platforms, has become a strategic tool for building brand image, reaching consumers, and increasing sales through digital interaction and engagement. As seen on their social media (Instagram), Andira Florist and its competitors operate in the same industry, but there are differences between them.

However, not all MSMEs are able to optimally utilise social media. This is evident from the comparison between the Instagram accounts of Andira Florist and Craftlabid, two MSMEs operating in the same field, namely the florist business. The Instagram account @andira_florist has only 522 followers, far behind its competitor @craftlabid, which has reached 19,500 followers. Despite offering similar products—flower arrangements, bouquets, and floral arrangements—this disparity highlights significant differences in social media management, digital marketing strategies, and the ability to engage with their audience. In a brief interview, the owner of Andira Florist, Ayu Yuliati, stated that she faced challenges in developing social media due to limited human resources (HR) and technological capabilities (digital literacy gaps) due to age-related factors.

This situation reflects the real challenges faced by many traditional SMEs in keeping pace with the digital era. The lack of understanding and skills in utilizing social media has resulted in low engagement, market reach, and ultimately, the competitiveness of the business itself. Through this study, we will examine how digital communication strategies and social media management can influence the competitiveness of florist SMEs, particularly in the context of comparing Andira Florist with its competitors who have already successfully built their brand and community through digital platforms.

UMKM	FOLLOWERS INSTAGRAM
Andira Florist	522 followers
Craftlabid	19.500 followers

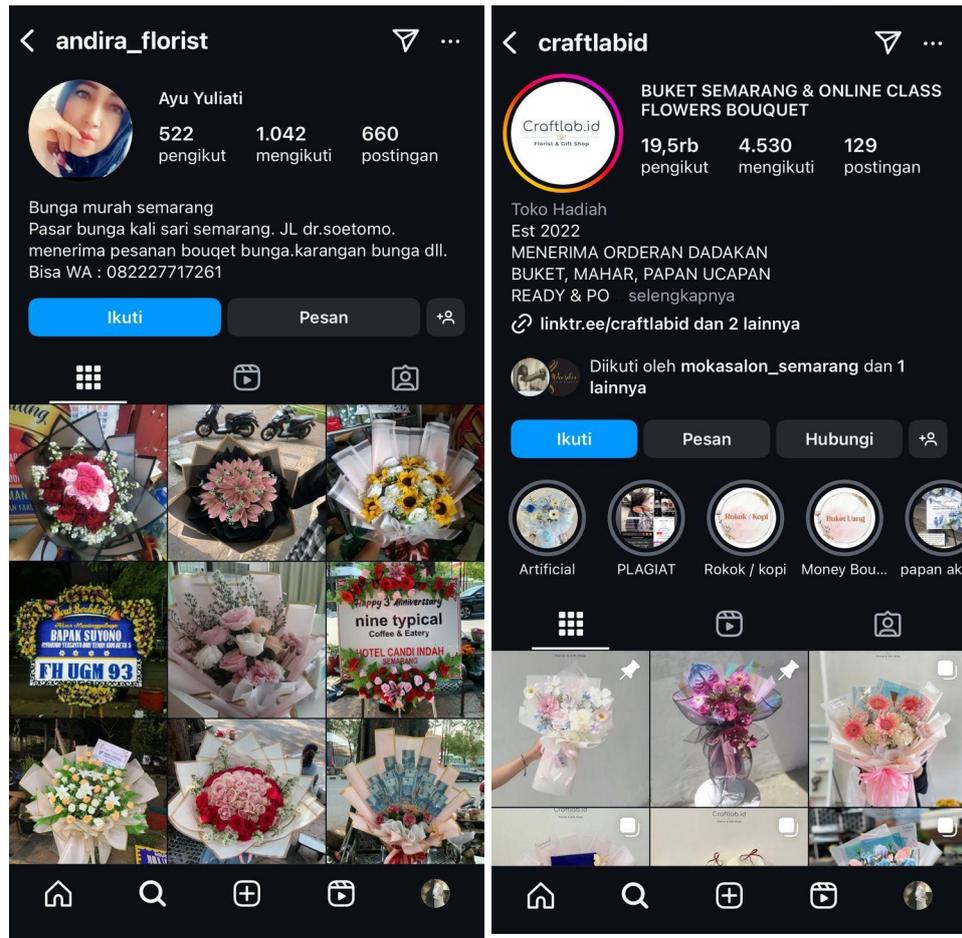


Figure 1: Instagram social media accounts of Andira Florist and its competitor Craftlabid

Interactive communication emphasizes the importance of feedback between the sender and receiver of a message, creating a two-way relationship that allows the message to be better understood and accepted. In the digital age, platforms such as social media enable SMEs to communicate directly with their audience, introduce products, and build customer loyalty through more personal and relevant interactions (Neqabi, 2012). Additionally, persuasive communication theory is also relevant in the context of offline communication. This theory explains that messages delivered directly and persuasively can influence the attitudes and behaviour of the audience (Aminul et al., 2011). In this case, face-to-face communication or through physical promotional materials such as brochures and leaflets can strengthen brand influence among local audiences. Offline activities such as exhibitions, bazaars, or collaborations with local communities provide opportunities for MSMEs to interact directly with customers and increase brand awareness more intensely (Feng et al., 2020). Furthermore, the concept of brand awareness is an important foundation in this study. Brand awareness refers to the

ability of consumers to recognise and recall a brand in a particular product category. There are several levels of brand awareness, ranging from brand recognition, brand recall, to the brand that is most frequently remembered or top of mind among consumers. Increasing brand awareness through effective communication strategies can help MSMEs stand out in competitive markets and create stronger product differentiation in the eyes of consumers (Chit et al., 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the dynamics and roles of various parties in supporting the sustainability of MSMEs, particularly at Andira Florist. In this approach, data was collected through interviews, field observations, and documentation. Interviews were used as the main data collection instrument, conducted face-to-face with purposively selected informants. The informants are individuals who have direct knowledge and experience related to business operations, promotional strategies, forms of cooperation, as well as the challenges and opportunities faced by Andira Florist. To support data analysis through data validity, the interview process was recorded using audio devices so that no information was missed and to facilitate the transcription process. In addition to interviews, the researcher also conducted direct observations at the business location to observe the field conditions and the social context surrounding the MSME's business activities. Furthermore, visual documentation, such as photographs of business activities, was also taken as supporting data. The data collection process was carried out in stages, starting from initial observations, conducting interviews, to collecting documentation. This approach was chosen to produce descriptive and contextual data, enabling a realistic portrayal of the challenges faced by SME operators in building sustainable businesses. The collected data was analysed using descriptive-qualitative methods to draw relevant findings and conclusions aligned with the research focus.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) play an important role. As part of the Indonesian economy, they have a significant impact, particularly in the creative industries and the service sector. One of the biggest challenges faced by SMEs is building and introducing their brands in a competitive market. In such situations, effective communication is essential for raising brand awareness. Andira Florist is a small business selling flowers and arrangements. They recognise the importance of using the right communication strategies to increase brand awareness. In the context of a growing digital world and changing consumer preferences, Andira Florist must utilise various communication channels, both offline and digital, to showcase their products to a broader audience. Therefore, it

is important to develop and implement communication strategies that can increase brand awareness, strengthen customer loyalty and promote long-term company growth.

The Importance of Brand Awareness for MSMEs

Brand awareness is key to ensuring that a business is widely recognised by the public. For MSMEs such as Andira Florist, having strong brand awareness is important for differentiating themselves from competitors and building customer trust. If a brand is well known, customers will find it easier to choose items, potentially leading to increased sales. The right communication strategy is then needed to raise awareness of the Andira Florist brand and strengthen its position in the market. Andira Florist's SME Instagram account uses effective visual communication strategies to achieve this. In digital marketing, product visualisation is crucial for attracting customers' attention. Andira Florist always follows this principle. The account showcases a variety of products, such as fresh flower and chocolate bouquets, arranged with a complementary backdrop. This variety demonstrates the ability to meet the needs of a diverse customer base for celebratory or mourning events. Instagram enables direct interaction and the sharing of engaging content, making it an excellent platform for increasing brand awareness. Andira Florist can expand its audience and enhance its brand visibility by using Instagram. Additionally, the account bio includes useful information such as the sales location at Kalisari Flower Market and the address. This clear information makes it easier for potential customers to access services. These visual elements and relevant information strengthen consumer perception of credibility and professionalism. This small-to-medium enterprise (SME) understands that consistency in messaging and visual appearance is crucial for building a strong brand image. Andira Florist's Instagram content serves not only as a marketing tool for products, but also as a strategic means of fostering emotional connections with customers, increasing brand visibility and expanding online market reach.

This demonstrates how social media can be used as part of an SME's digital communication strategy. Andira Florist's Instagram content includes unique promotions, customer testimonials and attractive product photos. The company employs various innovative approaches to enhance the appeal of its Instagram content and increase customer brand awareness. SMEs like Andira Florist can utilise effective marketing strategies, such as social media, to drive business growth and enhance brand awareness (Istiyanto et al., 2024). Andira Florist can strengthen customer relationships and enhance brand appeal by optimising content and interactions on the platform. This is an important component in developing brand awareness (Putra, 2024). To remain relevant in a competitive market, it is necessary to continuously change and adjust marketing strategies. Attractive product packaging can also enhance brand awareness as it attracts customers' attention and creates a positive brand impression. While interactions on Instagram can increase customer engagement and support business growth, they need to be

optimised further. Andira Florist can increase customer understanding of its brand and build stronger relationships with customers by optimising interactions. Although interactions on Instagram can increase engagement with customers and support business growth, they need to be optimised further.

Andara Florist can increase brand awareness and create stronger relationships to boost customer loyalty by optimising interactions. Consistency in posting a variety of products to meet consumer needs is very important for building brand awareness. This becomes an innovative marketing strategy for Andira Florist. According to Kurniati (2023), digital marketing requires adaptation to developments. By implementing this strategy, Andira Florist will be able to maintain relevance and competitiveness in an ever-changing market. Digital interactions facilitated by the @andira_florist account create a more intimate and meaningful user experience. The more users interact with the content, the more likely they are to develop cognitive and affective awareness of the brand.

Offline Communication Strategies to Increase Brand Awareness

Offline communication remains an effective way to increase brand awareness, particularly among local consumers. Andira Florist MSMEs can take advantage of various opportunities to participate in local events and exhibitions, such as bazaars and festivals. Andira Florist MSMEs can strengthen their offline communication by building a brand presence in the community, fostering emotional closeness and direct trust. Active participation enables Andira Florist to showcase its products, offer hands-on experiences and enhance its brand image through personal interaction. This strategy increases product visibility and fosters positive opinions through high-quality service and friendly face-to-face communication. Collaborating with local communities, such as social groups, religious organisations or schools, can expand the consumer network through word of mouth and personal recommendations, which remain highly effective in Indonesia's social environment.

Additionally, distributing physical promotional materials such as brochures or leaflets at exhibition venues is a strategic step. Merchandise such as small flowers bearing the Andira Florist logo is an effective way to introduce the brand to consumers. Such activities provide an opportunity for SMEs to interact directly with their audience, showcase product quality, and introduce the brand in a more personal manner. Offline communication enables consumers to not only see, but also touch and experience products firsthand. This creates a strong and lasting brand impression that cannot be replicated through digital interactions. By taking this approach, Andira Florist can build stronger relationships with customers and boost brand loyalty within the local community. Service quality is paramount in these interactions, significantly contributing to customer satisfaction and loyalty, which in turn can increase brand awareness (Laila, 2024). Additionally, direct communication and experience helps Andira Florist to interact directly with customers. The local community's reliance on word-of-mouth recommendations

provides a great opportunity to continue building brand closeness and trust through interpersonal channels. This means that Andira Florist prioritises offline communication as a strategic component that can strengthen brand awareness through more authentic, relational experiences, not merely as a complement to digital strategies.

To achieve its offline communication goals, Andira Florist tailors its strategies to enhance local consumers' knowledge and skills. The belief in the power of word-of-mouth communication to build trust is central to this approach. This strategy helps Andira Florist build a positive reputation and enhance its brand appeal in the eyes of local consumers.

Integration of Offline and Digital Communication

Integrating offline and digital communication is a key strategy for building the sustainability of MSMEs (micro, small and medium-sized enterprises), including businesses such as Andira Florist in Semarang. In practice, businesses face challenges in maintaining consistent brand identity amid limited resources and the need to adapt to changing consumer behaviour. An effective combination of marketing strategies can help MSMEs such as Andira Florist remain relevant and competitive in the ever-evolving digital era. Developing digital skills and leveraging technology to enhance competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market has become a fundamental need for SMEs that is constantly emphasised. Optimising the use of digital technology and communication to improve competitiveness and expand market reach has become a top priority for SMEs. Therefore, combining the power of direct offline interactions with the wide reach of digital communication is a relevant and contextual approach. Participating in local events such as bazaars or flower festivals, for example, provides a space to showcase products directly and can also direct visitors to Andira Florist's Instagram account. Brochures containing QR codes that link to digital accounts can be distributed to strengthen offline interactions, creating a bridge between face-to-face experiences and online presence.

Conversely, digital platforms such as Instagram serve not only as a visual showcase, but also as a medium to promote offline activities. For instance, they can be used to announce special discounts for customers who visit the physical store or attend certain exhibitions. Furthermore, social media interactions can boost customer engagement, thereby fostering a stronger connection between the brand and its audience. Therefore, incorporating Instagram into marketing strategies is crucial for building stronger connections and responsiveness to customer needs. Using Instagram effectively for communication and marketing can help organisations build better relationships with the public and increase mutually beneficial interactions. Using social media, especially Instagram, has proven effective for marketing in the digital age, highlighting the importance of adapting strategies to increase customer engagement and responsiveness. This integrative model offers advantages such as expanding market reach through digital channels

and building emotional closeness through direct communication. In the context of building sustainable brand awareness, the synergy between offline and digital communication is becoming an increasingly important adaptive strategy for SMEs, particularly in light of the transformation in consumer behaviour that increasingly relies on cross-channel experiences. Thus, Andira Florist strengthens its brand visibility and increases customer loyalty by providing a consistent and unified experience across various interaction points.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion shows that Andira Florist MSMEs use flexible communication strategies, considering the importance of integrating digital and offline communication to increase brand awareness. Through engaging and informative content, social media platforms such as Instagram have proven successful in showcasing product designs, building relationships with consumers, and expanding market reach. Conversely, direct communication methods, such as participating in local exhibitions, distributing brochures, and collaborating with communities, have been shown to enhance trust and create emotional connections, which are difficult to achieve solely through digital media. Direct experiences enhance personal impressions, while digital media supports information expansion and quick interaction. It is important for Andira Florist to develop a strategy that can increase brand visibility, expand the consumer base, and build a strong foundation for sustainable business growth amid the ever-changing market dynamics by implementing this integrated strategy.

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