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Wardah Marketing Communication Strategy to Improve Brand Image During Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effect of the marketing communication strategy that has been carried out by Wardah on his consumers in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Using a qualitative descriptive method with an exploratory descriptive approach. Techniques for data analysis use interactive qualitative descriptive methods in the first form, namely collecting data then data reduction, data display, and conclusions/ interpretive verification. Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that Wardah had used the right communication strategy during this pandemic to be able to maintain their brand image. Consumers remain loyal to Wardah because the brand image is very well formed. The advice that can be conveyed to Wardah is to create something that attracts the attention of consumers while maintaining a good brand image in the midst of the current pandemic.

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1. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of 2020, there was a case of a new type of disease called Covid-19 which originated in the city of Wuhan, China. The corona virus or severe acutes piratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) is a virus that irritates the respiratory system, acute pneumonia, causing death. According to BBC Indonesia on May 11, 2020, at 16.00 WIB, the number of Covid-19 virus cases out of 14,032 patients, 2,698 patients were declared cured, and 973 patients were declared dead.

With the Pandemic Covid-19 is the

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case today, people's daily behavior change as well as some of the sector which generates a revenue source for the government and society to be disturbed. Sne of the only sectors of the economy and business, some businesses suffered a setback due to the pandemic Covid 19th (Andina Prasetya et al., 2021). One of the famous cosmetic brands from Indonesia, Wardah (Ernesto Jose Tjahjono et al., 2021). As a result of this outbreak, Wardah must carry out a remarketing communication strategy to maintain business existence and increase the

brand image of the company.

According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016), marketing communication is a tool to provide information, influence, and remind consumers, either directly or indirectly, about a product or service being offered. Marketing communication is very important in a business. Marketing communication that is done correctly and correctly can provide benefits in a business. For example, increasing consumer loyalty can do several ways, one of which is by increasing the brand image. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2010), brand image is a perspective that impresses consumers, is formed through experience, and is relatively consistent. For this reason, it is important for the Wardah Cosmetics brand to pay attention to the image that is given to consumers because the brand image given greatly influences consumers to make purchases or not. Especially in the middle of this current pandemic, semakin good brand image is given, the higher the level of consumer interest.

Therefore, a study is needed to determine the effect of the marketing communication strategy carried out by Wardah in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Many researchers have conducted research with similar cases, but this study focuses more on the strategies used by the Wardah brand in increasing its brand image during the Covid-19 virus pandemic. The output that is expected by other business players can apply the right marketing communication strategy to be implemented in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic as Wardah has done so that business players continue to earn income, maintain business and increase consumer loyalty by continuing to carry out targeted, innovative strategies and creative.

2. METHODS

The research was conducted from May to June 2020. The method used is a qualitative descriptive method, which is research that seeks to describe the facts in the field and then describe them in the form of an actual explanation. In this research, the approach taken is through a descriptive exploratory approach. The object of research is the cosmetic products of PT. Paragon Technology and Innovation, namely Wardah cosmetics. The type of data collected is primary data obtained through questionnaires to several sources of information (informants). In conducting the survey, researchers used a personal approach (unstructured questionnaire) to obtain information related to Wardah's Brand. Techniques for data analysis use interactive qualitative descriptive methods in the first form, namely collecting data then data reduction, data display, and conclusions / interpretive verification.

2.1 Marketing Communication Strategy

Marketing communication strategy is part of communication planning in achieving the goals to be achieved (Cangara, 2013). Marketing communication strategies are continuous creative steps aimed at achieving the best marketing targets to achieve the maximum level of consumer satisfaction Adisaputro (2010). The similarity obtained from the two researchers is that the marketing communication strategy is a strategy carried out to achieve customer satisfaction levels. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2001)

"Marketing communication strategy is also known as a mix of marketing or promotional communications". This statement is also supported by the statement of Soemanegara (2006: 48) "the marketing communication mix consists of advertising, sales promotion, publicity, personal selling, and direct marketing". Marketing communication strategies can be done by using several forms of marketing communication, one of which is through social media.

According to Zaraella (2010) social media is argued as a medium with easy marketing access. The problem faced by business people in using social media is the limited human resources in understanding technology (Berthon, et al., 2012; Michaelidou, Siamagka, & Christodoulides, 2011; Lu, Yao, & Yu, 2005). Even though social media is very accessible, business people must also pay attention to several factors that make their products visible to people.

2.2 Brand Image

Brand Image can be defined as the belief, trust and impression that consumers have of a particular brand (Kotler and Armstrong in Anang Firmansyah, 2019). According to Henslowe (in V. Parengkuan, et al., 2014), Brand Image is an impression that is obtained according to the level of knowledge of facts about a product. Based on these two definitions, it can be concluded that Brand Image is the trust, belief and knowledge of consumers about a product.

Brand image consists of giving the target market impression of product characteristics including profit, product use, usage situation, as well as user, producer and marketing characteristics of the product (Mufid, 2005). Therefore, the attitudes and actions of consumers towards a brand are

very dependent on the brand image. Because the brand image is a requirement of a strong brand in order to repair, maintain, and enhance the company's image. (Kotler in Santi E, 2019). The part of the brand image consists of three parts, namely:

- a) Corporate image (image maker), which is a set of associations that are perceived as a company that makes a good or service.
- b) User image, which is a set of associations that consumers perceive to users who use a product or service.
- c) Product image, which is a set of associations that consumers perceive to a good or service. (Rita, 2018).

According to Timmerman (in Mega Febriani: 2014), brand image is often conceptualized as a collection of all associations related to a brand consisting of:

- a) Physical factors, namely the visible characteristics of a brand, such as packaging design, logo, brand name, function, and product use of that brand.
- b) Psychological factors, formed by emotions, beliefs, values, personalities that are considered by consumers to describe the products of the brand.
- c) Brand image is related to the thoughts and feelings that a person experiences with a particular brand, so that psychological factors play a bigger role than physical factors.

2.3 Wardah Cosmetic

Wardah initially merup will be one of the flagship products from PT. Paragon Teknologi and Innovation which was founded on February 28, 1985. At the beginning of its establishment, this company was named PT. Mother's Tradition Heritage, but in 2011 changed its name to PT. Paragon Technology and Innovation. This company was founded by a husband and wife named Drs. H. Subakat Hadi, M.Sc and Dra. Hj. Nurhayati Subakat, Apt. This company produces three brands, namely Puteri, Zahra, and Wardah. Wardah is the flagship brand of PT. Paragon Technology and Innovation compared to the other two brands. Since 1996, sales of Wardah products have begun to show significant developments in the cosmetics business in Indonesia (Rahmawati, 2013).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study prove the opinion of experts that marketing communication strategies have an influence in increasing *brand image*. Cangara, (2013) says that a marketing communication strategy is part of communication planning in achieving the goals to be achieved. One of the achievements of the marketing communication strategy is increasing the *brand image* that can influence consumers to consider purchasing a product.

The respondent amounted to 12 people with gender woman with vulnerable users of the products Wardah g aged 19-22 years who came from Bekasi, Jakarta, Bandung and Lampung. Here is kesimpulan of the answers of 12 respondents regarding the marketing communication strategy brand Wardah:

- 1) The marketing strategy is very good so that it is easily recognized by consumers. Most respondents know Wardah brand through social media, advertising in televisi, and through magazines, it shows that Wardah very attentive to the marketing strategy that can make prospective customers interested in trying the product of Wardah and make Wardah has been recognized by many people.
- 2) The reason they choose and buy Wardah products is because the price is affordable with good quality and has been tested. Consumers feel suitable to use Wardah, especially since Wardah has a long durability and has been certified halal.
- 3) They remain loyal premises n brand Wardah and still supports Wardah though Wardah decline in the company resulting from the pandemic up to 50% resulting in reduced cost promotions as low as possible and focus on sales through online only.
- 4) They have been using Wardah products for more than one year and have remained loyal to Wardah products. For them, Wardah's brand image is very good because Wardah has good product quality, attractive advertising, has halal certification, pays attention to consumers, and cares about current issues, such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

From the answers of the respondents above, it can be concluded that a good marketing communication strategy will also improve the *corporate image*, *user image*, and *product image*. These results are continuous with the theory according to Rita, SE., M.Si. (2018). Wardah has made changes in marketing communication strategies and policies in dealing with the C ovid- 19 pandemic. Wardah allocated 40 billion funds to provide CSR (*Corporate Social Responsibility*) to 130 hospitals. As a result of this pandemic, Wardah's company experienced a decline in the company by up to 50% which resulted in the lowest possible cost of promotion and advertising

pandemic. For example, such as making

and a focus on online sales only.

From the description above, it is clear that the right communication strategy will provide a good corporate *brand image* and can make consumers loyal to support the movements made by the company.

4. CONCLUSION

From the results of the research above, it can be seen that Wardah's communication strategy is able to maintain the company's brand image. This is due to several factors, namely consumers feel fit to wear the product Wardah, sebelum happens its pandemic product Wardah already famous, and has been tested, price affordable, and women still need nurses, although still at home alone. Because the factors that, brand image wardah remains good in the midst of a pandemic at this time, although Wardah has been pressing the promotion and advertising expenses as low as possible, te but consumers still remain loyal to Wardah because the brand image dib angun very good.

The results of this study are indirectly in line with previous research (Ghina Kamilah, 2017) which states that brand image has a significant and positive effect on purchasing decisions. As well as halal labeling has a positive influence so that the brand image can also affect purchasing decisions. Thus, the implications of this research ad ne good in a pandemic situation or a n on- pandemic, ternyata a product Wardah still in demand by the public so that the brand image Wardah remains good and customers remain loyal. Based on the results of the research obtained, the suggestions that can be conveyed to Wardah are: To continue to do things that can attract consumers' attention and maintain a good brand image in the midst of the current

a Photocontest, a Wardah Brand Ambassador model, where consumers are stylish as if they were a Brand Ambassador model by using the latest Wardah products (Example: Wardah Rgi Crystallure Series Original) or the consumer's flagship product.

For future researchers who are interested in examining more deeply about the marketing communication strategies that Wardah did during the Coronavirus pandemic, they should use other methods and approaches so that the results of the research are more diverse and more accurate.

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