Sensemaking in Digital Marketing Communications for Wedding Dowry Products

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ABSTRACT

The transformation of digital technology has had a significant impact on various aspects of life, one of which is marketing, which is now increasingly utilizing social media platforms, such as Instagram, as the primary strategy to reach audiences and convey information about products and services. In this context, the sensemaking process plays a vital role in understanding how information received by consumers can be interpreted and shaped into relevant meanings. This process helps consumers to assess and make decisions based on their perceptions of the messages conveyed. This study aims to analyze how the sensemaking process is applied in digital marketing communications, primarily through the Instagram platform used by the Sinopinopi Project. The study uses a qualitative method. The study results indicate that applying sensemaking in digital marketing communications can build stronger relationships between brands and consumers, encourage increased social interaction, and strengthen consumer loyalty to the brand.
Keywords: Communication Strategy; Digital Marketing Communication; Instagram Social Media; Sensemaking

INTRODUCTION

Digital technology transformation has changed various aspects of life, including marketing (Gillpatrick, 2019). Digital marketing, which utilizes social media platforms, is now a key strategy for businesses to reach and inform consumers

(Khanom, 2023). In this context, sensemaking, as proposed by Weick, plays an important role in interpreting and creating meaning from the information received by consumers (Weick et al., 2005). In digital marketing, sensemaking helps consumers understand a product's value, relevance, and benefits by connecting scattered elements of information into a cohesive and meaningful narrative (Woodside, 2001; Giannakis et al., 2022). This process allows organizations to create emotional connections with consumers so that they not only offer products but also build meaningful experiences for the audience and develop marketing strategies (Neill et al., 2007; Krush et al., 2013; Pınarbaşı & Kırçova, 2021)

Instagram marketing allows companies to offer products and services and build relevant and engaging narratives to help consumers understand the value and meaning behind a product (Kim et al., 2019). Instagram is a tool to increase sales and a strategic platform to build a brand through attractive visuals, real-time interactions, and global audience reach (Putri, 2023). This allows businesses to create meaningful experiences, helping audiences associate their products with emotional and social needs (Untari, D., & Fajariana, 2018).

According to the Hootsuite Indonesian Digital Report 2023, Instagram users in Indonesia have reached 86.5% of the total population. In addition, the increase in the percentage of Instagram users can be attributed to various factors, including increased accessibility of technology, growth of the digital economy, and community adaptation to various new features and services offered by the platform. Thus, Instagram remains a strategic platform for building brand awareness and engagement and increasing sales conversions in the dynamic and competitive Indonesian market (Riyanto, 2023).

In the context of wedding dowry products, digital marketing through Instagram offers features such as Stories, Reels, and Shopping, which allow businesses to present visual and narrative content that strengthens consumers' understanding of the product's aesthetic, cultural, and symbolic value. Sinopinopi Project, as a provider of complementary wedding products, has utilized this potential to help prospective brides and grooms realize their dream weddings by promoting products that are not only functional but also emotionally and culturally meaningful (Sinaga, 2021).

One very effective way that wedding business people can adopt to market wedding accessories is by utilizing Instagram as the primary medium in their digital marketing communication. With its ability to display attractive visual content, Instagram allows businesses to highlight the uniqueness and quality of their products more creatively and directly to relevant audiences. In addition, Instagram's interactive features, such as Stories, Reels, and Shopping, provide opportunities to promote products and build closer relationships with potential customers, increase brand awareness, and drive sales (Rachmawati et al., 2022).

Based on the background description, this study aims to analyze the sensemaking process in digital marketing communication through Instagram, especially on the Sinopinopi Project, in building meaningful and effective narratives to attract attention, increase brand awareness, and strengthen relationships with consumers. This approach is expected to be a guide for other business actors in designing digital marketing communication strategies that are relevant to the needs of the audience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital marketing communication is a communication process that utilizes digital technology and internet networks to convey marketing messages to a broader audience more effectively and efficiently (Shankar et al., 2022). Digital marketing communications are a tool to convey messages to audiences and a communication strategy to create a visual narrative centered on brand identity and value.(Ala-Kortesmaa et al., 2022). In sensemaking, as described by Weick, digital marketing communications create opportunities for businesses to help audiences construct meaning through interaction, visual narratives, and in-depth data analysis (Idrysheva et al., 2019). Sensemaking occurs when consumers begin to process a brand's visual content and narrative. This process allows consumers to understand the product's benefits, uniqueness, and value proposition.

Digital marketing communications is not only about moving traditional communications to digital platforms but also about leveraging the advantages of digital technology to create a more effective and interactive marketing experience for consumers through marketing strategies that aim to reach, attract, and influence target audiences through digital platforms that allow users to obtain data to understand consumer behavior, identify trends and predict future needs so that they can adjust decision-making strategies more precisely (Sidharta et al., 2024).

In the era of digital technology disruption, marketing communication is a marketing technique that utilizes various digital platforms and technologies to promote products and services to customers and potential buyers. The main goal is to increase brand awareness, build relationships with potential customers, and ultimately increase sales (JyotiVerma, 2022). With digital technology, digital marketing communications enable businesses to reach a broader and more segmented audience than traditional marketing methods, which are often limited in reach and effectiveness.

Digital marketing communications is a strategic approach that utilizes various digital channels to interact with consumers, promote products or services, and build ongoing relationships with target audiences (Okonkwo et al., 2023). Digital marketing communications is a strategic process involving various digital platforms and tools to communicate marketing messages, build strong relationships with audiences, and drive desired actions. (JyotiVerma, 2022).

Technological advances have enabled social media to function as a tool for communicating and marketing products and services (Khanom, 2023). Social media is a reliable communication tool, and even when traditional media fails to convey the message, social media is considered a long-distance interaction channel to build information exchange relationships between its users. Utilizing Instagram social media to market wedding equipment products is a very strategic step considering the characteristics of this platform, which is very visual and interactive.

Instagram is a marketing tool that allows interaction with customers to share photos and videos and comment or receive comments to share information and like or dislike content to get customer feedback (Adegbola et al., 2018). According to Challa, Instagram is a platform for sharing images and videos and a strategic tool that can help businesses reach a wider audience, strengthen brand identity, and drive business growth (Akhila Challa, 2021). With the right strategy, business people can use Instagram to build brand identity, increase engagement, and achieve significant growth.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design, utilizing a constructivist paradigm approach. The choice of this approach is grounded in its ability to explore and interpret the meanings constructed by individuals or groups in a particular context, such as business actors and consumers interacting on digital platforms like Instagram. The study focuses on the Sinopinopi Project, which uses Instagram as a digital marketing communication tool for complementary wedding products. The sample for this study consists of key informants directly involved in the management and implementation of digital marketing strategies at Sinopinopi Project, including the Owner and the Social Media Specialist.

Instrument and Procedures

The main data collection instrument used in this study is in-depth interviews, which were conducted with the key informants. These interviews were designed to gather insights on how the Sinopinopi Project utilizes Instagram in its digital marketing strategy. Secondary data were collected through a review of relevant literature, including studies, reports, and articles on digital marketing and social media platforms. The data collection was conducted with careful consideration of the research participants' perspectives, in line with the constructivist approach (Lew et al., 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a qualitative approach that involves thematic analysis. Thematic analysis allows the researcher to identify, analyze, and report

patterns (themes) within the data. The analysis process was carried out by interpreting the interview transcripts and literature review findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Sinopinopi Project uses Instagram as a tool for digital marketing. The researcher applied a constructivist perspective to interpret the data, focusing on understanding the subjective meanings and experiences shared by the informants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Sinopinopi Project is a business actor engaged in retail and services, better known as a specialist in handicraft products and wedding needs, commonly called a craft and wedding specialist. The products and services offered include various wedding accessories, making it a vendor that provides comprehensive solutions for prospective brides and grooms. Sinopinopi Project actively utilizes Instagram social media as the leading platform in their digital marketing strategy to expand market reach and increase the visibility of the products and services offered.

This process reflects the application of sensemaking, where the Sinopinopi Project seeks to build transparent and consistent meaning for its audience through structured narratives and strong visuals, providing a deep understanding of the quality and aesthetics of the wedding dowry products they offer. With a following of 6,525, the Sinopinopi Project has succeeded in building a significant online presence, allowing them to more easily reach potential customers from various regions, strengthen brand awareness, and increase interaction with a broader audience. Instagram is used to showcase the uniqueness and quality of their products through attractive and informative visual content, which is an integral part of an effective digital marketing strategy and creates meaning that builds emotional closeness between the product and the consumer.

Figure 1. Sinopinopi Project Instagram Profile

Through Instagram, Sinopinopi Project displays its products attractively and aesthetically, using elegant and creative visuals to attract the attention of potential customers. Each post serves as a promotional tool and a means to build a closer and more personal relationship with the audience, creating a shared understanding of the meaning behind each dowry design. The featured products offered by the Sinopinopi Project include a variety of unique and exclusive wedding decorations and equipment.

Some of them are maroon ornaments in baskets that add an elegant impression, acrylic brush dowry that offers a modern artistic touch, Daneswara dowry with a terrarium frame that gives a natural and exotic feel, Ayla Moon ring box designed with minimalist beauty, and dowry gifts that are carefully arranged to create memorable moments for the bride and groom. Each product is designed to meet high aesthetic tastes while providing emotional value for couples planning their special day.

Digital marketing strategies have become important in an organization's efforts to promote products in today's digital era. Through digital marketing, products or services can be promoted more effectively and efficiently through content distributed on various social media platforms. Sinopinopi Project, as a business actor in the retail and service sector, has implemented several steps in their digital marketing strategy, which also facilitates the sensemaking process by creating a narrative that builds audience understanding of their products:

1. Branding is a key element that creates a unique identity for the products or services offered by a company. Branding plays an important role in building consumer awareness and loyalty. Sinopinopi Project uses branding to ensure that consumers can easily recognize and remember their wedding accessories and communicate the meaning they want to convey about the quality and emotional value of each product.

2. Content Planner: Social media specialist as a content planner is responsible for planning and developing content that is in line with the company's marketing objectives. At Sinopinopi Project, this role is crucial in creating engaging and relevant content for the target audience on Instagram, ensuring that each piece of content not only attracts attention but communicates meaning consistent with the brand identity.

3. Targeted Advertising: Advertising is an effective tool to convey product information to the audience. Sinopinopi Project uses targeted advertising on Instagram to reach an audience that fits their consumer profile, making the ads more relevant and effective in conveying messages that build the meaning they want to achieve, namely consumer understanding of the quality and aesthetics of their wedding products.

4. Social Media Marketing: Social media marketing allows direct consumer interaction and helps build a loyal community. Sinopinopi Project uses Instagram to increase brand awareness, support sales of their wedding accessories, and explore their audience's needs and wants, thus creating relevant meaning with the audience and building a more emotional connection.

According to Mela Sabrina, a social media specialist at the Sinopinopi Project, product branding is done through effective marketing strategies considering how the audience interprets and understands each message. By using digital marketing techniques, Mela Sabrina aims to increase product visibility among consumers, ensuring that Sinopinopi Project products are known, understood, and remembered in a memorable way by their target audience. This branding includes various activities to facilitate consumer sensemaking, from creating a consistent visual identity to developing a brand narrative that resonates with consumer needs and desires. Through these steps, Sinopinopi Project seeks to build strong relationships with potential customers and strengthen its position as a reliable provider of complementary wedding products while supporting the growth of MSMEs in the digital era.

> *"Yes, in my opinion, digital marketing is one of the marketing strategies, right? How do we promote branding like that, especially since we are in the MSMEs sector, so one of the ways we can let people know what we actually want to sell?"*

The strategy implemented by the Sinopinopi Project aims to make its products known to the broader community. Using Instagram social media as an interactive medium, the Sinopinopi Project seeks to create brand awareness, namely consumer awareness of the brands and products they offer. Brand awareness is critical because it is the foundation for consumers to recognize, understand, choose, and ultimately buy products from the Sinopinopi Project. This is also closely related to how the audience understands the message conveyed and uses it as a reference in decision-making.

By introducing products through engaging and informative Instagram content, the Sinopinopi Project seeks to attract new consumers and strengthen relationships with existing consumers. This process involves preparing a planned content strategy by considering the audience's sensemaking process, such as regular posting, engaging visuals, and direct interaction with followers through comments or private messages. Through this approach, the audience can more easily understand the meaning of the product and the message the brand wants to convey.

In addition, this strategy also includes the use of targeted advertising designed to reach specific market segments, ensuring that Sinopinopi Project's marketing messages reach the right audience in the right way. With this approach, the audience can more quickly interpret and respond to the ads they receive, making promotions

through Instagram more effective in converting followers into loyal customers. Sinopinopi Project's success in implementing this digital marketing strategy can be seen from the increase in the number of followers, high levels of engagement, and significant sales growth. Through a consistent and measurable approach, the Sinopinopi Project has created a strong brand presence on social media platforms, ultimately contributing to achieving their overall business goals.

Overall, the strategy implemented by the Sinopinopi Project includes four main elements that are interconnected to achieve practical marketing goals in the digital realm. These elements include a) Branding, b) Content Planning, c) Targeted Advertising and d) Social Media Marketing. Branding is the first step the Sinopinopi Project takes to build a strong and different identity from its competitors. Through branding, the Sinopinopi Project seeks to create a deep and memorable impression in the minds of consumers, facilitating the sensemaking process so that the audience can immediately associate the product with the values and quality they expect. This is done by creating a distinctive logo, using a consistent color palette, and developing a brand narrative that describes the values and uniqueness of their products. This branding is the basis for all other marketing activities, ensuring that every communication carried out aligns with the brand identity that has been built.

Content planners play an important role in developing and managing content strategies that will be published on social media, especially Instagram. Sinopinopi Project realizes that interesting and relevant content is the key to attracting audience attention. Therefore, they plan content carefully, covering various formats such as high-quality product photos, video tutorials, customer testimonials, and behind-the-scenes stories that give a personal touch. These contents are designed not only to be interesting but also to build consumer engagement and loyalty. This also supports the audience's sensemaking process, where they interpret the value and meaning of the product from what is presented in the content.

Targeted advertising is one of the important strategies implemented by the Sinopinopi Project to ensure that their marketing campaigns reach the right audience. By utilizing the advertising features available on Instagram, the Sinopinopi Project can filter audiences based on specific criteria such as demographics, interests, and online behavior. This allows them to show relevant ads to potential customers who are more likely to be interested and buy their products. Targeted advertising also helps optimize marketing budgets, ensuring that every dollar invested delivers maximum results. By selecting the right audience, their sensemaking process is faster and more relevant to the products offered.

Social media marketing is at the heart of Sinopinopi Project's digital strategy. Using Instagram as their primary platform, Sinopinopi Project can reach a wider audience, build an active community, and engage directly with their customers. Through regular posting, strategic hashtag usage, and collaboration with influencers, the Sinopinopi Project has increased visibility and engagement on social media. This

strategy helps increase brand awareness, drive sales, and expand their market reach. These activities aim to facilitate consumer sensemaking to understand and associate the brand with values that match their expectations.

Combining branding, content planning, targeted advertising, and social media marketing forms a strong foundation for the Sinopinopi Project in executing its digital marketing strategy. With a holistic and integrated approach, Sinopinopi Project can build a strong brand and create a strong relationship with its audience, ultimately contributing to the business's success in the digital era through an effective and efficient sensemaking process in marketing communications.

CONCLUSION

The digital marketing strategy implemented by the Sinopinopi Project focuses on increasing brand visibility through social media and how the brand can be understood, interpreted, and remembered by its audience. With a structured approach based on sensemaking, the Sinopinopi Project has effectively communicated the brand identity to consumers, making it easier for them to understand the value, quality, and uniqueness of the wedding dowry products offered. Important elements in this strategy such as strong branding, relevant content planning, targeted advertising, and social media marketing activities— serve as tools to create a deeper relationship between the brand and its consumers.

Sinopinopi Project can build better connections with its audiences and increase consumer engagement and loyalty by utilizing sensemaking in digital marketing communications. By emphasizing the audience's active involvement in getting to know and understand the brand, this strategy not only serves to create brand awareness but also optimizes the consumer journey from initial introduction to purchase. Sinopinopi Project's success in increasing sales and expanding market share also reflects the effectiveness of in-depth and integrated communication with the audience, significantly impacting the development of their business in the digital era.

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