

SOCIAL MEDIA UTILIZATION STRATEGY TO ENHANCE BRAND AWARENESS: A CASE STUDY OF SUMDE BETTA ORNAMENTAL FISH BREEDER IN TULUNGAGUNG

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the optimization strategy of social media utilization in enhancing brand awareness of ornamental betta fish products at Sumde Betta, Kedungwaru, Tulungagung. Amid the declining popularity of betta fish after the pandemic boom, Sumde Betta has maintained its business presence and expanded market reach through TikTok and Instagram. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the owner, social media administrators, content creators, and consumers, supported by observation and documentation of social media activities. The findings show that Sumde Betta applies a structured digital communication strategy through educational content, product visualization, storytelling, and two-way interaction. Short videos, Reels, Stories, and live streaming are used to support sales, build trust, and strengthen emotional connections with consumers. Consistent content optimization encourages audiences to move from brand awareness to brand advocacy, where consumers voluntarily recommend the brand to others. The main challenges include limited human resources, administrative workloads, and continuous content demands. These challenges are addressed through task distribution, team collaboration, and flexible audience-oriented strategies. This study confirms that effective social media optimization depends on communication strategy, brand consistency, and adaptive digital relationship management.

Keywords: *social media, brand awareness, digital marketing, ornamental betta fish, Sumdebetta*

INTRODUCTION

The development of social media has transformed the way micro-businesses build relationships with consumers. Platforms such as TikTok and Instagram serve not only as promotional tools but also as digital communication spaces for building brand awareness, strengthening trust, and creating an emotional connection with the audience. Digital marketing enables businesses to reach consumers more broadly, quickly, and measurably through the use of digital technology in marketing activities (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). For micro-businesses with limited resources, social media is a vital tool because it supports promotion, two-way interaction, product visualization, and the distribution of brand messages more efficiently.

The ornamental betta fish industry is a microbusiness sector significantly influenced by social media dynamics. During the pandemic, ornamental betta fish experienced a substantial surge in popularity. However, as this trend waned, many business owners faced challenges in retaining consumer attention, maintaining sales, and building brand differentiation. In modern marketing, brand awareness is a crucial foundation as it relates to consumers' ability to recognize and recall a brand within a specific product category (Aaker, 1991). Therefore, the success of

ornamental betta fish marketing depends not only on product quality but also on business owners' ability to manage digital communication consistently and adaptively.

Sumde Betta is an ornamental betta fish breeder in Kedungwaru, Tulungagung, that has managed to sustain its business through the use of social media, particularly TikTok and Instagram. Sumde Betta not only showcases its betta fish products visually but also utilizes educational content, storytelling, short videos, Reels, Stories, live streaming, and direct interaction with customers. This strategy ensures that social media functions not only as a sales channel but also as a means to build trust, strengthen brand identity, and drive audience engagement. This aligns with social media marketing concepts that emphasize the importance of platform selection, valuable content, consistent posting, and performance evaluation in strengthening brand communication (Wardhana, 2025).

Several previous studies have examined the role of social media in increasing brand awareness. Simanjuntak and Shabrina (2024) demonstrate that TikTok can be used as a marketing communication tool to boost brand recognition through adaptive communication strategies. Gisellim and Yoedtadi (2024) emphasize that social media plays a role in

increasing brand awareness through consistent content and communication with the audience. Saldina and Anjarsari (2022) also show that digital marketing via Instagram can help small business owners strengthen their marketing activities through product visualization and consistent posting. However, most of these studies still focus on digital marketing in general or on a broader range of business types.

In practice, social media optimization for micro-businesses involves more than just choosing a platform or determining posting frequency. Business owners must also manage content ideas, visual consistency, communication style, two-way interaction, customer service, and changes to platform algorithms that can affect content reach. For businesses raising ornamental betta fish, these aspects become even more critical because the products offered rely heavily on visual appeal, trust in the fish's quality, and the closeness of communication between sellers and consumers. Therefore, understanding how content strategies, storytelling, live streaming, and admin responses shape the consumer experience is a vital component in assessing the effectiveness of social media as a tool for building brand awareness.

This study highlights Sumde Betta as an interesting case because this micro-enterprise has managed to maintain its brand presence amid a post-pandemic decline in the betta fish market. The research focuses not only on the use of social media as a promotional tool but also on how Sumde Betta builds a digital communication system through content planning, product visualization, storytelling, two-way interaction, customer service, live streaming, and brand advocacy. In the Marketing 4.0 concept, the consumer journey can progress from awareness, appeal, inquiry, action, to advocacy, so that social media can play a role in driving consumers from brand awareness toward voluntary recommendations to others (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2017).

Based on the above discussion, this study aims to analyze strategies for optimizing the use of social media to increase brand awareness of ornamental betta fish products at Sumde Betta in Tulungagung. This study is expected to make an academic contribution to the field of digital marketing communication and serve as a practical reference for micro-business owners in managing social media to build brand awareness in a sustainable manner.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. This approach

was chosen because the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of strategies for optimizing the use of social media to increase brand awareness of ornamental betta fish products at Sumde Betta in Tulungagung. A qualitative approach is appropriate for exploring and understanding the meaning of a social phenomenon based on the experiences, perspectives, and information of research subjects within a specific context (Creswell, 2010). The case study method was used because this study focuses on a single subject of study, namely Sumde Betta, which actively utilizes TikTok and Instagram as digital communication and marketing platforms.

The subject of this study is Sumde Betta, an ornamental betta fish breeder located in Kedungwaru, Tulungagung. The study focuses on social media strategies, content planning, digital communication, audience interaction, consumer experience, and the role of TikTok and Instagram in building brand awareness. This study also examines the challenges faced by Sumde Betta in managing social media and the solutions implemented to maintain brand communication consistency.

Research informants were selected using purposive sampling, which involves selecting informants based on their direct involvement with the research focus. A total of 8 informants were included: 1 Sumde Betta owner, 2 social media administrators, 2 content creators, and 3 Sumde Betta consumers. The owner was selected because they understand business strategies and brand identity. The social media administrators were selected because they manage communication, transactions, and customer complaints. Content creators were selected because they are involved in content planning and production. Consumers were selected because they have experience viewing content, interacting, purchasing products, and evaluating the brand experience. Informant criteria included direct involvement with Sumde Betta's TikTok and Instagram activities, understanding or experience with digital communication, willingness to be interviewed, and—specifically for consumers—having previously interacted with or purchased Sumde Betta products.

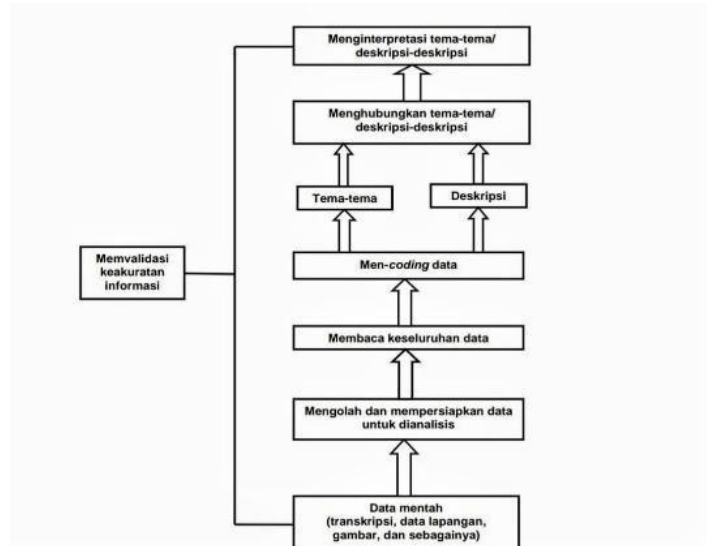
Data collection methods included in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were used to gather information on social media optimization strategies, content production processes, digital communication patterns, consumer experiences, and challenges in social media management. Observations were conducted on Sumde Betta's TikTok and Instagram activities, focusing on content types,

communication styles, use of platform features, audience interactions, and brand message consistency. Documentation was carried out by collecting screenshots of posts, comments, Reels, Stories, live streams, and other relevant forms of digital interaction.

Data analysis utilized Creswell's

qualitative analysis model, which includes data organization, comprehensive data reading, coding, theme development, data presentation, interpretation, and drawing conclusions (Creswell, 2010). The data analysis flowchart is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Stages of Qualitative Data Analysis



Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation were grouped into key themes: social media optimization strategies, content strategies, audience interaction, brand awareness building, social media management challenges, and solutions implemented by Sumde Betta. The analysis results were then interpreted by linking field findings to concepts of digital marketing, social media marketing, brand awareness, and the 5A customer path. The 5A model—comprising aware, appeal, ask, act, and advocate—was used to understand consumer movement from the stage of becoming aware of a brand to recommending the brand to others (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

The Use of Social Media in Building Brand Awareness

Research findings indicate that social media serves as the primary channel utilized by Sumde Betta to build brand awareness. The most dominant platforms used are TikTok and Instagram, as both are capable of showcasing product visuals in an engaging manner, reaching a broader audience, and facilitating direct interaction with consumers. Through short videos, Reels, Stories, and live streams, Sumde Betta is able to introduce its ornamental betta fish products to potential consumers who were previously unfamiliar with the brand.

Content appearing on recommendation pages such as the For You Page and Reels serve as the starting point for consumers to discover Sumde Betta. Consumers not only view the products but also gain information about fish species, care, packaging processes, and sales activities. These findings indicate that social media is not merely used as a promotional tool but also as a communication space to build brand awareness, trust, and initial relationships with the audience.

Content Optimization and Audience Engagement Strategies

Sumde Betta's social media optimization strategy is implemented through educational content, product visuals, storytelling, the use of hooks, calls to action, and two-way engagement with the audience. Educational content such as tutorials on fish care, breeding processes, packaging, and explanations of fish species receives a positive response from the audience because it provides practical information. Additionally, product visuals that detail color, fin shape, fish movement, and fish condition help consumers assess product quality before making a purchase.

Sumde Betta also uses a distinctive communication style and storytelling to make content more engaging and easily recognizable. The owner's involvement in some content further strengthens the connection between the brand and the audience. Two-way interaction takes place through comments, direct messages, live

streaming, WhatsApp, and transaction platforms. Admins are responsible for answering questions, providing product information, explaining purchase procedures, and addressing customer complaints. This communication approach helps build trust and enhance the consumer experience with the brand.

Live streaming and open auction systems are key strategies for increasing audience engagement. Through live streams, consumers can view fish in real-time, ask questions directly, compare products, and follow the purchasing process interactively. This strategy transforms social media not only into an information platform but also into a space for transactions and building relationships with consumers.

Challenges in Social Media Management

The research findings identified several challenges in the process of optimizing Sumde Betta's social media. The first challenge is the demand for continuous content production. The team must constantly generate content ideas that are engaging, relevant, and aligned with audience preferences. This challenge is exacerbated by the fact that social media trends change rapidly and require constant adjustments to communication styles.

The second challenge is limited human resources. Social media management encompasses not only content creation but also customer communication, transaction management, administration, packaging, and handling complaints. As the volume of messages or transactions increases, admin responses can sometimes become slower. This situation indicates that the digital workload is substantial and requires a clear division of tasks.

The third challenge relates to changes in platform algorithms and policies. TikTok and Instagram have content distribution systems that businesses cannot fully control. Algorithm changes, feature restrictions, or technical issues can affect content reach and the effectiveness of promotions. The fourth challenge is handling consumer complaints, particularly regarding the condition of fish after delivery, delayed responses, or discrepancies between the visual content and buyers' expectations.

Solutions Implemented by Sumde Betta

To address these challenges, Sumde Betta implemented several operational and strategic solutions. On the operational side, tasks were divided among the owner, administrators, and content creators to ensure a more organized social media management process. Internal coordination was maintained to ensure that content, transactions, and customer service continued to

run smoothly despite the increase in digital activity.

On the content side, Sumde Betta developed a flexible strategy and tailored posted material to audience needs. Educational content, product visualizations, storytelling, and live streaming were maintained as the primary formats because they have proven effective at capturing consumer attention. Regarding customer service, Sumde Betta strengthened communication through multiple channels—such as WhatsApp, marketplaces, and social media to ensure consumers receive information more quickly and clearly.

Sumde Betta has also begun developing a digital self-reliance strategy through platform diversification and the utilization of alternative transaction channels. This step is taken to reduce reliance on a single social media platform and maintain sustainable communication with consumers. This solution demonstrates that social media optimization is not only achieved through content but also through team management, digital services, and adaptation to platform changes.

DISCUSSION

Social Media as a Tool for Building Brand Awareness

The research findings indicate that TikTok and Instagram play a significant role in building brand awareness for Sumde Betta. Social media enables potential consumers to become familiar with the brand through visual content, short videos, Reels, Stories, and live streams. This aligns with the concept of digital marketing, which explains that digital technology can help businesses reach consumers more broadly, quickly, interactively, and measurably (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). In this study, social media serves not only as a promotional tool but also as a communication space that shapes consumers' perceptions of the brand.

Brand awareness is established when consumers are able to recognize and recall a brand within a specific product category. Aaker (1991) explains that brand awareness is a key element of brand equity because it helps consumers recognize, recall, and distinguish a brand from its competitors. At Sumde Betta, brand recognition is built through visual consistency, a distinctive communication style, and content that is relevant to the audience's needs. Attractive betta fish visuals, clear product information, and the presence of educational content help the audience distinguish Sumde Betta from other competitors in the ornamental betta fish industry.

These findings are also consistent with

research by Gisellim and Yoedtadi (2024), which shows that social media can be a means to increase brand awareness through consistent content and communication with the audience. In the case of Sumde Betta, this consistency is evident in the active use of TikTok and Instagram, the utilization of product visuals, and a communication style that is closely aligned with the community of ornamental betta fish enthusiasts.

Content, Interaction, and the Customer Journey

Educational content, storytelling, live streaming, and two-way interaction are key elements in guiding consumers from brand awareness through interest, information seeking, purchase, to recommendation. Within the 5A customer path framework, social media can drive consumers through the stages of awareness, appeal, inquiry, action, and advocacy (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2017). Research findings indicate that consumers first become aware of Sumde Betta through content, then become interested due to the visuals and information provided, seek information via comments or direct messages, make a purchase, and ultimately recommend the brand to others when satisfied.

The educational content presented by Sumde Betta—such as tutorials on fish care, breeding, packaging, and explanations of fish species—strengthens the brand's position as a trusted source of information. This aligns with Wardhana's (2025) view that valuable, informative, and consistent social media content can increase audience engagement and reinforce brand communication. These findings also support the research by Saldina and Anjarsari (2022), which states that product visualization and consistent posting on Instagram can help small business owners strengthen their digital marketing.

Two-way interaction reinforces this process because consumers do not merely passively receive information but can also ask questions, request explanations, follow live streams, and receive direct responses from the admin. Responsive digital interaction can strengthen the relationship between the brand and consumers because consumers feel involved in the communication process. This aligns with Lim and Rasul (2022), who emphasize that consumer engagement on social media can strengthen the relationship between consumers and the brand. This trust becomes even stronger when the product received matches the visuals displayed in the content.

Additionally, the use of storytelling in Sumde Betta's content helps create an emotional connection with the audience. Storytelling can

make brand messages easier to understand, more engaging, and more memorable for consumers. In digital marketing, a strong narrative can help build positive associations with the brand and influence the audience's interest in the product (Fauziyyah & Putri, 2024).

Challenges and Adaptations of Microenterprises in Digital Marketing

The challenges faced by Sumde Betta demonstrate that social media optimization depends not only on platform usage but also on the ability to manage resources, content, services, and algorithm changes. Human resource constraints are a significant issue because microenterprises often have small teams, while digital activities require quick responses, regular content production, and consistent transaction management. This situation aligns with the findings of Patma et al. (2021), who explain that social media can support the sustainability of MSMEs, but its success remains influenced by business management capacity and adaptation to the digital environment.

Algorithm changes, feature restrictions, and reliance on third-party platforms also pose challenges in maintaining content reach. Dwivedi et al. (2021) emphasize that the evolution of social media compels businesses to continuously adjust their digital marketing strategies as consumer behavior, platform technology, and digital interaction patterns continue to shift. In the case of Sumde Betta, these challenges were addressed through flexible content planning, platform diversification, and the use of multiple communication channels.

The adaptive strategies implemented by Sumde Betta—including task delegation, flexible content planning, platform diversification, and enhanced customer service—demonstrate that social media success requires structured management. Micro-enterprises must possess the ability to understand audience needs, maintain brand message consistency, and adapt strategies to the dynamics of digital platforms. Laradi, Berbou, and Ouabouch (2023) explain that the ability to manage social media posts, interactions, and monitoring plays a role in shaping brand image and brand awareness.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that social media optimization at Sumde Betta occurs through the integration of educational content, product visualization, storytelling, live streaming, two-way interaction, customer service, and internal adaptation. This discussion underscores that increased brand awareness is not solely determined by the intensity of social media use, but also by content quality, brand identity

consistency, communication responsiveness, and the ability of micro-enterprises to build sustainable digital relationships with consumers. This aligns with Dabbous and Barakat (2020), who state that the quality of social media content can influence brand awareness and consumer purchase intent.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that a social media optimization strategy plays a crucial role in raising brand awareness for Sumde Betta, a betta fish breeder in Tulungagung. The use of TikTok and Instagram through educational content, consistent product visuals, storytelling, live streaming, and two-way interaction can strengthen brand recognition, build consumer trust, and encourage the audience to move from the brand awareness stage to interest, purchase, and finally, a willingness to recommend the brand to others. These findings indicate that social media success is not solely determined by posting frequency but also by content quality, brand identity consistency, communication responsiveness, and the micro-enterprise's ability to manage digital relationships with consumers. Nevertheless, Sumde Betta still faces challenges such as limited human resources, administrative burdens, content production demands, delayed admin responses, and platform algorithm changes. Therefore, Sumde Betta is advised to develop a more systematic content calendar, strengthen the division of tasks between admins and content creators, improve the speed of customer service responses, maintain authentic educational and product visual content, and develop additional digital channels such as marketplaces or websites to avoid over-reliance on a single social media platform. Future research is recommended to use a quantitative or mixed-methods approach to measure the impact of social media strategies on engagement, purchasing decisions, and consumer loyalty in a more measurable way.

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