International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

The Implementation of Word of Mouth as a Marketing Strategy for Red Chili to Enhance Sales and Revenue at Pondok Pesantren LSQ Arrohmah

Muhammad Zafir Hikam[1], Muhammad Nur Abdi [2]

[1]Origin of the Campus, Universitas Terbuka Yogyakarta
[2]Univeristas muhammadiyah makassar[2]

Email: 049332813@ecampus.ut.ac.id , mnurabdi@unismuh.ac.id

Abstract

This study endeavors to analyze the implementation of the word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing strategy as a means to promote red chili at Pondok Pesantren LSQ Arrohmah, as well as its influence on augmenting sales volume and revenue. Employing a qualitative approach, the research utilizes data collection methods such as interviews and observations, with informants comprising santri, local residents, and consumers, through in-depth conversational techniques. The findings reveal that the active engagement of santri and consumers in disseminating WOM significantly elevates public awareness of the red chili product, thereby contributing to an increase in sales volume and the institution's income. This strategy has proven particularly effective within the context of community-based marketing and strong social ties.

Keywords: Word-of-Mouth, Strategic Marketing, Crimson Chili, Sales Performance, Revenue Generation

INTRODUCTION

Historically, the community has predominantly perceived pesantren solely as religious educational institutions focused on Islamic studies and the spiritual formation of santri. However, contemporary pesantren are increasingly evolving into multifaceted entities that also assume economic roles. As articulated by Fathoni (Fathoni & Rohim, 2019), pesantren possess substantial potential to foster economic development through

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

their inherent resources, including human capital, social networks, and community trust. This aligns with the spirit of self-reliance that pesantren embody in confronting modern challenges and in equipping santri with pragmatic life skills.

Furthermore, pesantren's economic independence can be advanced through the empowerment of enterprise units rooted within the institution, such as agriculture, livestock, and trade. Pesantren transcend their traditional roles as religious and educational centers to become pivotal economic hubs that contribute directly to the welfare of surrounding communities. Such initiatives bolster the pesantren's vision as resilient, autonomous, and adaptive institutions capable of responding to contemporary developments (Fitria, 2022).

One notable endeavor undertaken by Pondok Pesantren LSQ Arrohmah, located in Yogyakarta, involves the development of a self-sustaining enterprise—namely, the cultivation of bird's-eye chili (cabai rawit). This agricultural activity functions not only as an educational platform for santri in farming practices but also as a sustainable source of income for the pesantren. The project optimizes the pesantren's land resources productively and actively involves santri in all stages of cultivation, from planting and maintenance to marketing the harvest. Additionally, research indicates that the cultivation of bird's-eye chili using organic hormonal treatments such as GSA (Gibberellin, Cytokinin, Auxin) can enhance crop productivity. Conducted in Sleman, Yogyakarta, this study reported a yield of 62.26 kilograms over 14 harvest cycles, demonstrating significant profit potential for the chili farming venture (Suhita et al., 2024).



The price table for chili at Beringharjo Market (Food Prices, n.d.)

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

According to the aforementioned price table, the cost of bird's-eye chili in the Yogyakarta region is characterized by fluctuations and tends to remain elevated, particularly during the rainy season or in the lead-up to major religious festivities. Data from the Yogyakarta Special Region Trade Department (DIY) indicate that the price of bird's-eye chili once surged to Rp100,000 per kilogram at the beginning of 2025. This situation presents a substantial opportunity for local farmers, including pesantren communities, to market their chili directly to consumers at competitive yet profitable prices (Media, 2025).

Modern marketing concepts emphasize that products should align with consumer needs and preferences. This creates a favorable prospect for pesantren situated in densely populated areas, such as LSQ Arrohmah, which is located in close proximity to residential neighborhoods. Such proximity offers advantages in distributing products directly to end-users, minimizing intermediary costs and fostering more personal interactions with consumers. A similar approach has been adopted by Pondok Pesantren Nurul Huda Blora, where Fina Ulliya's research reveals that the pesantren implements a marketing strategy involving direct distribution to local consumers. This tactic has proven effective in increasing sales volume and strengthening the relationship between the pesantren and the surrounding community (Ulliya, n.d.).

Among the most effective community-scale marketing strategies is word-of-mouth (WOM), which facilitates direct communication from person to person. This approach enables pesantren to bypass lengthy distribution chains typically associated with traditional markets, thereby fostering closer relationships and higher trust levels with consumers. WOM marketing involves promotion through interpersonal communication—verbal, written, or via electronic media—based on personal experiences with a product or service. Its influence significantly impacts consumer purchasing behavior, as recommendations from trusted friends are generally deemed more credible than conventional advertising (Joesyiana, 2018).

Initial findings from Rahmawati (2022) further affirm that word-of-mouth marketing can substantially enhance business development, especially when products evoke emotional responses and create added value for consumers. This strategy yields notable benefits, as customers tend to trust personal recommendations more than traditional advertisements. It has also been shown to generate a considerable increase in profits compared to conventional marketing schemes, where products are sold to middlemen or general markets. Research by Ulumi and Syafar (2021) indicates that socially

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

entrepreneurial ventures based on pesantren can bolster economic independence and improve the welfare of surrounding communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

Word of Mouth

Word of Mouth (WOM) constitutes an informal communication process whereby consumers share information, experiences, and recommendations concerning products or services with others, either directly or via social media platforms. WOM is regarded as highly effective in influencing purchasing decisions because the information disseminated originates from sources trusted by the recipients.

WOM represents one of the most vital forms of interpersonal communication within marketing, as it can foster greater trust and credibility compared to traditional advertising (Oktavianto, 2014). Furthermore, WOM strategies wield considerable power in shaping consumer perceptions and driving customer loyalty (Hapsari, 2019).

Additionally, communication through WOM can significantly boost product sales by rapidly and broadly influencing consumers' social networks (Pamungkas, 2017).

WOM Marketing Strategy

The WOM marketing strategy relies on the dissemination of information through verbal recommendations from satisfied consumers to potential buyers. WOM is considered one of the most effective marketing approaches because messages originating from trusted individuals—such as friends, family, or colleagues—garner higher levels of trust than conventional advertising.

This strategy typically emphasizes enhancing customer satisfaction, creating positive experiences, and establishing strong relationships to encourage consumers to voluntarily recommend products or services to others. WOM also serves to reinforce brand image and bolster customer loyalty through authentic and persuasive informal communication.

According to Brown et al. (2005), WOM exerts a powerful influence on purchasing decisions and customer loyalty owing to its personal and trustworthy nature. Consequently, companies must develop strategies that support positive interactions and experiences capable of organically triggering WOM.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Ponpes LSQ Arrohmah

Pondok Pesantren LSQ Arrohmah is an informal Islamic educational institution that concentrates on the study and deepening of the Qur'an, particularly in the fields of memorization (hafalan), exegesis (tafsir), and character development rooted in Qur'anic values. This pesantren is distinguished by its student body comprising university students from both public and private higher education institutions in the surrounding area.

The pesantren offers an integrated self-development program combining religious education with academic guidance. Its boarding program is flexible, designed to align with the students' university activities. Beyond Qur'anic studies, the institution equips students with life skills, including entrepreneurship and productive activities—one of which involves the management and marketing of red chili products.

With its religious and educational environment, Pondok Pesantren LSQ Arrohmah provides a platform for students to intensively study religious sciences while preparing to become independent, morally upright, and productive individuals. The pesantren upholds values of sincerity, humility, independence, and Islamic brotherhood (ukhuwah Islamiyah) in all aspects of its activities and development initiatives.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing an inductive data analysis method. This approach was selected because it is well-suited for exploring naturally occurring marketing strategies implemented by Pondok Pesantren LSQ Arrohmah.

Research Location and Informants

The research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren LSQ Arrohmah, Yogyakarta. The subjects of the study include the management of the red chili business unit, santri involved in marketing activities, and consumers from the surrounding community.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were gathered through:

a. In-depth interviews with management and consumers,
b. Direct observation of chili cultivation and distribution activities,
c. Documentation such as sales records and marketing activities.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis employed in this research is of an inductive nature. The inductive method involves explaining the research subjects based on existing facts, which are then formulated into conclusions (Emzir, n.d., p. 138). In this context, the researcher observed the process of the word-of-mouth (WOM) strategy executed organically by the pesantren and drew conclusions regarding its effectiveness in boosting sales and revenue.

Data Validity

To ensure data validity, source triangulation was used by comparing and confirming information obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation. This technique aids in assessing data consistency and enhances the validity of the research findings. This approach aligns with the guidelines articulated by Arianto (2024), emphasizing the importance of applying such techniques in qualitative research to guarantee data validity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on interviews and observations conducted at Pondok Pesantren LSQ Arrohmah, it was found that the marketing of red chili products through the word-of-mouth (WOM) strategy significantly influences the growth of the pesantren's business. The role of marketing communication in business is instrumental; effective marketing communication fosters closer connections between consumers and the offered products, enhances consumer awareness, and broadens market reach (Baraka, 2024).

The WOM strategy at Pondok Pesantren LSQ Arrohmah functions as a form of personal and credible marketing communication. This aligns with the assertion that effective communication between sellers and buyers can establish strong relationships, thereby increasing the marketing efficiency and effectiveness of products. In this context, WOM serves as an efficient communication channel, where consumers feel more confident in the products after receiving recommendations from acquaintances.

Through this WOM approach, the pesantren has successfully maintained its existence amid fierce market competition. This is reflected in the rising demand for red chili from local consumers who prefer to purchase directly from the pesantren due to assured quality and competitive prices. As explained by Baraka (2024), business development heavily depends on understanding consumer needs and desires, which forms the foundation for designing effective marketing strategies.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

With WOM, consumers perceive that they gain more than just a product—they also establish social bonds through recommendations from close contacts. Consequently, WOM proves effective in product introduction, fostering loyalty, and increasing sales volume without substantial marketing expenditure. WOM has a significant impact on purchasing decisions because the information conveyed is perceived as more credible and trustworthy compared to traditional advertising (Pratama et al., 2025). Additionally, WOM can generate a higher influx of new customers than other marketing forms.

To remain competitive, the pesantren also ensures that its marketing strategies stay relevant to consumer needs. Recognizing consumer preferences is vital when devising marketing approaches, similar to how various small and medium enterprises (SMEs) maintain their market position. Modern consumers are more discerning and expect higher standards in quality, innovation, and pricing. Therefore, innovative skills are necessary to satisfy consumer demands while retaining their loyalty (M. Fathrezza Imani et al., 2022).

Based on these insights, the researcher aims to analyze the application of Word of Mouth at Pondok Pesantren LSQ Arrohmah, supported by expert opinions and validated through interview confirmation, to assess the extent to which marketing activities related to WOM are implemented by the pesantren.

Characteristics of Entrepreneurs and Their Influence

According to interviews with the business managers, it is evident that WOM marketing significantly contributes to the sales of red chili at Pondok Pesantren LSQ Arrohmah. Word-of-mouth dissemination from consumers and internal pesantren actors has proven capable of increasing product sales, expanding market reach, and strengthening community trust in the quality of the chili produced. The pesantren's caretaker stated, "Initially, santri went door-to-door offering chili at prices lower than market rates to encourage voluntary recommendations from consumers to neighbors and relatives." This strategy also reinforces the pesantren's image as an active and trusted economic actor within its community.

Furthermore, to facilitate smooth operations, santri participate actively in the business activities. One santri shared, "I play a direct role in marketing the red chili. My tasks include helping with harvest packaging, recording customer orders, and informing residents about product availability. I also often interact directly with consumers or via communication platforms like WhatsApp to provide information on quality, prices, and pickup times."

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

WOM occurs when consumers are satisfied with the products or services received and voluntarily recommend them to others. This is exemplified by Ibu Ningsih, a local consumer, who stated:

"I have personally experienced the quality of the chili from this pesantren—fresh and long-lasting. That's why I have no hesitation recommending it to my neighbors and social circle. I believe, if the product is good, others should know about it. Plus, I enjoy helping the pesantren's efforts to develop their business."

This statement illustrates how positive consumer experiences can naturally trigger word-of-mouth dissemination. WOM becomes even more powerful when consumers are not only satisfied but also emotionally engaged with the product or producer, as Ibu Ningsih's support indicates.

Analysis of WOM Application and Consumer Buying Power for Red Chili at Pondok Pesantren LSQ Arrohmah

By incorporating consumer feedback and responses, Pondok Pesantren LSQ Arrohmah continuously makes adjustments and improvements to the quality of its chili products. This approach maintains consumer trust and loyalty while attracting new buyers through a positive reputation and consistent product quality. The favorable reputation spread via word-of-mouth serves as a primary strength in expanding market reach.

Impact on Consumer Purchasing Behavior

The implementation of WOM, entrepreneurial characteristics, and innovation efforts visibly influence buying patterns for the chili products. Consumers tend to purchase after receiving recommendations from close contacts such as neighbors or family. Moreover, positive experiences with quality and service encourage repeat purchases and motivate others to try the products.

The significance of WOM, entrepreneurial spirit, and innovation is also reflected in customer loyalty and increased demand. Direct recommendations create greater trust in the chili, fostering long-term relationships between the producer and consumers. The entrepreneurial traits exhibited by the pesantren's management—such as risk-taking, creativity, and perseverance—drive innovation in packaging and marketing strategies, ensuring products remain relevant amidst market fluctuations. The synergy of these elements contributes positively to purchasing decisions and broadens market share.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings at Pondok Pesantren LSQ Arrohmah, it can be concluded that the application of Word of Mouth (WOM) marketing significantly influences the increase in sales and revenue of red chili products. This strategy is effective due to three main factors: strong relationships and friendly service, consistent product quality, and structured, measurable WOM implementation. These components collaboratively foster voluntary and positive recommendations from consumers to prospective buyers.

The success of WOM not only yields economic benefits for the pesantren but also reinforces its position as an independently functioning economic institution. Through a personal, consistent, and evaluative approach, WOM emerges as an efficient and effective marketing tool, especially for pesantren-like organizations with limited promotional budgets. Therefore, this strategy warrants continued development as part of a sustainable marketing model within pesantren environments and small to medium enterprises.

REFERENCES

BARAKA. (2024, April 22). Membuat Konsumen Tertarik: Strategi Pemasaran yang Berfokus pada Motivasi. Biro Perencanaan Sumber Daya Manusia dan Karir. https://baraka.uma.ac.id/membuat-konsumen-tertarik-strategi-pemasaran-yang-berfokus-pada-motivasi/

Brown, T. J., Barry, T. E., Dacin, P. A., & Gunst, R. F. (2005). Spreading the word: Investigating antecedents of consumers' positive word-of-mouth intentions and behaviors in a retailing context. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 33(2), 123–138. https://doi.org/10.1177/0092070304268417

Fathoni, M. A., & Rohim, A. N. (2019). Peran pesantren dalam pemberdayaan ekonomi umat di Indonesia. 2.

Fitria, F. (2022). Pemberdayaan Ekonomi Pesantren melalui Program Entrepreneurship (Studi Kasus Unit Usaha Pondok Pesantren Darun Najah Sumbersuko Lumajang). Risalatuna Journal of Pesantren Studies, 2(2), Article 2. https://doi.org/10.54471/rjps.v2i2.1897

Hapsari, I. E. (2019). PENGARUH WORD OF MOUTH DAN CITRA MEREK TERHADAP LOYALITAS KONSUMEN GO-JEK DI YOGYAKARTA. 16(1).

Harga Pangan. (n.d.). Retrieved May 28, 2025, from https://hargapangan.jogjakota.go.id/

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Joesyiana, K. (2018). PENGARUH WORD OF MOUTH TERHADAP KEPUTUSAN PEMBELIAN KONSUMEN PADA MEDIA ONLINE SHOP SHOPEE DI PEKANBARU. 4(1).

M. Fathrezza Imani, M. Khoirul Fikri, & Almas Filzah. (2022). PENGARUH KREATIF, INOVASI DAN STRATEGI PEMASARAN TERHADAP PENINGKATAN DAYA BELI KONSUMEN. Jurnal Ilmu Manajemen, Ekonomi dan Kewirausahaan, 2(1), 117–138. https://doi.org/10.55606/jimek.v2i1.160

Media, K. C. (2025, January 8). Alasan Harga Cabai Rawit di Kota Jogja Tembus Rp 100.000 Per Kg. KOMPAS.com. https://yogyakarta.kompas.com/read/2025/01/08/102059978/alasan-harga-cabai-rawit-di-kota-jogja-tembus-rp-100000-per-kg

Metodologi penelitian kualitatif: Analisis data / Emzir | Perpustakaan Mahkamah Konstitusi. (n.d.). Retrieved May 29, 2025, from https://simpus.mkri.id/opac/detail-opac?id=8983

Oktavianto, Y. (2014). Pengaruh Word Of Mouth Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Konsumen Pada Usaha Mie Ayam Pak Agus Di Kota Batu. Manajemen Bisnis, 3(1). https://doi.org/10.22219/jmb.v3i1.1715

Pamungkas, B. A. (2017). PENGARUH PROMOSI DI MEDIA SOSIAL DAN WORD OF MOUTH TERHADAP KEPUTUSAN PEMBELIAN (STUDI KASUS PADA KEDAI BONTACOS, JOMBANG). Jurnal Komunikasi, 10(2), 145. https://doi.org/10.21107/ilkom.v10i2.2518

(PDF) Triangulasi Metoda Penelitian Kualitatif. (2024, December 26). ResearchGate. https://doi.org/10.70310/q81zdh33

Pratama, R. I., Gianti, P. E., Fil'ilmi, P. R., & Purnamasari, P. (2025). Pengaruh Word of Mouth dan Testimoni Online terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Produk Skincare G2GLOW. JISOSEPOL: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Ekonomi Dan Politik, 3(1), Article 1. https://doi.org/10.61787/hn6kx783

Rahmawati, F. D. (2022). Peran Digital Marketing Dalam Memediasi Pengaruh Electronic Word Of Mouth, Promosi dan Harga Terhadap Impluse Buying (Studi pada E-commerce Shopee). Journal of Economics and Business Aseanomics, 7(2), Article 2. https://doi.org/10.33476/jeba.v7i2.3416

Suhita, C. P., Nurafian, D. A., & Setyaningrum, D. (2024). Budidaya Tanaman Cabai Rawit (Capsicum frutescens L.) melalui Pemanfaatan Hormon GSA (Giberelin Sitokinin Auksin) Organik. Jurnal Kridatama Sains dan Teknologi, 6(02), Article 02. https://doi.org/10.53863/kst.v6i02.1464

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Ulliya, F. (n.d.). Disusun Untuk Memenuhi Tugas dan Melengkapi Syarat Guna Memperoleh Gelar Sarjana dalam Ilmu Ekonomi Islam.

Ulumi, H., & Syafar, M. (2021). Social Entrepreneurship Pesantren-based to Support Rural Development in the Era of Covid-19 Pandemic: Case Study in District of Lebak, Banten Province, Indonesia: Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Emerging Issues in Humanity Studies and Social Sciences, 649–659. https://doi.org/10.5220/0010756300003112

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.