

Self-Existence in Social Media as a Communication Strategy for Women Entrepreneurs

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out how the marketing communication strategy is carried out by Women SMEs in marketing their products in the current digital era. The importance of marketing communication strategies in convincing consumers, especially in the digital era. Considering that most of today's consumer behavior is mostly done in digital media. This is what makes competition in digital media increasingly fierce. This research is examined phenomenologically by exploring the experiences of five Women SMEs. The results of this study are two important things in building a successful digital marketing communication strategy. First, the entrepreneurial perspective built by women SMEs tends to be positive. The second, self-existences play a major role in building marketing communications. The Women SME actors have a positive meaning about entrepreneurship. According to them entrepreneurship is an activity that makes them have self-ability that makes them confident, independent, creative and innovative. In addition, their hopes are based on the future. A bright future for themselves, their families, and the surrounding environment. From these results, it can be seen that the existence of women in social media can make a marketing communication strategy.

Keywords: Existence, women, digital, SMEs

INTRODUCTION

The role of women in entrepreneurship is now starting to be highlighted (Akehurst, Simarro, & Mas-Tur, 2012; Yadav & Yadav, 2014). At first, women are often considered weak creatures who are difficult to develop, especially in running a business (Ramadani, 2015; Singh & Raghuvanshi, 2012). But some research shows the current role of women in entrepreneurship can compete with men. However, the role of women in entrepreneurship has many obstacles (Cárdenas et al., 2014; Yadav & Yadav, 2014). The barriers faced by women in developing their businesses are in developing countries and developed countries such as the UK. (Quader, 2012).

Each country has different problems in developing entrepreneurship in women. In various countries, women's issues in entrepreneurship are always related to stereotypes that consider women to be weak and unable to deal with business challenges. (Singh & Raghuvanshi, 2012). In Iran, a woman in entrepreneurship is constrained by the culture and stereotypes adopted in the country (Javadian & Singh, 2012). Interestingly, as a developed country, women entrepreneurs have a significant barrier to risk from the business they run



(Quader, 2012). In Iran, women entrepreneurs' risk is not an obstacle (Javadian & Singh, 2012). It is because confidence and self-confidence can break down the uncertainty of the risks they might get. In India, women entrepreneurs have constraints on education, which results in low management skills in running their businesses. (Sharma, 2013). Of the various problems faced by women in entrepreneurship in multiple countries, there are still women who can meet these problems and become successful entrepreneurs. The success of women in entrepreneurship is because, basically, women always have the persistence to show their independence and strength compared to men. (Akehurst, 2012). In addition, their success is also supported to break down the stigmas that continually demean women (Singh & Raghuvanshi, 2012).

At first, women were considered to have various limitations compared to men in various ways (Efendi, 2002; Koneru, 2018; Le & Raven, 2015). Therefore, Women SMEs entrepreneurs often find it difficult to market their products strategically, effectively, and efficiently (Rachmawati, 2014). Consequently, Women SMEs actors often market their products to nearby markets with fewer buyers, so the culture of men as successful entrepreneurs still dominates. (Marlow & McAdam, 2013; Pradiani, 2017).

With education and marketing technology development, women can also open and manage their businesses to achieve success (Ardhanari, 2007). At first, SMEs that women carried out mainly was done as side jobs to help increase household income, but they can become the primary source of income if done seriously. (Widyastuti, Nuswantoro, & Sidhi, 2016). In contrast to homemakers, running a business starts with opportunity and willingness (Rachmawati, 2014). The character of Women SMEs actors always starts from the household, which is bound by their role as housewives, although this does not close the obstacle of their success in running their business. (Rachmawati, 2014).

Women SMEs actors prefer to use the internet and social media. Based on research, women are very active in using the internet, especially social media (Lubis, 2014). So many women use the internet to help market their products. The information technology revolution has changed the landscape of the marketing world in recent years (Wilson & Consultant, 2005). Marketing communication methods that were previously traditional and conventional are now integrated into the digital world (Matsoso & Benedict, 2016). It is a space shift phenomenon from offline to online space, from real-space to cyber-space, even online 80 percent faster than offline.

Social media is a means of Marketing Communication in the Digital Age that is the easiest to use (Derham, Cragg, & Morrish, 2011; Gestionale, Milano, Gestionale, & Milano, 2017; Jagongo & Kinyua, 2013; Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014). Data from research by APJII (Association of Indonesian Internet Service Users) states that women also tend to dominate internet use over the past few years (Lestari, 2011). Female gender dominance in internet use is seen with 51 percent of women and 49 percent of men. Data obtained by APJII also shows that the internet is the highest at the 31.5 percent used by the trade sector (Widyastuti, 2016). The digital era is impossible to avoid (Kaiser & Bodendorf, 2012). If you want to survive in the midst of many competitors and the rapid development of digital, then SMEs must be able to maximize the benefits of digital development (Lestari, 2011). The digital marketing strategy carried out by Women SMEs actors in running their businesses is becoming more prospective (Lubis, 2014). This can happen because digital marketing communications allow potential customers to obtain all kinds of information about products and transact via the internet. All digital marketing communication activities carried out by women SMEs are carried out to meet one of the challenges in the business world, namely surviving in the midst of high competitiveness (Rachmawati, 2014).



This study wants to examine the experiences of women entrepreneurs of SMEs, regarding their efforts to carry out digital marketing communications. With a focus on the study of what meanings are formed by women entrepreneurs of SMEs about the entrepreneurial profession and the experiences of women SMEs in managing digital marketing communication media.

METHODOLOGY

This research was reviewed in 2018, qualitatively using the phenomenological method, which examines the meaning through the experiences of every Women SMEs actor in marketing in the digital era. Based on Albert Schutz's phenomenological theory, there are three models in building meaning in a person (Nindito, 2005). First, the consistency model of action which becomes the objective validity of the researcher's construction which is a guarantee and distinction with the construction of meaning from the reality of everyday life, second, the subjective interpretation model in which the researcher can base the categorization of the types of human actions and the results of the personal meaning of the actions or results of actions. Carried out by the actor, and third, the model of feasibility (fitness) between the purpose constructed by the researcher and the individual social actors and their social environment. In addition, to ensure the appropriateness of meaning carried out by a researcher, meaning must be in line with the process of importance from broad experience in everyday social life. In this study, the definition explored emphasizes the subjective interpretation model. The research will look at the meaning that results from every action taken by every Women SMEs actor.

Researchers will select resource persons using purposive sampling, then conduct indepth interviews with each SME actor to produce meaning and motive for each Women SMEs actor. In addition, researchers also used literature studies and were involved in direct observation of each resource person's activities. The data results from the field researchers will reduce the data until the required data is obtained. To test the validity of the data, the researchers triangulated the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Many factors support a woman in opening a business or entrepreneurship. These factors can come from themselves as good intentions and will, their families, and their environment. Women have several aspects that support the development of their careers in entrepreneurship (Alma, 2010). First, the instincts of women who work more carefully, anticipate the future, maintain harmony, and work together in the household can be applied in business life. Second, educating family members to succeed in the future can be developed in company management personnel. The third is the cultural factor (Bali and West Sumatra), where women regulate the household economy. Fourth, environmental necessities such as sewing, embroidery, cake making, various dishes, and cosmetics encourage women entrepreneurs who develop these commodities. Fifth, women's education has greatly facilitated the development of career women, becoming employees, or opening their businesses in various business fields.

The advancement of technology has also made it easier for women's communication networks in entrepreneurship (Lestari, 2011). Women have various reasons to enter the world of entrepreneurship (Rachmawati, 2014). Women entrepreneurs try to develop the potential that is in themselves. The women worked as private employees before they became entrepreneurs. Based on discomfort in the work environment, some women entrepreneurs view entrepreneurship as a new thing that they can apply to their knowledge when working as private employees. As expressed (Alma, 2010), Entrepreneurs are motivated to open a business



because they want to excel and because of the frustration in their previous job. They feel constrained that they cannot display their skills and develop their talents (Alma, 2010). The success of women in running their businesses is strongly influenced by how they form perceptions (Le & Raven, 2015). This is based on the perception that growth in women will affect the built motivation. Every perception formed in women can affect building their business through the inspiration created within them.

The hidden abilities of women since they work in a company are then instilled when they start to become entrepreneurs. They open up job opportunities for other people and learn from their abilities. Entrepreneurial women can develop with all their skills, driven by the will or good intentions from within themselves and a tenacious, diligent, and diligent attitude. So the result is that with these abilities, women entrepreneurs can work hard and have a goal to produce their brand. Murphy and Peck in Alma state that hard work is the primary capital for one's success (Alma, 2010).

Besides, a woman entrepreneur must have high self-confidence. They see a potential target market and believe that they can market the product appropriately. Confidence can be implemented in actual entrepreneurship activities and is felt by oneself and others. Furthermore, Zimmer and Scarborough stated that regarding the personality characteristics of women entrepreneurs who are tolerant and flexible, realistic, creative, enthusiastic and energetic and able to relate to the community and have a medium level of self-tolerance (Alma, 2010).

Women entrepreneurs' self-confidence is not as high as that of men. Still, women always have a sense of optimism as a value instilled by women entrepreneurs in themselves. Entrepreneurial women interpret their entrepreneurship as proving themselves that they are independent people. Entrepreneurial women are trying to prove that they can get up and not bother others. In running their entrepreneurship, they also must be based on creative and innovative thinking. Zimmer stated that Creativity is the ability to develop new ideas and to discover new ways of looking at problems and opportunities. Creativity is the ability to create new ideas and find new ways to see options or issues faced. Innovation is the ability to apply creative solutions to those problems and opportunities to enhance or enrich people's lives. Innovation is the ability to use innovative solutions to fill options to benefit people's lives (Alma, 2010).

The innovations they carry out cannot be separated from the creative thoughts of women entrepreneurs. Making product differentiation from many other products is included in entrepreneurs' women. In the end, this creative and innovative thinking has led many women to become successful entrepreneurs.

Based on the research results, women also interpret themselves in entrepreneurship for hope in the future or future-oriented. Generally, they choose to be entrepreneurs because they see many promising things in the future. One of them is that they want their brand to be known by everyone nationally and internationally. As Tambunan said, if we're going to be successful, we must market our products to penetrate the local market (Tulus Tambunan, 2004). Women entrepreneurs use technological developments to make it easier to market their products. Their direct involvement in the business gives them the freedom to determine its goals. Several informants admitted that they dared to take risks, dream more, and achieve what was expected with entrepreneurship. As stated by Hisrich-Peters (dalam Alma, 2010). That Entrepreneurship is a dynamic process to create prosperity. Entrepreneurial individuals who take risks, spend time and provide a variety of goods and services create this additional wealth.



Everything they do to meet personal needs in the future. Their long-term desire is to create an application or store to form product branding. Another hope is that they can develop a commitment to remain consistent with their goal of opening a business to make their family and closest relatives happy.

Researchers will select resource persons using purposive sampling, then conduct indepth interviews with each SME actor to produce meaning and motive for each Women SMEs actor. In addition, researchers also used literature studies and were involved in direct observation of each resource person's activities. The data results from the field researchers will reduce the data until the required data is obtained. To test the validity of the data, the researchers triangulated the data.

Table 1. Relation of Theory and Research Results

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Aspects of lfred Schutz's	Definition of aspects of	The Relation of Alfred Schutz's	
Theory of Phenomenology	Alfred Schutz's Theory of	Phenomenological Theory with	
	Phenomenology	Research Results	
Because of motive (Well	Actions that refer to the past.	Because Women SMEs actors	
Motive)	Where, the actions taken by	want develop themselves in a	
	someone must have a reason	better direction. Putting the	
	from the past when he did it.	theory they can into practice	
		they work.	
In Order to Motive (Um- Zu-	Motives that refer to actions	Their long-term desire is to	
Motiv)	in the future. Where,	create an application or store to	
	actions taken by	establish product branding.	
	someone must have a goal	Other expectations can form a	
	has been established.	commitment with himself to	
		remain consistent with his goal	
		of opening a business.	

Source: Alfred Schutz's Phenomenological Theory, modified based on research results.

One of the crucial elements of digital marketing communication is the presence of a communicator as a source of delivering messages to the audience. Audiences contained in digital media are also called followers. The communicators used by women SMEs in digital media were selected based on the brands they marketed. The meaning of communicators in digital media is divided into two essential parts. The first is based on personal credibility and the use of endorsers. (O'Reilly & Braedley, 2008; Sabdillah, Hidayat, Lubis, & Wardayani, 2017).

The personal credibility of a communicator is formed through their impression in the audience's eyes (Valente & Pumpuang, 2007; Woods, 2016). Through the research results, it is known that several Women SMEs actors play a role as communicators (marketers) for their brands. "The Source Credibility Theory States that people are more likely to be persuaded when the source presents itself as credible" (Hovland, Janis & Kelley). It can be concluded that credible communicators will be easier to influence other people. If the communicators are experts and can be trusted, they will easily control their audience.

The Women SMEs actors communicate in conveying their product marketing messages. The factors that become the reference for women SME entrepreneurs to become communicators are because they have been known to be intense personally before they opened the business. In addition, all women SMEs in making products use themselves as a reference. Some are based on their hobbies, preferences, the style they usually use, and even their interest



in one product. So that the products produced by women SMEs are a reflection of themselves. For example, the fashion style of the product is the daily style of SMEs, the type of product produced is what the SMEs themselves are interested in. So that Women SMEs actors make themselves as communicators in disseminating information related to products. This is done by using the product in their various activities to meet and interact with the surrounding environment.

As we know, women are easier to adapt to their environment (Kancana, 2017). This is marked by the ease with which they join certain groups because they have a common goal or liking for one thing. Through this strategy, women SMEs can influence their consumers. As communicators, they create marketing messages based on their characteristics, which also become characters in the small groups of SMEs so that it is easier for brands to influence consumers because they have clear targets.

Likewise, in compiling their marketing messages, they make marketing messages reflect themselves. Every time they produce a marketing message, women SMEs do not create a marketing message whose content is different from their character. They assume that building marketing messages is like talking to themselves (Kancana, 2017) so that the content of the marketing messages they create tends to be original and more attached to their products, making it easier for Women SMEs actors to convey their marketing messages because there is a match between the marketing message and the product produced and the communicator who speaks the marketing message.

Women SME actors in making themselves as communicators are also equipped with abilities developed through themselves. They have built their competence so that others can believe what they say. The self-competence of each communicator is different, one of which is their ability to apply their favorite hobbies in written or video form. Most of them establish credibility by becoming vlogger (video blog users) on YouTube social media. Women are happy with how much appreciation the audience gives to their vlogs. Psychologists argue that our primary need as human beings and to become spiritually healthy is the need for friendly social relationships, which can only be met by fostering good relationships with other people. Abraham Maslow stated that humans have five basic needs: physiological needs, safety, social needs, self-esteem, and self-actualization (Mulyana, 2012).

Appreciation such as praise and then getting self-existence from the audience becomes the principal capital to build trust. Through the existence of a vlogger and Women SMEs, it is easier to decide on the target market when opening a business. Their target market is no longer product-oriented but has been included in the customer-oriented category. The marketing they do for the company they manage will eventually follow the target market's needs. Theodore Levitt of Harvard explains the difference between selling and marketing concepts. Sales focus on the needs of the seller; marketing focuses on buyers' needs. Deals are based on the seller's need to convert his product into money; Marketing is based on the idea of satisfying customer needs through products and things related to creating, delivering, and ultimately consuming them (cited in Kotler (2009)).

Through their interactions, they know what the audience needs in the comments column contained in the communicator's YouTube channel. Audiences will have a sense of trust in the products of Women SMEs because they already know their personality and existence on social media. Social media is a means for women to be themselves (Widyastuti, 2016; Sidiq & Achmad, 2020). If in mainstream media women are always victims of exploitation by capital



owners, women become more honest to be themselves in social media. (Lubis, 2014). This honesty is displayed in each social media content to be accepted by their followers. Women SMEs never intended to influence through social media content, but the honesty of their content is what attracts social media accounts. So it is not difficult for those who already have a good image (impression) in the audience's eyes to open a business. There will be many audiences interested in following social media, which is used as a medium to market their products.

In addition to using themselves as communicators, Women SMEs actors also use endorsements to help market their products. A person who has carried out his activities as an endorser is called an endorser. On Instagram social media, the endorsement actor comes from the Instagram celebrity (celebgram) circle. (Maghfiroh & Hapsari, 2014; O'Reilly & Braedley, 2008; Sabdillah, 2017; Sidiq et al., 2021), with the celebgram, it can help Women SMEs expand their target market and increase the audience (followers) on social media.

Several understandings from experts quoted by Chriswardana Bayu Dewa mention that Celebrity endorsers are individuals many people know because of their achievements in one of the fields (actor, athlete, artist, etc.) (Kozinets, de Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010; Sabdilla, 2017). Caroll (2009) defines a celebrity endorser as an individual recognized by the public and uses that recognition on behalf of consumer goods by appearing together in one advertisement. Celebrities usually have fans that they can use to create a market. Fans can provide information about the suitability of celebrities with the product and their attitudes towards the product so that it can lead to the identification of the celebrity's impact on the product image. (Langner, Hennigs, & Wiedmann, 2013; Messiaen, 2017).

Choosing an endorser is not arbitrary because it will affect the brand image. Women SME actors are generally selected based on the endorser's excellent impression in the audience's eyes. Some special considerations that form the basis for choosing an endorser include; the number of likes for posts on a celebgram's Instagram account, the interaction of the comment column, and the number of followers who follow their Instagram account. Then the message conveyed by an endorser must have something in common with the brand's audience. The level of popularity of a celebrity also significantly influences the selection of endorsers. These considerations are carried out to give the brand a positive image (impression).

Every product marketed by Women SMEs actors who use endorsers in social media has branding. The benefits of branding carried out by Women SMEs actors as communicators are that they can increase the number of audiences who follow accounts on the digital media. Branding is about the meaning of the product represented by a communicator for the audience. Effective marketing communication can send symbols that represent the "self" or identity of the consumer (Suwatno, 2017). Endorsers also help Women SMEs entrepreneurs to expand the target market of the brand, but the role of SME actors can influence the community more. This can be seen from the interactions that appear in each post. Posts containing endorsers have fewer interactions arising from followers on social media than containing content from SMEs. This is because people are now increasingly aware of the advertising languages used by endorsers. The role of the endorser here is only to attract a lot of followers, but to be able to influence the content of SMEs, the content is more convincing.

The target market that has been determined by Women SMEs actors in the research results is that it is known that they are targeting the target market of teenagers. This is determined based on a survey conducted by Women SMEs actors on social media users and



the growth of millennials who are active in social media. They see market opportunities, determine the target market, and choose an endorser that fits the classification. Teenagers widely use social media, where teenagers have dynamic characteristics (Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014). They are easy to influence, especially by using public figures. However, keep in mind that the millennial generation also always wants to stand out and be different. They do not want to look the same as the others. This is what makes public figures and endorsers lacking in influencing adolescents. Because one endorser is not enough to influence the millennial generation. Millennials are not easy to control with just one public figure endorser. Their behavior that prioritizes networking on social media consumes a lot of web content and, most importantly, likes two-way communication (Hayu, 2019). SME owners can only provide two-way interactive communication compared to public figures who prefer one-way communication. This is what makes SME owners more able to influence their marketing messages.

After explaining the discussion, the researcher tried to modify Alfred Schutz's phenomenological theory with the results of the study, the following results will be obtained

Table 4.2.2 Relation of Theory and Research Results

Aspects of Alfred Schutz's	Definition of aspects of	The Relation of Alfred Schutz's
Theory of Phenomenology	Alfred Schutz's Theory of	Phenomenological Theory with
	Phenomenology	Research Results
Because of motive (Well	Someone's reason	Because Women SMEs have
Motive)	do Action	hobbies which can form
		sense of self-existence and
		self credibility, good
		through himself or choose
		people others in order to
		make an impression
		good in the eyes of
		the audience.
In Order to Motive (Um- Zu-	Goals that have been	The goal is to be Brand with
Motiv)	someone set after doing	good branding and expanding
	action	product marketing to the
		national market.

Source: Alfred Schutz's Phenomenological Theory, modified based on research results.

The discussion shows that a woman has an advantage in managing social media as a marketing communication strategy. Through their habits and characters like to interact with the environment, women SMEs actors are carried away in the management of social media. This makes women's management of social media much more active than men. In addition, Women characters who are more expressive can more easily build the character of their brand. The explicit nature makes every Women SMEs actor embed his expression in the brand so that the brand's character can be more clearly depicted. It also helps in helping the brand's character as a differentiator with other brands. This differs from several previous studies where many reveal that women are a dual role in running a business. This research shows how every Women SMEs actor can build a strategy based on the expressive Women character in the brand, carried out on social media. And women's ability to express themselves in their character makes it easier for them to build brand characters according to their characteristics. So that women can more easily build a strong brand through character.

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CONCLUSION

The results of this study can be concluded into two essential points. First, the meaning of entrepreneurship for women SMEs is that they can develop themselves more actively through entrepreneurship. They have self-ability that makes them confident, independent, creative, and innovative. In addition, their hopes are based on the future—a bright future for himself, his family, and the surrounding environment. Second, the meaning of communicators in digital media marketing is divided into two crucial parts. The first is based on personal credibility and endorsers. Women SMEs who make themselves communicators have their competence so that others can believe what they convey. The credibility formed by the communicator is built from the motive of channeling a favorite hobby. They make personal vlogs on YouTube to establish their existence so that the target market recognizes them. In addition, Women SMEs also use endorsements, but the endorsement strategy is only to help strengthen the brand. But for product education and brand building it is carried out by women SMEs themselves. Because on average they make products based on their character. So that each resulting marketing message is a characteristic of themselves, and this message is more in demand by consumers because it seems more sincere. Based on these findings, it is explained that women can manage digital media, marketing communications and build their brands through their characteristics.

LIMITATION

This research still has limitations, especially in examining the strategies used in carrying out marketing communications. The selection of methods using phenomenology is a limitation in analyzing digital marketing communication strategies. For this reason, further research is needed to investigate more specific marketing communication strategies used by women SMEs.

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