

# Analysis of Digital Marketing Strategies in the Era of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Private Higher Education

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## Abstract

The presence of the internet has changed everything, not only in scope, but throughout the world. Marketing activities on the internet have crossed all boundaries, both location and duration. Internet marketing technology media have not only developed as a means of marketing products, services and marketing that are stagnant, but have also developed into interactive and active marketing. The presence of COVID-19 as a global pandemic has ensured that all promotional activities have been carried out digitally to hit various sectors of global society, especially promotional activities at Private Higher Education (PHE) to attract prospective students through digital media. The survey conducted in this study was conducted through interactive communication media or interviews with internal university officials and students regarding the digital marketing strategies used. The analytical method used is the "SWOT" analysis approach matrix which will be a tool to determine effectiveness and efficiency. The results of this study can have implications for universities and external parties as a parameter of success and as an evaluation tool to improve the quality of competition with digital resources and grow the number of students more.

## Keywords

Digital Marketing, Marketing Strategy, Private Higher Education, SWOT.

## 1. Introduction

The use of digital media as a medium of communication is increasingly gaining a place in various industries. This is due to the widespread use of digital-based communication devices which are also increasingly evenly distributed, and the cost of internet data access is increasingly affordable. The survey results show that the trend of using digital media as a source of information by young people is quite high, especially in big cities (Nigar, 2018).

To reduce the spread of the new coronavirus, universities around the world are moving quickly to transfer many courses from classes to online (Sahu, 2020; Ali, 2020) with online learning (e-learning) so that it becomes a compulsory teaching and learning process for educational institutions. Online Teaching is not just putting learning materials online. Teachers must organize the content and delivery methods of learning in new ways so that students do not feel isolated and alone in the learning process. Therefore, adequate teacher knowledge and skills, as well as ICT tools, must be guaranteed, as study authors in countries where online learning occurs. It had not spread before the COVID-19 pandemic (Khan, 2020; Baticulon, et al., 2020; Anifowoshe, Aborode, Ayodele, Iretiayo, & David, 2020).

The competition of higher education institutions towards obtaining a quantity of students has become very fierce. PTS in Indonesia has multiplied this matter, which has grown like a "mushroom-filled rain". Reported on this situation, at PT (Higher Education) which has just been built and still not widely known can understand the consequences of the harshness of the fight in obtaining new students (Surya, 2014).

Some researchers in their journals argue that promotion through digital marketing can affect the number of consumers in the current era (Azliani, Adibrata, & Clement, 2015; Iyamabo & Otubanjo, 2013; Afrilia, 2018; Okfiantoro, 2019; Malaysia&Rahim, 2017; Nurchayati, 2018 ; Yuniarti&Mauliana, 2012 ; Yohatha, 2019; Nursatyo & Rosliani, 2018; A, 2006; Hamzah, 2018; Syafwandhinata & Ahmad, 2019; Mansur, Setianingrum, & Muslikh, 2017).

Based on the various studies that have been stated above, it can be argued that the influence of digital progress is currently very influential on the education industry, especially in the promotion of private universities which have become increasingly widespread now, and this is also one of the opportunities for each university. shows its potential so that it can be chosen because of the advantages and also the advantages it has.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Digital Marketing**

Marketing Management, according to the opinion (Daryanto, 2011) is an executive and social process in which individuals and groups obtain needs up to their willingness to hold, negotiate, or transfer something of value. It can be said that marketing is the activity of delivering goods or services to consumers in the form of individuals and groups that intend to enjoy the power of power, not just consumers who are the target targets, but also for the needs of employees, management, officials, distributors, and competitors.

The definition of a strategy can be interpreted as a formulation or method in the design of an agency or company, this situation is planning in a long and brief period of time. strategy has the fundamentals for achieving an ambition. In terms of business, strategy is the direction set by the organization for management with business objectives, namely human resources and regarding how to observe conditions on maximum income to support the victory of competition in the market (Dirgantoro, 2001). Strategy substitution varieties have four strategic substitution varieties. Namely, a diversification strategy, intensive, as well as a defense strategy and internal (David, 2010).

Digital marketing was first identified in the early 90's and in 2014 started to implement the main strategy as a whole in the business world. Digitalization of marketing is a form of implementation, or use of progress information on the marketing process, which consists of several stages: (Ryan, 2014)

- A. The emergence of new technologies that will be used.
- B. Marketing began to introduce and prioritize technology.
- C. Increasing technological functionality is carried out by innovative marketers in research in order to obtain targeted reach.
- D. The key strategy and adaptation as a standard marketing method is carried out by technology.

The above stages show that the advancement of information underlies the birth of digital media marketing, but from a marketing point of view, technology is a relationship between personalities, in this case, the marketer and the market. It is only a means of connection that can be more effective (target) (Ryan, 2014).

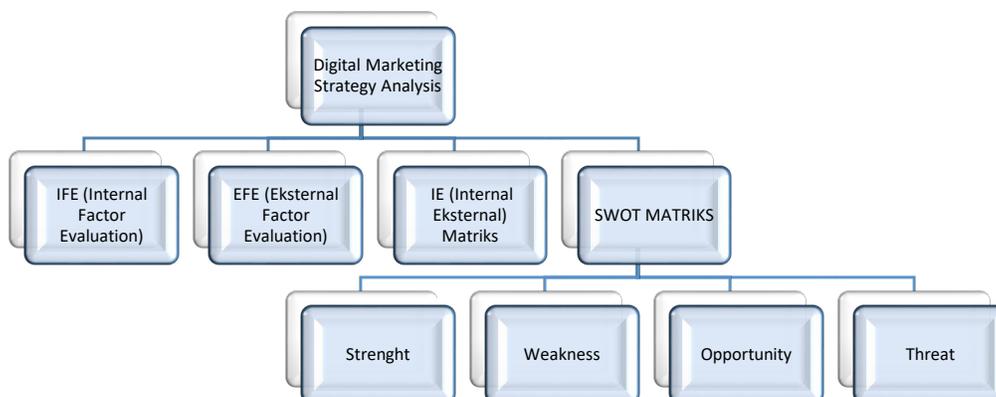
Digital marketing is not a technology-focused concept, but a way to understand people (marketers), and use technology to build relationships with other people (customers) to make sales. A concept that focuses on how to build and improve significantly (Ryan, 2014).

### **2.2 Strategy**

The notion of strategy can be interpreted as a method or tactic in corporate planning, in this case long-term plans and short-term plans. Strategy has principles for achieving a goal. Strategy in the business context is the direction that the company sets to management in terms of human resources in the business and is about how to observe the conditions for maximum profitability to help win the competition in the market. (Dirgantoro, 2001: 5).

Types of Alternative Strategies There are four (4) types of alternative strategies, namely integration strategies, intensive strategies, diversification strategies, and survival strategies, namely internal strategies, intensive strategies, diversification strategies, and survival strategies. (David, 2010: 298).

## 2.3 Framework of Thinking



**Figure 1. Framework of Thinking**

Based on the figure above, this study analyzes the digital marketing strategy used by one of the private universities in Palembang with the SWOT method "strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats". So that it is known the marketing strategies that must be carried out by PHE (private higher education) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 3. Methods

This exploration study examines one of the private universities (PTS) in Palembang City. Based on the research objectives, researchers will identify by conducting interviews with key informants such as the Chancellor, Dean, Marketing Department, and Students at one of the private universities (PTS) to be studied. This research is descriptive and qualitative in order to determine the percentage of effectiveness and efficiency. The formulation of a marketing strategy is based on the analysis of the "SWOT" method of Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat. This method uses a three-step data study. In more detail, the stages of the data research are (Ginting, 2006) :

The stages of the matrix included at this stage are the IFE Matrix and the EFE Matrix. The stages of the IFE and EFE matrices are:

1. Identifying factors outside and within the company. The stage marks the internal or internal factors by listing all the strengths and weaknesses of the company. Before writing the presentation of negative factor data (deficiency), first write down the positive factors (advantages). At this stage, external or external factors of the company are also identified.
2. Give a score for each reason. Determination of value in analyzing the company's external and internal factors through questioning respondents through the paired pairing method.
3. Ranking / assessment, describes the efficiency of the company's current policies in response to its strategic factors. This level is based on information, namely:
  - Value four, if the company has a very good advantage in taking advantage of opportunities, then the threat will have a weak impact on the company.
  - Value three, if the company has a good advantage in taking advantage of opportunities, then the threat will have a weak impact on the company.
  - Value two, if the company has sufficient ability to take advantage of opportunities and threat factors also have a strong influence on the company.
  - Value one, if the company has a weak advantage to occupy opportunities and threat factors have a strong influence on the company.

Addition and weight determination. Determine the weighted value of each factor obtained by the added weight of each rated factor. The sum of each factor is then added together to get the total weight value.

Matching stages and decisions. Namely, IE Matrix (Internal External) which is useful for placing a nine-cell matrix in a company. The IE matrix consists of two dimensions, namely the total score of the IFE matrix on the X and Y axes on the EFE matrix. Based on the main strategy this matrix is mapped into three, namely:

1. Build and Grow is in cell one, two or four. Intensive in the right strategy (market expansion, product expansion, and market penetration) or unification (front, back, or horizontal integration)
2. Hold or maintain the closing cells three, five, and seven. The general strategy used is market expansion, product expansion and market penetration.
3. Davestation or harvest includes cells six, eight, and nine. The davestation strategy used is the liquidation strategy and conglomerate diversification.

"SWOT" matrix. Thus, it is a policy setting medium to determine the strategy to be followed based on logical thinking to maximize opportunities and strengths, but at the same time reduce the company's threats and weaknesses. Here are the steps for the SWOT matrix:

1. List the threats and opportunities external to the business, as well as the weaknesses and strengths of the internal business.
2. Develop a Strength Opportunity (SO) Strategy by adjusting external opportunities and internal strengths.
3. Develop a Weakness Opportunity (WO) Strategy by adjusting to external opportunities and internal weaknesses.
4. Develop a Strength of Threat (ST) strategy by combining external threats and internal forces.
5. Develop a Weakness Threat (WT) strategy by aligning external threats and internal vulnerabilities.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

This university is designated as one of the objects of research because it has been based on Technology and Information, so that this research will of course refer to the methodology that has been determined from both internal and external analysis.

**Table 1.** Identify strengths and weaknesses

Internal Factor	Strenghts	Weakness
<b>A. Management</b>		
- Planning	- Agenda carried out in detail and virtually	- Still untouched by targets who live in remote areas.
- Organizing	- Every structure is well done and orderly.	-
- Actuating	- There is direction and motivation before work starts.	-
- Controlling	- There is control over each program implementation.	-
<b>B. Research and development</b>		
<b>C. Information Systems</b>		
	- carried out in a sustainable manner	-
	- Marketing is carried out through digital media in the form of social media, radio, television, and also websites to disseminate information evenly and thoroughly.	- There is still no maximum target that is wider and evenly distributed.
<b>D. Marketing Party</b>		
- Marketing through social media	- Marketing has been done through Facebook and Instagram.	- Jangkauan media sosial yang belum maksimal.
- Marketing through print media	- The print media that have become a relationship often promote through daily news newspapers.	-
- Marketing through television media	- Several times invited local artists as promotional media.	- The lack of reach for millennials as one of the targets.
- Radio marketing	- There is a radio from the university.	- Less well-known radio from this university
- There are attractive promos from the university through marketing	- Often discounted tuition fees and admission fees for New Student Candidates.	- There are still competitors who offer discounts that are cheaper and suitable for the economy of the Palembang community.

#### 4.1 Internal Environmental Analysis

The internal environment discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the company. Internal factors used in research based on the state of the company consist of management, marketing, research and development and information systems. The variables of strengths and weaknesses in each factor can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 2.** Identification of opportunity and threat factors

Eksternal Factor	Opportunity	Threat
A. Competitor Environment		
- Promotion through celebgrams	-	- There are already other campuses that attract the younger generation as influencers to attract students who want to continue to higher education.
- Promotion via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, website, etc.	-	- Many other campuses have used social media networks as promotional media.
- Advertising through print media	-	- There are already several private universities that collaborate with the print media
- Radio advertising	-	- There is already a radio network in one of the private universities in Palembang which has a good image for millennials.
- Tuition fees	-	- The existence of promos offered by competitors as an attraction.
- Facilities	- There are still not too many PHE competitors who have Information and Technology facilities like PHE that are being studied.	-
B. Micro Environment		
- Demographics	-	- The existence of PTS competitors close to each other so that prospective students have other options for the university to be determined.
- Economy	- The community still considers the PTS under study to be an option because the price offered is in balance with the facilities to be provided.	-
- Social	- The lifestyle of the community which tends to have high prestige, thus making the PTS being studied is one of the options.	-
- Technology	-	- There are still many parts of society who have not used social

media as a means of communication and obtaining information.

- C. Industry Environment  
- outside cooperation - There are several agencies that collaborate with PTS under study in order to improve quality and quality.

#### 4.2 External Environmental Analysis

The external environment leads to opportunities and threats. Opportunities can direct organizational activities whereas threats, hinder organizational movement. External factors discussed in this study are the micro environment, industrial environment and macro environment. The variables of opportunities and threats for each factor can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 3. IFE Matriks Result**

Strength	Average Rating	Average Weights	Total Score
A. Meetings are held continuously	3	0,0625	0,1875
B. Every position is carried out properly	3	0,063	0,189
C. There is a briefing before doing work	3	0,062	0,186
D. There is control over program implementation	3	0,070	0,21
E. Marketing development and innovation	3	0,0625	0,1875
F. Social media marketing	3	0,065	0,195
G. Print media marketing	2	0,062	0,124
H. Television media marketing	2,5	0,055	0,1375
I. Radio media marketing	2,5	0,055	0,1375
J. Promos from universities	3	0,065	0,195
<b>TOTAL</b>			
		<b>1.000</b>	<b>2,885</b>

Weakness	Average Rating	Average Weights	Total Score
K. The targets are remote	2,5	0,057	0,1425
L. Not maximally evenly targeted	2,5	0,053	0,1325
M. Not yet reached by social media	3	0,065	0,195
N. Not maximally touched millennials	4	0,0845	0,338
O. Less well-known radio	3	0,0635	0,1905
P. More attractive competitor promotions	2,5	0,055	0,1375
<b>TOTAL</b>			
		<b>1.000</b>	<b>2,885</b>

#### 4.3 IFE Matriks (*Internal Factor Evaluation*)

Internal environmental analysis is carried out by identifying the company's internal factors to determine the company's strengths and weaknesses. Once identified, weighting and rating are carried out for each variable. Based on the weighting and rating results using the IFE matrix, it can be seen that the total score of the IFE matrix is 2,885. The table of IFE matrix results can be seen in Table 3. The total score indicates a strong position.

**Table 4. EFE Matriks Result**

Opportunity	Average Rating	Average Weights	Total Score
A. PTS facilities that can still be matched	3	0,090	0,27
B. Public opinion regarding price and facilities	3	0,095	0,285
C. The community's prestige towards PTS	3	0,090	0,27
D. Cooperation with outside parties	3	0,090	0,27
<b>TOTAL</b>			
		<b>1.000</b>	<b>1,105</b>

Threat	Average Rating	Average Weights	Total Score
E. Another campus that attracts millennials	4	0,095	0,38
F. A social media network that has been widely used by competitors	2,5	0,085	0,2125
<b>TOTAL</b>			
		<b>1.000</b>	<b>0,5925</b>

G. The number of competitors who cooperate with the print media	3	0,085	0,255
H. The more famous competitor radio	4	0,1	0,4
I. More attractive competitive promos	3	0,085	0,255
J. Near demographics of competitors	4	0,1	0,4
K. There are still many people who have not used social media	3	0,085	0,255
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1.000</b>	<b>3,2525</b>

#### 4.4 EFE Matriks (*Eksternal Factor Evaluation*)

EFE matrix analysis is the result of the identification of external factors in the form of opportunities and threats that affect the Digital Marketing Strategy in one of the private universities in Palembang City. The result of multiplying the weighted average and rating rating will give you the total score. Opportunities at this private university are based on the highest score, namely the community's opinion regarding prices and facilities. Based on the weighting and rating results using the EFE matrix, it can be seen that the total score of the EFE matrix is 3.2525. The table of EFE matrix results can be seen in Table 4.

#### 4.5 IE Matriks

Based on the results of the IFE matrix and the EFE matrix, it can be arranged further in the IE matrix. The average IFE value is 2.885 and the EFE average is 3.2525. The average IFE and EFE scores are obtained from the total score on each factor, and the score is obtained from the multiplication of the average rating and the average weighted value for each factor.

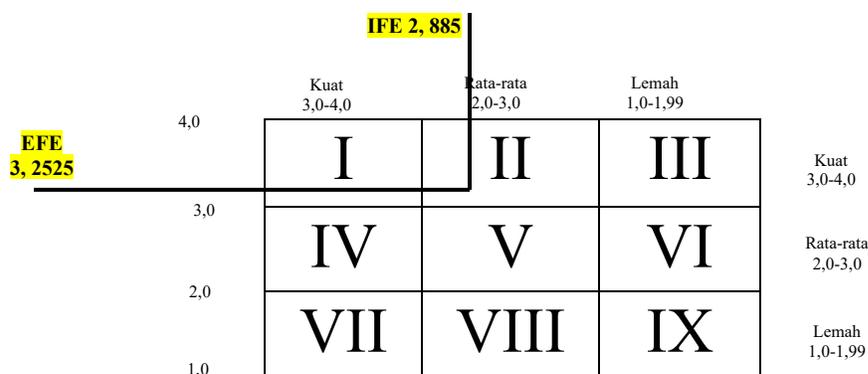


Figure 2. IE Matrix

This value shows the position of quadrants I and II, which shows the strategy needed for the company at this time is a grow and build strategy. Grow and build strategy shows that this private university needs a strategy to grow better and be able to develop a better digital marketing strategy. The strategies that can be applied by state universities at this time are an integrative strategy and an intensive strategy. IE matrix can be seen in Figure 2.

#### 4.6 SWOT Matriks

The SWOT matrix produces several alternative strategies obtained from internal and external variables according to the company's position on the IE matrix, namely Grow and build strategy. However, in the SWOT matrix the strategy used is an offensive strategy. With this position, the company makes tactics by producing competitive products. The alternative strategies obtained are as follows:

1. SO strategy,
  - a. Make the most of digital marketing to attract interest and increase quantity.
  - b. Improving the management and marketing capabilities for common goals.
2. WO strategy
  - a. Take advantage of technological advances as a digital marketing medium.
  - b. Maintain good relations with outsiders in order to improve quality and quality.
3. ST strategy
  - a. Provide attractive promos that are directly proportional to the facilities offered.
  - b. Cooperation and collaboration to increase the number of students.

#### 4. WT strategy

- a. Target setting by maximizing effort to obtain high reach.
- b. Improve digital marketing strategies for effective and efficient results.

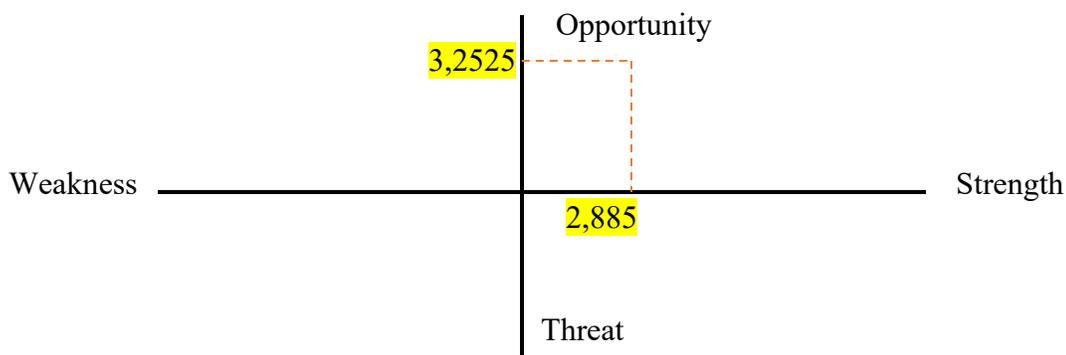


Figure 3. SWOT Matrix

The value of this strategy explains that the analysis used gives positive results. The location of the weighted value gives opportunity and strength as the final result. SWOT matrix can be seen in Figure 3.

## 5. Conclusion

The results of this study aim to find alternative strategies from data processing, namely using the SWOT analysis method (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat), by increasing the use of digital media as a means of marketing and disseminating information to the public in order to attract prospective new students who will continue to level of private higher education, attracting millennials who are even more effective, collaborating with various institutions, and improving facilities to improve quality and quality that is tested. The results of the research on digital marketing strategies at this university are in the grow and build strategy stage which of course can be used as evaluation material in quality improvement, especially in the marketing sector by analyzing internal and external influencing factors, subsequent research can make prospective new student registrants as respondents to consider marketing strategies.

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**Muji Gunarto** is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Economics and Business at Bina Darma University, Palembang. A bachelor's degree was obtained from the Statistics Department, Padjadjaran University, Bandung in 1997. A master's degree in science was obtained from Sriwijaya University Palembang in 2009 and a doctorate degree was obtained from the Doctor of Management Science program at the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung in 2018. Before becoming a lecturer at Bina Darma University, he worked in the Region II Higher Education Service Institution (L2Dikti Wil 2.). During his time as a lecturer, various scientific papers such as reference books and articles have been published in journals indexed by Scopus and Sinta. His current position is Dean at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Bina Darma University.

