Digital Marketing Strategy in Increasing Education Business Competitiveness

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Abstract. Education in Surakarta is a rapidly growing industry with increasingly fierce competition. In the digital age, marketing has become a key element to increase the competitiveness of education businesses in this city. Various educational institutions compete to attract prospective students and university students by adopting diverse digital marketing strategies. However, the success and effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in increasing the competitiveness of education businesses in Surakarta need to be evaluated in depth. This study aims to investigate the role of digital marketing strategies in increasing the competitiveness of education businesses in Surakarta. This research will use qualitative design with observational data collection techniques, interviews and documentation. Data validity using source trianggulation, data analysis with from data from interviews and observations were analyzed using a qualitative content analysis approach. The results of the study will provide deep insight into how digital marketing strategies can improve the competitiveness of education businesses in Surakarta. It will include findings on the most effective strategies in achieving marketing goals conclusion on the important role of digital marketing in improving the competitiveness of education business in Surakarta and practical recommendations for educational institutions that want to improve digital-based business marketing. The novelty of this research is its focus on the specific context of Surakarta and an in-depth understanding of successful digital marketing strategies in enhancing the competitiveness of education businesses in the region. The research also explores the factors that influence the success of digital marketing in an educational context.

Keywords: digital marketing strategy, business education, business competitiveness

INTRODUCTION

Education is a key aspect in community and economic development, and today, digital marketing strategies have become a vital tool in dealing with global and local problems in the world of education. In the midst of globalization and changing learning paradigms influenced by technological developments, educational institutions from global to local scale are increasingly competing to attract and retain students or students. At this time, there are important problems in the world of education that need to be overcome, namely, how to improve the accessibility and quality of education in the midst of globalization dynamics and learning paradigm changes influenced by technology Hashim et al., 2021).

With the advent of digital technology, online education and distance courses have become a significant alternative. However, there are still challenges in ensuring that all levels of society can access quality education, and also in maintaining the quality of that education (Chick et al., 2020). Therefore, the problem that arises is the extent to which digital marketing strategies in the education business can help improve the accessibility of education, while maintaining its quality, in the midst of global to local competition (Munir et al., 2019).

It is in this context that digital marketing strategies become relevant, as they can influence the selection of educational institutions by prospective students or university students and change the way those institutions communicate with their market. This research aims to uncover the role of digital marketing in responding to these global to local challenges, focusing on improving the competitiveness of education businesses and answering questions about its impact on the accessibility and quality of education in the digital age (Wamba-Taguimdje et al., 2020; Pelletier, 2021).

Previous research has noted that the use of digital marketing strategies has changed the educational landscape, enabling educational institutions to reach a wider and deeper audience (Chassignol et al., 2018). However, there is still a lot of room to understand more deeply the effectiveness and role of digital marketing in improving the competitiveness of education businesses. Along with that, digital marketing strategies have allowed education to become more responsive to customer needs and preferences, as well as increase its visibility in an increasingly crowded market (Kittipanya-Ngam & Tan, 2020).

Nonetheless, there is still a lot of room to understand more deeply the effectiveness and role of digital marketing in improving the competitiveness of education businesses. Key questions that arise in this context are how digital marketing strategies concretely affect student enrollment, increase their involvement in the learning process, and retain existing students. In

addition, it is also important to understand the impact of digital marketing strategies on the brand image of educational institutions and how it contributes to the growth and success of educational businesses (Elhajjar & Yacoub, 2022).

By answering these questions, this study seeks to provide deep insights into how digital marketing can play a role in increasing the competitiveness of education businesses at global to local levels. The implication of this research is that it provides a solid foundation for developing more effective and measurable digital marketing strategies, which in turn will benefit educational institutions and educational consumers, as well as society more broadly (Williamson, 2021).

The importance of this research lies in trying to answer questions that arise in global to local contexts, such as how digital marketing strategies affect student enrollment, engagement, and student nurturing (Ainscow, 2020). The importance of this research lies in trying to answer questions that arise in global to local contexts, such as how digital marketing strategies affect student enrollment, engagement, and student nurturing. These questions have significant implications in education, especially when we consider the paradigm shift in learning and digital transformation that is happening today.

First, a deeper understanding of how digital marketing strategies affect student enrollment is key to improving educational accessibility. By understanding the most effective strategies for reaching prospective students, educational institutions can expand their coverage, create more inclusive educational opportunities, and respond to the needs of diverse communities (Milner, 2021).

Second, analysis of the influence of digital marketing strategies on student engagement in the learning process is crucial in optimizing the educational experience. Strong engagement can contribute to student success and better retention. Therefore, a deeper understanding of how digital marketing can increase student engagement will help educational institutions to develop more effective approaches in supporting the learning process.

Third, the maintenance of existing students is an important aspect in maintaining the sustainability of the education business. By understanding how digital marketing can impact student nurturing, educational institutions can design more effective retention strategies, minimize exit rates, and ensure students stay engaged and successful through graduation (Dixon-Saxon & Buckley, 2020).

In a global to local order, this research contributes to a better understanding of the role of digital marketing in education and its implications on the accessibility, quality, and sustainability of education businesses. This will help educational institutions and education stakeholders in facing challenges and opportunities in today's digital era.

The implications of this research are expected to provide insight to educational institutions of various levels—from global to local scales—about effective digital marketing practices. This will help them face challenges in increasing competitiveness in the digital era. In addition, this research will make an important contribution in understanding how digital marketing can shape the future of education, with long-term implications on education quality and accessibility for learners. As such, the study addresses global to local challenges in education and details the importance of digital marketing exploration to enhance the competitiveness of education businesses, with a possibly long-term impact on the world of education.

METHODS

This study uses qualitative research design to understand the role of digital marketing strategies in increasing the competitiveness of education businesses. The qualitative approach allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of the experience and perception of research subjects.

Participants in this study were various parties related to education business at the local level in Surakarta. This includes marketing staff, academic staff, students, and prospective students. The selection of participants is carried out purposively to ensure a diversity of views and experiences. Data collection uses in-depth interviews i.e., data is collected through in-depth interviews with marketing staff, academic staff, and students. The interviews focused on their experiences related to digital marketing strategies and their impact. Participatory Observation, where researchers also conduct participatory observations in educational institutions to understand the digital marketing practices applied.

The validity of the data will be maintained by using triangulation techniques, which combine data from various sources such as interviews and observations. Member-checking will be used by sharing initial findings with participants to verify the accuracy of the analysis results. Peer-debriefing will also be applied by involving research colleagues to provide different input and understanding. Data analysis was conducted from data from interviews and observations were analyzed using a qualitative content analysis approach. It involves coding data, creating categories, and developing key themes. The data from the analysis will be presented in narrative form, with the support of relevant citations to support the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study bring light to the role of digital marketing strategies in increasing the

competitiveness of education businesses in Surakarta. Based on data collected through in-depth interviews and participatory observations, several significant findings were found:

Increased Student Enrollment

The digital marketing strategies used by educational institutions in Surakarta have effectively increased the number of student enrollments. Various digital marketing tools, such as online advertising, social media, and email campaigns, allow these institutions to reach a wider range of prospective students and interest them. Data shows a consistent increase in student enrollment numbers over the past few years.

The results showed that digital marketing strategies play an important role in increasing student enrollment. Digital marketing enables educational institutions to reach diverse prospective students and interest them through targeted online advertising and informative content. This has significant implications in improving the accessibility of education in Surakarta. In the digital age, prospective students have wider access to seek information about various educational options, and digital marketing provides an effective platform for educational institutions to communicate with their audience.

The results of this study are consistent with the findings of previous studies that highlight the important role of digital marketing in increasing student enrollment in educational institutions. Previous research has identified that effective digital marketing enables educational institutions to reach a wider and deeper range of prospective students. In a global context, similar research has highlighted the positive impact of digital marketing in attracting international students. The global implication of the study is that digital marketing strategies have universal relevance in increasing student enrollment in different countries and cities.

In addition, the results of this study also emphasize the importance of enhanced educational accessibility through digital marketing (Kant et al., 2021). From global to local, this study corroborates previous findings that highlight how digital marketing can help answer educational accessibility issues. In this way, this research strengthens the argument that digital marketing is a vital tool in enabling education that is more inclusive and more accessible to a wide range of people.

In the ever-evolving digital era, it is important for educational institutions to continue to understand the role of digital marketing and adapt to the changes that occur. In the context of this study, previous research has provided a solid foundation in understanding the contribution of digital marketing to student enrollment (Elhajjar & Yacoub, 2022).

Previous studies have also shown that digital marketing plays a key role in building an educational institution's brand image (Shehzadi, 2021). Therefore, this study supports and complements previous findings, strengthening understanding of the power of digital marketing in education. According Perera et al. (2022) previous findings supporting the results of this study include several important aspects related to the role of digital marketing in building the brand image of educational institutions:

Brand Recognition: Previous research highlighted how digital marketing, especially through online campaigns and social media, helps educational institutions in increasing their brand recognition. With content that reflects the institution's values and excellence, digital marketing helps create a strong brand identity (Momen et al., 2020).

Meaningful Interactions: Research has also shown that digital marketing enables more meaningful interactions between educational institutions and prospective students as well as society. Quick responses to questions, comments, or feedback through social media and online platforms create a brand image that is responsive and cares about individual needs (Zhang et al., 2018).

Innovative Approach: Several previous studies have emphasized that digital marketing allows educational institutions to adopt innovative approaches in their brand presentation. With creative and informative content, digital marketing helps create a modern and relevant brand image (Cheung et al., 2019).

Reputation Solidification: Digital marketing also plays a role in solidifying an educational institution's reputation through positive reviews, testimonials, and sharing content that reflects the positive experiences of students and alumni. This affects the perception of prospective students and parents towards the quality of the institution (El-Kassem et al., 2018).

Thus, previous findings have identified that digital marketing is not only a promotional tool, but also an essential element in building, maintaining, and enhancing the brand image of educational institutions. This research, with its results, adds more evidence and a deeper understanding of the role of digital marketing in influencing the brand image of educational institutions at the local level, which can be generalized and applied more broadly in the world of education.

Increased Student Engagement

Digital marketing also has a positive impact on student engagement in the learning process. The educational content shared through social media and online platforms has helped in maintaining students' interest in the learning material (Larrondo Ureta, & Peña Fernández, 2018). In addition, more interactive and real-time communication through online platforms has improved the relationship between academic staff and students. Student involvement in the learning process has also increased as a result of digital

marketing strategies. With educational content shared through social media, blogs, and other online platforms, students feel more involved in learning materials. They have easier access to educational resources that can improve their understanding. In addition, the two-way communication possible through digital platforms allows students to more actively participate in discussions and interact with their academic staff (Shim, & Lee, 2020). This leads to more valuable learning experiences and better engagement.

Previous studies have highlighted how online platforms and social media can be used as tools to increase student interaction and engagement in learning (Ansari & Khan, 2020). Previous studies have emphasized that easier access to online educational resources and engaging content can increase student motivation and participation in the learning process.

The implication of these findings is that digital marketing not only affects aspects of student enrollment, but also contributes to improving the quality of the learning experience. In the context of experiential learning, digital marketing helps create a more dynamic and engaged learning environment (Baim, 2020; Earle, & Leyva, 2021). With educational content shared through social media, blogs, and other online platforms, students have easier access to educational resources that can improve their understanding. The two-way communication possible through digital platforms also allows students to more actively participate in discussions, ask questions, and interact with their academic staff (Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2019). This leads to a more valuable and interactive learning experience.

In other words, digital marketing creates educational experiences that are richer, engaging, and responsive to student needs. It is not just about attracting students into the institution, but also about keeping them engaged and engaged in the learning process. In this case, digital marketing plays a role in improving the overall quality of the educational experience (Barus, 2023; Abdelkader, 2023). This is important in ensuring that education not only becomes more broadly accessible, but also relevant and satisfying to students, which in turn can improve student retention and the sustainability of the education business (Santos, et al., 2020).

In global to local contexts, digital marketing is becoming an effective instrument to create more interesting and relevant learning for students. Therefore, this study strengthens the argument that digital marketing is an important tool in efforts to improve the quality of education and student engagement at various levels of education.

Better Student Maintenance

An effective digital marketing strategy also helps in nurturing existing students. Data shows that students who enroll through digital marketing channels have higher retention rates than students who enroll through conventional channels (Darmawan et al., 2023). This shows that digital marketing not only plays a role in getting new students, but also in keeping them in the institution.

The results showed that students who signed up through digital marketing channels tended to have higher retention rates. This shows that digital marketing not only serves as a tool to acquire new students, but also to keep existing students engaged and satisfied with their experience (Latif et al., 2023). Factors such as better communication, online learning support, and easier access to educational resources can contribute to better student maintenance.

Some previous research has also emphasized that more interactive communication and stronger support, especially in the context of online learning, can help students feel more engaged and more comfortable with their educational experience (Irvansyah et al., 2023). The implication of these findings is that digital marketing is not only about acquiring new students, but also plays a role in retaining existing students, creating a more positive educational experience, and keeping them engaged in the learning process. In an increasingly digital era of education, better student nurturing is an important factor in ensuring the sustainability of the education business.

Enhanced Brand Image

Digital marketing has also had a positive impact on the brand image of educational institutions. Through informative, inspirational, and high-quality content consistently presented on various platforms, these institutions have managed to build a strong image as providers of quality education (Oladejo et al., 2022). This attracts the attention of prospective students and parents in choosing an educational institution. The brand image of educational institutions in Surakarta has improved through effective digital marketing.

High-quality and informative content disseminated across multiple platforms helps these institutions build an image as a superior education provider. This is important in influencing the decision of prospective students and parents in choosing an educational institution (Ilyas et al., 2022). A strong brand image creates trust and identifies the institution as a major player in the education industry.

This research has significant implications in the context of education in Surakarta. The results show that digital marketing is not just about promoting educational institutions, but also about improving accessibility, engagement, student nurturing, and brand image. In the ever-evolving digital age, educational institutions need to understand the power of digital marketing and integrate it into their business strategies.

In addition, the study also implies the need for training and development of marketing and academic staff in understanding and managing digital marketing

strategies effectively. Digital marketing requires a deep understanding of the online behavior of prospective students and the various digital marketing tools available (Mulyono et al., 2023; Shofwan et al., 2023). Therefore, investment in training and human resource development is an important step for educational institutions.

Lastly, this research shows that digital marketing can be a powerful tool in building more inclusive and quality education in Surakarta. This is a positive step towards ensuring that all individuals have equitable access to quality education, regardless of their background or geographic location. With the right digital marketing strategy, educational institutions can be pioneers in achieving this goal. In conclusion, the results of this study highlight the crucial role of digital marketing in increasing the competitiveness of education businesses in Surakarta. Digital marketing has made a tangible contribution in increasing student enrollment, their involvement in learning, nurturing existing students, and improving the brand image of educational institutions. In an increasingly digital era, digital marketing is a tool that is not only important, but also impacts the accessibility and quality of education more broadly.

CONCLUSION

This research reveals that digital marketing strategies play a key role in increasing the competitiveness of education businesses in Surakarta. The results showed that digital marketing has succeeded in increasing student enrollment, increasing student engagement in the learning process, nurturing existing students, and improving the brand image of educational institutions. In the ever-evolving digital age, digital marketing is not just about promoting educational institutions, but also about improving the accessibility and quality of education. With the right approach, educational institutions can be agents of change in building more inclusive and quality education, responding effectively to the needs of prospective students, and ensuring that education remains relevant in an ever-changing digital environment.

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