

The Impact of Digital Marketing through Websites on the Export of PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: This study explores the impact of digital marketing, particularly through website optimization, on the export performance of PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia, a plywood supplier in the global market. As digital marketing becomes increasingly essential for expanding international reach, this research investigates how website optimization, SEO strategies, and social media integration contribute to improving export outcomes. The study employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative data on export growth and qualitative insights from interviews with the company's marketing team. The results indicate that the effective use of SEO has significantly enhanced the company's global visibility, resulting in increased international inquiries and sales. Furthermore, features such as live chat and detailed product catalogs on the website have improved customer engagement and trust. Despite these positive outcomes, challenges such as regulatory certifications, logistics costs, and meeting international standards remain significant obstacles. The study recommends continued optimization of digital strategies, the integration of AI for personalized marketing, and closer collaboration with logistics partners to address these challenges. The findings provide valuable insights for other SMEs in the plywood industry and beyond, illustrating the importance of leveraging digital tools to enhance export performance.

KEYWORD: Digital marketing, website optimization, SEO, export performance, plywood, B2B, international trade, social media integration, export challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Along with the rapid development of digital technology, companies around the world are increasingly relying on digital platforms to expand their market reach and increase their competitiveness. One of the most effective tools in digital marketing is the website. The website not only functions as a product storefront, but also as a tool to introduce the company to the global market, facilitate communication with international customers, and conduct direct transactions. In this context, marketing through the website is an important key for companies that want to increase their exports, especially in markets that are increasingly competitive and globally connected. PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia, as a high quality plywood manufacturer, faces the challenge of expanding its market share at the international level. Considering the quality of the products they offer, it is important for companies to utilize the website as the main marketing platform. However, along with the increasing competition in the global market, companies need to continue to evaluate the effectiveness of digital marketing applied to ensure that their website not only functions as a promotional medium, but also as an effective means of increasing export volume. Therefore, this research aims to explore how marketing through the website contributes to the increase in the export of PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia. Previous research has shown that marketing through websites has a significant positive impact on increasing international sales. For example, research by Chaffey (2015) states that the use of digital technology and marketing through websites can increase brand visibility, expand market reach, and ultimately support product export growth. On the other hand, Laudon & Traver (2016) also revealed that companies that successfully optimize their websites through SEO, good user experience, and relevant content tend to have better performance in attracting global customers, which in turn increases their international transactions.

In Indonesia, the development of digital marketing through websites also shows positive results in the context of manufacturing companies. A study by Pratama (2020) revealed that website-based digital marketing is able to accelerate access to international markets and reduce dependence on intermediaries, which leads to an increase in the export of local products. In this case, PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia has great potential to achieve similar benefits if it maximizes the use of the website as part of their marketing strategy. However, although many studies show the success of digital marketing in increasing exports, the challenges faced by companies such as fierce competition in the international market, cultural differences between markets, and difficulties in measuring the direct impact of marketing through websites are still problems that need to be solved. Therefore, this research will further analyze how websites can function as an effective marketing tool and have a real impact on increasing exports, focusing on

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the experience of PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia in implementing the digital strategy.

Through this research, the author tries to analyze the impact of marketing through the website on the increase in exports of PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia. This study is important to provide practical insight into how digital technology can be optimally utilized to support business growth, especially in the plywood export sector. PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia, a plywood supplier operating in the global market, faces various challenges in enhancing its export performance. One of the main obstacles is adapting to digital marketing, which has become a crucial element in expanding international reach. Many Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia, including PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia, struggle to effectively utilize digital technology. This is due to limitations in knowledge and skills related to digital platforms, uneven internet infrastructure, and high logistics costs. Additionally, website optimization

through Search Engine Optimization (SEO) strategies presents another challenge. Many SMEs fail to recognize the importance of SEO in increasing visibility on search engines, which affects the conversion rate of website visitors into customers. Factors such as poor-quality content, non-responsive website design, and slow page loading speed further hinder the effectiveness of digital marketing.

Moreover, the integration of social media as a marketing tool has not been fully optimized. Social media holds significant potential in enhancing customer engagement and building trust in products. However, a lack of understanding regarding social media marketing strategies prevents businesses from fully leveraging this opportunities. Therefore, this study aims to explore the impact of digital marketing, particularly through website optimization, on the export performance of PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia. By understanding and addressing these challenges, the company is expected to improve its global visibility, attract more international inquiries, and ultimately increase export sales.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Marketing and Website as Strategic Tools

Digital marketing is a promotional effort that utilizes digital technology to reach a wide audience (Chaffey & Smith, 2022). One of the main tools in digital marketing is the website, which functions as a medium for communication, branding, and business transactions. A well- designed website can increase the attractiveness of a company and expand international market access (Kotler et al., 2021). In addition, search engine optimization (SEO) helps websites achieve high rankings in online searches, which is crucial for attracting the attention of potential global customers (Reddy, 2020).

For export-oriented businesses, a strategically optimized website plays a pivotal role in enhancing visibility and credibility in the global market. Studies have shown that effective website design, including user-friendly navigation, responsive layouts, and multilingual support, can significantly improve customer engagement and conversion rates (Holliman & Rowley, 2022). Moreover, integrating features such as live chat, detailed product catalogs, and customer reviews enhances trust and facilitates seamless interactions between businesses and international buyers (Dahl, 2021).

Social media integration further strengthens digital marketing efforts by amplifying brand exposure and fostering direct communication with potential customers worldwide. Platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook allow companies to share product information, industry insights, and promotional campaigns, increasing audience engagement and brand loyalty (Felix et al., 2017). Additionally, the use of data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) in digital marketing enables companies to personalize their marketing strategies, predict consumer behavior, and optimize content for target markets (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016).

Despite the numerous advantages, SMEs often face challenges in implementing digital marketing strategies effectively. Limited financial resources, lack of digital literacy, and high competition in the online marketplace can hinder the success of their digital initiatives (Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014). Moreover, regulatory requirements and international trade barriers further complicate the process of global market expansion. Therefore, continuous optimization of digital marketing tools, investment in SEO, and collaboration with digital marketing experts are essential for companies aiming to improve their export performance through digital channels.

Digital Marketing Strategy for Export

Previous research shows that companies that utilize digital marketing for export tend to experience an increase in sales volume and value. According to a study by Samiee et al. (2021), the utilization of interactive features on websites, such as digital catalogs and direct communication with customers, accelerates the purchasing decision-making process by international consumers. This is particularly relevant for the plywood industry, where customers often look for detailed technical specifications before making a purchase.

Digital marketing strategies tailored for export-oriented businesses emphasize the importance of localization, customer engagement, and data-driven decision-making. A study by Leonidou et al. (2020) highlights that companies integrating multilingual content and culturally adapted marketing messages on their websites are more likely to attract and retain international customers. Providing country-specific pricing, currency conversion tools, and compliance information regarding export

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regulations further enhances the credibility and accessibility of a company's digital presence (Zou & Cavusgil, 2019). Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and paid digital advertising, such as Google Ads and social media campaigns, are critical tools for expanding global market reach. Research by Sinkovics et al. (2022) suggests that businesses that invest in SEO experience higher international website traffic and lead generation. Moreover, programmatic advertising and retargeting strategies have proven effective in maintaining customer interest and increasing conversion rates (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2021). Additionally, the integration of digital marketing with Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems allows companies to track customer interactions, personalize marketing efforts, and improve retention rates (Wang & Kim, 2017). In the context of the plywood industry, leveraging AI-driven chatbots and automated email marketing can facilitate seamless communication with global buyers, ensuring that inquiries and purchase requests are efficiently managed (Kietzmann et al., 2018). Despite these benefits, digital marketing for export comes with challenges such as digital infrastructure limitations, varying consumer preferences across markets, and the need for compliance with international trade regulations (Morgan et al., 2018). Companies must continuously adapt their digital strategies by analyzing market trends, optimizing their online presence, and investing in digital literacy to maximize export performance.

Plywood Industry in the Global Market

The global plywood industry is expected to grow with a CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of 6.5% between 2023-2030 (Grand View Research, 2023). The increasing demand from the construction and furniture sectors drives this market expansion. As one of the high-quality plywood exporters, PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia has a great opportunity to expand its market reach, especially with a digital-based marketing strategy.

A well-executed digital marketing strategy can help plywood exporters differentiate themselves in a competitive global market. Research by Leonidou et al. (2020) emphasizes that digital transformation in export marketing enables firms to reach international buyers efficiently, enhance brand visibility, and streamline customer interactions. By leveraging data-driven marketing strategies, businesses can better target potential customers and optimize their advertising spend (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2021).

Digital Marketing Challenges in the International Market

Despite having many advantages, digital marketing faces several challenges, including fierce competition, frequent changes in search engine algorithms, and the need for careful data management. According to McKinsey (2022), companies must integrate data analytics to understand market preferences and personalize customer experiences to remain competitive. Effective data management allows firms to create targeted marketing campaigns and optimize conversion rates, making digital marketing more impactful in export markets (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). One of the primary challenges for exporters is search engine algorithm updates, which can significantly affect website rankings. Studies indicate that changes in Google's ranking criteria, such as prioritizing mobile-friendly websites and high-quality content, require continuous adaptation in SEO strategies (Holliman & Rowley, 2022). Additionally, high competition in digital advertising means companies must invest in paid advertising strategies, influencer collaborations, and content marketing to maintain visibility (Zou & Cavusgil, 2019). Another major challenge is regulatory compliance and data protection laws, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe and similar regulations in other regions. These laws require businesses to handle customer data responsibly and ensure transparency in data collection and usage (Tiago & Veríssimo, 2014). Failure to comply with these regulations can lead to reputational damage and financial penalties.

To overcome these challenges, companies must continuously monitor digital marketing trends, invest in AI-driven analytics, and adopt agile marketing strategies. Digital marketing is an evolving landscape, and plywood exporters must remain adaptable to sustain long-term success in international markets.

Research Relevance

This study addresses a critical gap in the literature by examining the role of website-based digital marketing in enhancing export performance within Indonesia's plywood industry. While previous research has explored the general impact of digital marketing on international trade, limited attention has been given to industry-specific applications, particularly in the context of SMEs operating in the plywood sector. By focusing on PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia, this study provides empirical insights into the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies—such as website optimization, search engine optimization (SEO), and online customer engagement—in driving export growth. The findings of this research are expected to offer valuable practical recommendations that can be adapted by other companies in similar industries, ultimately contributing to the broader discourse on digital transformation in global trade.

Type of Research

This research employs a qualitative approach to examine the influence of website-based digital marketing on the export performance of PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia. A qualitative methodology is particularly well-suited for this study, as it enables an in-depth exploration of the company's experiences, strategies, and challenges in leveraging digital tools for international market expansion. Through this approach, the study seeks to uncover nuanced perspectives and contextual factors that quantitative

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methods may overlook.

To achieve this objective, the research will utilize semi-structured interviews with the owner of PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia. These interviews will focus on key aspects such as SEO implementation, the role of digital product catalogs in attracting international buyers, and the effectiveness of digital interactions in facilitating purchasing decisions. By systematically analyzing these insights, the study aims to construct a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which website-based marketing contributes to export growth.

Furthermore, the integration of qualitative findings will provide a rich, narrative-driven perspective on the company's digital marketing journey, allowing for the identification of best practices and potential areas for improvement. Ultimately, this research aspires to generate strategic recommendations that can be applied by SMEs in the plywood industry and other export-oriented sectors seeking to optimize their digital marketing efforts for global competitiveness.

Definition of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a scientific approach that aims to understand social phenomena or human behavior by exploring the meaning, experience, and subjective views of individuals or groups in a certain context. This approach focuses on collecting non-numerical data, such as words, narratives, descriptions, or symbols, which are analyzed in depth to reveal patterns, relationships, or understandings that cannot be represented by numbers. Qualitative research is usually used to answer questions about "why" and "how" a phenomenon occurs, with the aim of gaining a deep understanding of complex reality. This approach is often flexible and adaptive, allowing researchers to develop a data collection process based on initial findings. In addition, qualitative research emphasizes the context and social environment, where data is collected in natural situations without manipulation, thus allowing a rich and detailed interpretation of the phenomenon being studied. The analysis process is inductive, where theories or conclusions are compiled from patterns that appear in the data. Data validity is guaranteed through triangulation, critical reflection, and in-depth involvement of researchers in the field. Qualitative research is often used in social sciences, education, culture, and humanities to explore the subjective dimensions of human life that cannot be fully explained by quantitative data.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection is done by accessing and reviewing relevant publication reports published by government agencies and related associations. And the data in this study was collected through semi-structured interviews with the management of PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia, especially from the marketing and export management team. Interviews are conducted to obtain detailed information about digital strategies that are applied, such as SEO optimization, social media use, as well as challenges and obstacles faced in the export process. In addition, company documents related to export performance and digital marketing strategies are also analyzed to enrich research data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Website Optimization and Its Impact on Export Growth

The results from PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia's integration of digital marketing strategies through their website demonstrate substantial success in expanding their global export footprint. As revealed during the interviews, the company's website is integral to their ability to connect with international clients. By optimizing their website's search engine performance (SEO), they were able to ensure that when clients searched for plywood supply chains from Indonesia, PT Fortuna's website ranked on the first page of search results. This significant visibility led to an increase in both the number of inquiries and overall exports. The integration of an optimized website resulted in a marked improvement in customer engagement, with clients easily accessing product catalogs, educational content, and more.

The company's commitment to SEO and digital marketing has been a key driver of its export growth. As mentioned in the interviews, the collaboration with digital marketers for Ads and SEO optimization has allowed PT Fortuna to target international keywords effectively. By focusing on relevant terms used globally, PT Fortuna can attract the right clientele from around the world, thus enhancing its credibility and customer trust. This aligns with existing research which suggests that optimizing a company's website with SEO can improve brand visibility and attract international customers, ultimately boosting export sales (Kotler et al., 2021; Reddy, 2020).

Direct Communication Features and Customer Trust

Direct communication tools such as live chat and inquiry forms on the company's website have played a pivotal role in building trust with international buyers. As highlighted in the interviews, these features not only enhance customer satisfaction by providing quick responses to inquiries but also help in managing complex negotiations and closing deals. Customers can easily access real-time assistance, which strengthens their confidence in the brand and the products offered. This communication ease helps bridge the gap between the business and international clients, facilitating smoother transactions, as pointed out by Samiee et al. (2021). Additionally, PT Fortuna's strategic use of social media platforms like LinkedIn and educational content on their website has proven effective in reaching global contractors and industries involved in woodworking. The educational content, covering topics such as engineered wood types and their advantages, has helped potential clients better understand the products offered. This

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educational approach not only showcases the company's expertise but also helps validate the business, further building customer trust.

Challenges Faced in Digital Export Marketing

Despite the evident benefits of digital marketing, PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia also faced several challenges in its efforts to expand its export market. As the interviewee mentioned, the primary hurdles included maintaining product quality standards across international markets, ensuring compliance with certifications such as FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and JIS (Japan Agricultural Standard), and dealing with logistics-related issues like high shipping costs and delivery delays. These challenges are common in the export sector, as companies often face difficulties in meeting international regulations and delivering products on time while maintaining cost efficiency.

One specific issue that emerged from the interviews was the challenge of meeting the international legal requirements for timber products, specifically the V-Legal document. This document, which certifies that the timber is legally sourced, is mandatory for export, and any discrepancies in documentation can result in penalties. The complexity of complying with these requirements, particularly in terms of ensuring all necessary certifications and handling logistics, was a significant pain point for the company. Moreover, while PT Fortuna benefited from government support, particularly in terms of regulatory facilitation and market access through programs like ITPC (Indonesian Trade Promotion Center), the company also noted that there were certain barriers to entry for new businesses in the export sector. Specifically, the requirement for businesses to have been operating for at least two years before qualifying for some government programs was seen as a challenge for new players like PT Fortuna.

Strategic Insights for Future Development

To address these challenges, it is recommended that PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia continue enhancing its website and digital marketing efforts while also leveraging advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) to further personalize customer experiences. The use of data analytics to track website performance, including customer interactions and purchase behaviors, should be prioritized. As mentioned during the interviews, the company uses tools like Google Analytics to monitor website traffic and adjust marketing strategies based on the performance data. This approach will allow PT Fortuna to refine their targeting efforts and optimize their marketing strategies to reach more international clients effectively. Additionally, fostering closer collaboration with logistics partners to address shipping cost concerns and improve delivery efficiency will be critical to sustaining export growth. As the company scales its operations, maintaining a robust supply chain and ensuring product quality across international markets will be essential to their long-term success.

DISCUSSION

Based on the regression results provided, we can interpret the findings as follows:

1. The Role of Website Optimization in Enhancing Export Performance

The use of website optimization, particularly through SEO strategies, has proven to be a crucial factor in PT Fortuna's success in expanding its global market presence. As demonstrated in the interviews, the company's emphasis on SEO allowed its website to rank high in international search results for key terms such as "plywood supply chain Indonesia." This improved visibility directly correlates with increased website traffic, which ultimately drives export growth. The significance of SEO in enhancing brand visibility aligns with existing research that suggests that businesses utilizing effective SEO strategies are better positioned to attract international customers, increase brand awareness, and facilitate global sales (Chaffey, 2015; Laudon & Traver, 2016). SEO optimization has not only resulted in higher visibility but has also contributed to building trust with potential clients. The website serves as a platform where prospective customers can access detailed product catalogs, technical specifications, and educational content. This aspect of digital marketing addresses one of the key barriers to B2B export transactions—lack of information. The ability to present clear and accessible information about products, combined with SEO-driven visibility, enhances the company's credibility, which is a vital component in fostering trust in international trade. As noted by Kotler et al. (2021), an optimized digital presence strengthens a company's market positioning and facilitates trust-building with customers, which is particularly important in B2B export markets.

2. Direct Communication and Customer Engagement

The integration of live chat, inquiry forms, and educational content on PT Fortuna's website has been pivotal in enhancing customer engagement and trust. As evidenced by the company's experiences, these communication features have helped overcome one of the primary challenges in B2B international trade: facilitating real-time communication with international clients. This is particularly important in export businesses, where customers often seek detailed product information and require personalized solutions. The ability to engage customers directly and promptly addresses these needs and reinforces the company's reliability as a supplier.

The use of social media, especially LinkedIn, as a tool for customer engagement and educational outreach also aligns with global best practices in digital marketing. The company's strategic approach to educating potential customers about the advantages and

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specifications of engineered wood products is consistent with research that emphasizes the role of content marketing in building relationships with international clients (Reddy, 2020). By educating clients about the technical aspects of their products, PT Fortuna not only markets its products but also positions itself as an authority in the plywood industry, thereby increasing its competitiveness in international markets.

3. Challenges in International Export Marketing

Despite the successes attributed to their website and digital marketing efforts, PT Fortuna faces several persistent challenges that hinder their full exploitation of the global export potential. A key issue is the complexity of meeting international quality standards and obtaining necessary certifications such as FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and JIS (Japan Agricultural Standard). These certifications are essential for exporting wood products to certain markets, but acquiring them can be time-consuming and costly. This challenge is indicative of the broader difficulties many SMEs face when attempting to scale internationally. According to McKinsey (2022), navigating the regulatory landscape of international trade, especially for products that require specific certifications, remains a significant barrier to export growth.

Additionally, the company's experience with logistics challenges, including high shipping costs and delivery delays, underscores the critical role of an efficient and cost-effective supply chain in sustaining export growth. The rising costs of shipping, as highlighted in the interviews, directly impact the profitability of exports and, in some cases, result in holding off on shipments, thus straining the company's cash flow. This is consistent with the findings of studies on the impact of logistics and supply chain management on international trade, where high logistics costs have been identified as one of the major obstacles to export expansion (Supriyadi, 2021). Addressing these logistics challenges will require PT Fortuna to invest in optimizing its supply chain and negotiating better shipping rates with logistics partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of these findings, it is recommended that PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia continue to enhance its digital marketing strategies, particularly in the areas of SEO, content marketing, and customer engagement. The use of AI and data analytics should be further integrated into the company's operations to personalize customer experiences and optimize marketing efforts based on detailed performance data. As the company moves forward, addressing logistical and certification challenges will be crucial to sustaining growth. Collaborating with government agencies and industry bodies to streamline certification processes and reduce logistics costs could provide significant benefits.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the significant role of website optimization in enhancing PT Fortuna Sukarasa Indonesia's export performance. The strategic implementation of SEO has proven to be a powerful tool in increasing global visibility, driving website traffic, and ultimately boosting international inquiries and sales. By providing clear and accessible product information, the company has successfully addressed a key barrier in B2B export transactions, reinforcing trust and credibility among international buyers. This aligns with existing research, which underscores the importance of digital presence in strengthening market positioning and fostering customer relationships in the export sector.

Furthermore, the integration of interactive communication tools such as live chat, inquiry forms, and educational content has played a crucial role in improving customer engagement. These features have enabled PT Fortuna to provide real-time responses to international clients, facilitating seamless communication and reinforcing the company's reputation as a reliable supplier. The use of social media platforms, particularly LinkedIn, has also contributed to brand positioning by educating potential customers and establishing the company as an industry authority in engineered wood products.

However, despite these successes, PT Fortuna continues to face significant challenges in the international export market. Regulatory requirements, including the need for certifications such as FSC and JIS, pose substantial barriers that require financial and administrative resources. Additionally, logistical constraints, particularly high shipping costs and delivery delays, remain critical obstacles that impact export profitability and operational efficiency. Addressing these challenges will require strategic investments in supply chain optimization and stronger collaborations with logistics partners to ensure cost-effective and timely deliveries.

Overall, this study underscores the necessity for SMEs in the plywood industry to leverage digital marketing tools to expand their international market reach. While website optimization and customer engagement strategies have proven effective in driving exports, overcoming regulatory and logistical barriers remains essential for sustaining long-term growth. Future research may explore further strategies to enhance digital marketing efficiency and supply chain resilience, ensuring that SMEs can fully capitalize on global market opportunities.

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