

**Implementing SOSTAC Model
for Marketing Communication Strategy:
A Case Study of Assalam Hypermarket**

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse the implementation of marketing communication strategies using the SOSTAC (Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, Control) framework at Assalam Hypermarket, Sukoharjo. The research method used is a qualitative descriptive approach, which consists of three stages: Pre-Field, Field Implementation, and Data Analysis. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with the CEO and the Marketing and Public Relations Division of Assalam Hypermarket, observation, and documentation. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) approaches consistently, from branding to integrated advertising and event marketing. The findings reflect the company's commitment to building engagement with customers and communities, and show that Assalam Hypermarket not only focuses on implementing marketing strategies, but also actively monitors and evaluates their effectiveness. This research is expected to provide valuable insights for the development of marketing communication strategies in the Islamic retail sector in Indonesia.

Introduction

The retail industry plays a very important role in the global and national economy, including in Indonesia. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the wholesale and retail trade sector accounts for around 13.6% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2022. This figure shows how significant the retail sector's contribution to economic growth is. In this context, effective marketing communication strategies are key to maintaining competitiveness and improving retail performance, especially in the midst of increasingly dynamic changes in consumer behaviour (Gaiha et al., 2024; Siyal et al., 2019; Teller et al., 2016; Umair et al., 2019).

Despite the growing popularity of online shopping, a report from Nielsen shows that around 70% of Indonesian consumers still rely on physical stores for their daily needs (Paendong et al., 2023; Qoyum et al., 2022). This shows that physical retail still has its appeal, especially in terms of shopping experience and social interaction. However, with the rapid growth of modern retail, including supermarkets and hypermarkets, retailers must be able to adapt and develop marketing communication strategies that can effectively reach consumers.

The growth of the retail industry in Indonesia is also influenced by two main models: conventional retail and modern retail. Conventional retail, such as traditional markets, is still the main choice for some people due to more affordable prices and social proximity (Blut et al., 2018; Fatimah, 2015; Whitehill et al., 2020). On the other hand, modern retail offers convenience, a wider range of products, and product quality assurance. The Indonesian Retailers Association (APRINDO) reports that the number of modern retailers will increase by around 8.5% by 2023, while traditional retailers will decline by around 2% in the same period (Kusumanto et al., 2019). This shows that modern retail is increasingly dominating the market, and conventional retailers need to innovate to stay relevant.

The development of Islamic retail in Indonesia has also begun to receive attention, along with the increasing awareness of Muslim consumers of the importance of halal products. Murti (2017) states that Islamic retail is developing in response to consumer demand that is increasingly aware of usury-free transactions. Islamic retail offers an attractive alternative for consumers who prioritise halal and ethical products in their daily transactions. As such, retailers need to understand and implement sharia-compliant marketing communication strategies to attract this market segment.

One of the main challenges faced by retailers is the increasing change in consumer preferences. Mensah (2022) notes that consumers now prioritise product quality and a better shopping experience. Modern retail that relies on technology, such as online shopping apps and digital payments, is increasingly favoured by consumers, especially in urban areas. Therefore, it is important for retailers to develop marketing communication strategies that are not only attractive but also provide added value to consumers.

In this context, the application of the SOSTAC model (Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, Control) becomes highly relevant. This model provides a systematic framework for planning, implementing, and measuring the success of marketing strategies. By using the SOSTAC model, Assalam Hypermarket can design marketing communication strategies that are effective and responsive to consumer needs, and overcome the competitive challenges faced in an

increasingly digital and dynamic retail market. This study aims to analyse the application of the SOSTAC model in the marketing communication strategy at Assalam Hypermarket, and provide recommendations for improvements that can be made.

Literature Review

Communication Strategy

Marketing communication strategy is a crucial element in achieving business objectives and building strong relationships with consumers. According to Kotler and Keller, a marketing communication strategy encompasses all the ways a company interacts with consumers, including advertising, sales promotions, public relations, and direct marketing (Al Khattab et al., 2015; Kiraz & Basal, 2024; Lim et al., 2021; Zhou, 2019). In the retail context, an effective communication strategy can help companies convey product value, build brand image, and enhance customer loyalty (Elg & Welinder, 2022; Ładyżyński et al., 2019). Therefore, it is essential for companies to formulate an integrated and consistent communication strategy across all marketing channels.

The scope of marketing communication strategy includes various interrelated elements. According to Fill and Turnbull, these elements include the message, communication channels, audience, and feedback (Kim et al., 2020; Kiraz & Basal, 2024). The message conveyed must be relevant and engaging to the target audience, while the communication channels should be selected based on consumer preferences and behaviours. In the digital age, the use of social media and other online platforms has become increasingly important in reaching consumers. Thus, companies need to understand audience characteristics and choose the most effective channels to deliver their messages.

Additionally, communication strategies must consider the social and cultural context in which the company operates. According to Belch and Belch, understanding this context can help companies design messages that are more relevant and acceptable to the audience (Key & Czaplewski, 2017; Šerić et al., 2014). In the case of Assalam Hypermarket, which operates in the sharia retail environment, it is crucial to ensure that all marketing communications align with sharia values and are acceptable to Muslim consumers. This not only enhances communication effectiveness but also builds trust and loyalty among consumers towards the brand.

Finally, evaluation and control are integral parts of the marketing communication strategy. According to Duncan and Moriarty, measuring communication effectiveness can be achieved through analysing consumer feedback and monitoring the performance of marketing campaigns (Alam, 2023; Kanaan et al., 2023; Kiraz & Basal, 2024). By conducting regular evaluations, companies can identify areas for improvement and adjust their communication strategies to achieve better results. In the context of Assalam Hypermarket, the implementation of appropriate evaluation will help the company continuously adapt to changing consumer needs and preferences, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the marketing communication strategies employed.

SOSTAC Model

The SOSTAC model, developed by Paul R. Smith, is a comprehensive framework for marketing planning that integrates all stages from strategy development to implementation.

According to Smith (2020), SOSTAC consists of six main elements: Situation Analysis, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, and Control. This model is designed to provide clear guidance in formulating and implementing marketing strategies, and can be adapted for various contexts, including digital marketing. Khayrani (2022) emphasise that SOSTAC is not only useful in planning marketing strategies, but also in expanding market reach and overcoming problems faced in product marketing. Thus, the application of this model at Assalam Hypermarket can help in formulating a more effective and targeted marketing communication strategy.

The first stage in the SOSTAC model is Situation Analysis, which serves to analyse the environmental conditions around the object of research. Hafid and Fahrullah (2023) explain that situation analysis aims to understand and map the current conditions and future potential of the entity under study, such as Assalam Hypermarket. In this stage, SWOT analysis is used to evaluate internal and external factors that affect company performance. By understanding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, companies can formulate strategies that are more appropriate and responsive to market dynamics (Büyüközkan & Ilıcak, 2019; Novicevic et al., 2016; Vlados, 2019). An in-depth situation analysis also allows the company to identify market trends and consumer behaviour that can influence strategic decisions.

After the situation analysis, the next stage is to set specific and measurable Objectives. Khayrani (2022) explains that the use of the 5S method-selling, serving, speaking, saving, and sizzle-as well as the SMART approach (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, Time-related) is essential in formulating achievable goals. Clear and measurable goals will provide the right direction for companies in designing marketing strategies. Furthermore, the strategies designed must be able to support the achievement of these goals, using the STOP (Segmenting, Targeting, Online Value Proposition, and Positioning) and SIT (Sequence or Stage, Integration, and Tools) approaches to assess the effectiveness of marketing strategies (Dolega et al., 2021; Driessen et al., 2024; Kitsios et al., 2021). By systematically following the stages of SOSTAC, companies can improve the effectiveness of marketing communications and achieve the desired results.

The last stage in the SOSTAC model is Control, which serves to monitor and evaluate the performance of the strategies that have been implemented. According to Kotler and Keller (2021), effective control allows companies to make necessary adjustments based on the results obtained (Wahid & Rizki, 2018). In the context of Assalam Hypermarket, implementing good control will help in identifying areas that need improvement and ensuring that the marketing communication strategy remains relevant to consumer needs. Thus, the SOSTAC model serves not only as a guide in planning marketing strategies, but also as a tool to ensure that companies can adapt quickly to changes in the market and consumer needs.

Integrated Marketing Communication

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is a strategic approach that integrates various marketing communication tools to deliver consistent and harmonious messages to consumers. IMC aims to create synergies between various communication channels, such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations, and digital marketing, so as to increase communication effectiveness and build better relationships with customers (Kliatchko, 2008). In a retail context, such as Assalam Hypermarket, the application of IMC can help in creating a more integrated and satisfying

shopping experience for consumers.

Key indicators of IMC success include message consistency, consumer engagement, and campaign effectiveness measurement. Message consistency ensures that all communication channels convey the same information, which can increase trust and brand recognition among consumers (Schultz & Schultz, 2010). Consumer engagement can be measured through interactions on social media, participation rates in promotions, and feedback from customers. In addition, campaign effectiveness measurement can be done through sales data analysis, customer satisfaction surveys, and ROI (Return on Investment) measurement of various communication channels.

The application of IMC in the marketing communication strategy at Assalam Hypermarket can be seen from how they combine various communication channels to achieve marketing objectives. For example, the use of social media to promote special offers, followed by advertisements in print and digital media, as well as in-store promotions. This creates a cohesive experience for consumers, where they can receive the same information through multiple channels (Belch & Belch, 2018). Thus, IMC not only increases brand visibility, but also encourages consumers to interact further with the brand.

In the context of this study, SOSTAC (Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, Control) analysis can be used to evaluate the implementation of IMC at Assalam Hypermarket. By understanding the current situation, setting clear objectives, formulating appropriate strategies, and executing effective tactics, retailers can control and evaluate the results of their communication campaigns. This will provide valuable insights into how IMC can be optimised to achieve better results in retail marketing (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Research Method

This research was conducted at Assalam Hypermarket Sukoharjo, which is one of the sharia-based retailers in Indonesia. The research subjects consisted of marketing managers, marketing staff, and Assalam Hypermarket consumers. Subject selection was carried out using purposive sampling technique, which is the selection of samples based on certain criteria that are considered to provide relevant information to answer research questions (Palinkas et al., 2015). This technique allows researchers to gain deep insights from individuals who have experience and knowledge relevant to the research topic (Dokmaipum et al., 2019). This research utilises a qualitative descriptive approach, which is particularly suited to case studies, as it allows researchers to explore and understand complex phenomena through the perspectives of the individuals involved.

The research stage consisted of three main phases: the pre-field stage, the field implementation stage, and the data analysis stage. In the pre-field stage, the researcher made preparations, including the development of research instruments. Furthermore, in the field implementation stage, data was collected through in-depth interviews with the Head of Marketing Division and marketing staff of Assalam Hypermarket, observation, and documentation. Data validity was checked through triangulation, which includes triangulation of sources, methods, and time, to ensure the consistency and reliability of the information obtained (Creswell, 2016). Data analysis techniques were conducted through three main stages: data reduction, data presentation,

and conclusion drawing, which enabled the researcher to organise and analyse the data systematically.

In this research, the analysis tool used is Atlas.ti, which serves as a medium to analyse qualitative data in a structured, effective and efficient manner. The analysis procedure using Atlas.ti includes entering interview documents (verbatim), coding the documents, grouping the main data, and creating flows and relationships from data that have been adjusted to the main categories. With this approach, it is expected that the research can provide a deeper understanding of the marketing communication strategies implemented at Assalam Hypermarket and how they can be optimised to achieve better marketing objectives (Porcu et al., 2020).

Results

SOSTAC Analysis

Through situation analysis, both internal and external, Assalam Hypermarket actively examines its resources, including team strength, marketing budget, and product and service innovation. On the external side, changes in consumer perceptions that increasingly lead to online shopping trends are an important factor in formulating marketing strategies. With the increasing use of social media and e-commerce, Assalam Hypermarket seeks to strengthen its presence on these platforms to reach a wider audience. This is in line with research by Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019) which shows that adaptation to changing consumer behaviour is essential in modern marketing strategies.

In formulating goals, Assalam Hypermarket uses the 5S formula which consists of Sell, Serve, Speak, Sizzle, and Save. The main purpose of this strategy is to broaden Assalam Hypermarket's appeal to the younger generation. For example, in the Sell aspect, the promotion of local products and the use of social media are optimised to increase sales. In addition, Cash on Delivery (COD) services and free shipping for a 1 km radius are expected to increase customer convenience. Research by Kotler and Keller emphasises the importance of understanding consumer needs to formulate relevant and achievable goals (Zhou, 2019).

In the strategy analysis, Assalam Hypermarket applies an effective segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) approach. Segmentation is done based on demographics, focusing on young families and Muslim customers. Targeting is directed towards active internet users who shop online, while positioning emphasises the brand image as a halal product provider. This is in line with the findings by Butkouskaya (2024) which showed that the right STP strategy can increase marketing effectiveness and customer loyalty.

Assalam Hypermarket's marketing tactics incorporate 4 variables from the marketing mix. In the Product aspect, emphasis on product quality and halalness are prioritised. Competitive pricing and loyalty programmes are also implemented to improve customer retention. In addition, the strategic location and the provision of facilities such as food courts are additional attractions. Promotions are conducted through various channels, including social media and event marketing, to increase brand awareness. Research by Belch and Belch, (2009) shows that the right combination of 4P elements can increase customer attraction and satisfaction.

In implementing the strategy, Assalam Hypermarket established a dedicated digital

marketing team that is responsible for managing all aspects of digital marketing. The team ensures content consistency with the brand identity and coordinates with partners to organise events. This is important to create a strong image in the eyes of consumers. According to Bernovskis (2024), good collaboration within the marketing team can increase the effectiveness of the campaign and the results achieved.

In the aspect of control, several important measures have been implemented. Regular monitoring of marketing tactics allows for quick adjustments to market changes. Measurement of engagement rates on social media helps assess interaction with the audience, while post-event evaluation provides insights for future improvements. The use of analytics tools such as Google Trends also provides valuable data on search trends. This is in line with research by Porcu (2019) which emphasises the importance of continuous evaluation in marketing strategies to achieve optimal results.

The results showed that Assalam Hypermarket has implemented an effective integrated promotional strategy to reach consumers and increase sales. By utilising various communication channels and holding interesting events, Assalam Hypermarket strives to remain relevant and attractive to all groups, especially the younger generation.

Integrated Marketing Communication

The Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) strategy at Assalam Hypermarket not only creates consistency of communication, but also strengthens the relationship between brand and customer. Consistent branding is seen from the use of the same logo and identity colours across all communication channels. The tagline 'We Are There For You' serves as a reminder to consumers about Assalam Hypermarket's commitment to fulfil their needs. Research by Šerić (2014) shows that consistency in branding can increase brand recognition and consumer trust, which is very important in building loyalty.

Integrated promotion becomes one of the main pillars in Assalam Hypermarket's IMC strategy. Special discounts announced through social media and an integrated shopping experience provide added value for consumers. By utilising various channels, including social media and email marketing, Assalam Hypermarket can reach a wider audience and increase consumer participation in promotions. According to Lembong and Kojo (2023), integrated promotions can increase marketing effectiveness and create a more pleasant experience for customers.

Assalam Hypermarket actively uses social media, especially Instagram, to create engaging and interesting content for the younger generation. Collaboration with influencers and local Instagram accounts helps expand the reach of promotions and give a more personalised touch to the audience. Research by Park (2021) shows that influencer marketing can increase brand awareness and consumer engagement, which is in line with Assalam Hypermarket's goal to attract the younger generation.

In an effort to build better relationships with customers, Assalam Hypermarket implements an effective Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. PAS and KPK membership cards provide exclusive benefits for customers, while communication through WhatsApp and SMS

marketing ensures that customers are always up to date with promotions and offers. According to Swoboda (2016), a good CRM strategy can increase customer loyalty and encourage repeat purchases.

Assalam Hypermarket is also active in public relations and community engagement activities, such as the National Level Olympics by Visitama and the Puppet Show in the framework of the 78th Anniversary of Sukoharjo Regency. These activities not only improve brand image, but also strengthen relationships with local communities. Research by Chang and Thai (2016) shows that involvement in community activities can increase consumer trust and loyalty to brands.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign, Assalam Hypermarket monitored the engagement rate on Instagram and conducted an overall evaluation of the campaign. By using analytics tools such as Google Trends, they can identify search trends and adjust marketing strategies as needed. This is in line with the findings by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) who emphasised the importance of continuous evaluation in marketing strategies to achieve optimal results.

Discussion

The SOSTAC model, developed by Paul R. Smith, serves as a comprehensive framework for marketing strategy planning, integrating all stages from strategy development to implementation. This model is particularly relevant for Assalam Hypermarket, as it provides a structured approach to formulating and executing marketing communication strategies. The six elements of SOSTAC—Situation Analysis, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, and Control—offer a systematic method for understanding the market environment, setting measurable goals, and evaluating the effectiveness of marketing efforts. By employing this model, Assalam Hypermarket can enhance its marketing communication strategies, ensuring they are aligned with both consumer needs and business objectives.

The first stage, Situation Analysis, is critical for understanding the current market landscape. As highlighted by Büyüközkan & Ilıcak (2019) conducting a thorough analysis using tools such as SWOT allows Assalam Hypermarket to identify its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This understanding is essential for making informed strategic decisions. For instance, by recognising its strengths in customer service and product variety, the hypermarket can leverage these attributes in its marketing communications. Conversely, identifying weaknesses, such as limited brand awareness, can guide the development of targeted strategies to address these issues.

Setting clear and measurable Objectives is the next step in the SOSTAC framework. As noted by Khayrani (2022), employing the SMART criteria ensures that objectives are Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, and Time-related. For Assalam Hypermarket, establishing objectives such as increasing foot traffic by 20% within six months or enhancing customer engagement on social media platforms can provide a clear direction for marketing efforts. These objectives not only guide the strategy formulation but also serve as benchmarks for evaluating success.

The Strategy phase involves determining how to achieve the set objectives. According to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), employing approaches like STOP (Segmenting, Targeting,

Online Value Proposition, and Positioning) can help Assalam Hypermarket effectively reach its target audience. By segmenting the market based on demographics and shopping behaviours, the hypermarket can tailor its marketing messages to resonate with specific consumer groups. This targeted approach is particularly important in a competitive retail environment, where personalised communication can significantly enhance customer engagement and loyalty.

Tactics and Action are the subsequent stages that focus on the implementation of the strategy. This involves selecting the appropriate marketing channels and crafting messages that align with the identified objectives. As highlighted by Porcu (2019), the choice of communication channels—whether traditional media, social media, or in-store promotions—should be guided by the preferences of the target audience. For Assalam Hypermarket, utilising a mix of online and offline channels can maximise reach and effectiveness. Additionally, the execution of marketing campaigns should be closely monitored to ensure alignment with the overall strategy.

Finally, the Control phase is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of the marketing communication strategy. As Kiraz & Basal (2024) suggest, measuring the impact of marketing efforts through consumer feedback and performance metrics allows Assalam Hypermarket to make necessary adjustments. Regular evaluation not only helps in identifying successful tactics but also highlights areas for improvement. By fostering a culture of continuous improvement, the hypermarket can adapt its strategies to meet evolving consumer needs and market dynamics, ultimately enhancing its competitive position in the retail sector.

Conclusion

This research has conducted an in-depth analysis of the implementation of marketing communication strategies at Assalam Hypermarket Sukoharjo using the SOSTAC framework (Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, Control). The results of the analysis show that Assalam Hypermarket implements a comprehensive Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) strategy to increase market attractiveness and penetration, especially among the younger generation, especially Gen Z. Assalam Hypermarket actively conducts internal and external situation analyses, formulates goals using the 5S model, and implements effective segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) strategies. The marketing tactics applied include the 4P marketing mix, focusing on product quality, competitive pricing, strategic location, and diverse promotions. The establishment of a dedicated digital marketing team demonstrates their commitment to managing digital marketing professionally, while regular monitoring and evaluation of marketing tactics allows for quick adjustments in line with market changes. Overall, Assalam Hypermarket has successfully utilised the SOSTAC framework to increase their appeal and build better relationships with consumers in today's digital era.

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