

Qualitative Research the Use of Online Applications as a Consequence of Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The aim of this research is a qualitative analysis of the use of online applications during the Covid-19 pandemic will be the next question. This study used observation and depth interview the partners with COVID-19 Social Distancing protocol and to stay alert. The results of the analysis presented earlier have led us to conclude that (1) uses customer database as the big data, (2) uses data on its partners to provide periodical maintenance service without being asked to do so or to ask, on its own initiative, its business partners whether it is the time to replace certain hardware or equipment. The most important is (3) synergy and collaboration with mutually supporting parties, such as the government, for the works that involve online application platform, administration, and local and national events.

Keywords: online, qualitative, applications, pandemic, big data.



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I. INTRODUCTION

Quite apart from Covid-19, the Indonesian economy will still be confronted with a lot of challenges. On the external side, the major challenges arise from the risks of weakening the global economy and a decline in commodity prices. On the domestic side, structural challenges arise from (i) food, energy, and water security; (ii) industry and tourism competitiveness; (iii) long term financing; and (iv) inclusive economy. In addition, reinforcement of basic capital for development, the macroeconomy, and financial system stability is a necessity.

The global economic growth prospect has declined due to the disruption of global supply chains and weakening confidence among economic agents. The negative impact of COVID-19 is reflected in the early indicators of an economic slowdown. In addition, electricity production and consumption experience a dramatic drop, which indicates a contraction in production activities in many countries

that affect the global supply chain. The latter has been disrupted due to the halt in production activities in several countries affected by COVID-19.

The problem arises when, in fact, the COVID-19 outbreak requires immediate changes in IR 4.0, and therefore all industries demanded accelerated BPR. Some small scale home industries have also begun using Whatsapp (WA) database for their favorite simple data storage. Restaurants change their services from dine-in into a takeaway or delivery form. Everyone becomes even more creative when the government required people to stay at home to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. When people trying to isolate themselves by staying at home and universities adopting online learning until the end of the semester, many seem to have a hard time adjusting to the changes and felt compelled to do the study in a revolutionary way without questioning. When people must stay at home and, at the same time, have to fulfill some of their basic needs, data and technology will play a significant role for them.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used observation and depth interview the partners with COVID-19 Social Distancing protocol and to stay alert. We employed a qualitative method to analyze information from various credible sources and to do a comparative analysis of surrounding conditions.

III. PARTNERS BACKGROUND

III.1. Partner 1

Ola Bakery was established on March 28, 2005. Until now, the demand for Ola Bakery's products remains high, thanks to its business strategy. The Bakery located at Jalan Pendek Baru No. 15, Gowok Police Housing Complex, Yogyakarta, adopted a flexible pricing strategy for customers with differing budgets. Being located in the middle of a residential area, it has become an ultimate destination for the locals to order refined grain products. They mostly ordered bread for events such as meetings, regular social gatherings, religious gatherings, and others. Ola Bakery produces cakes from small to large sizes for customers with differing budgets. To its customers, affordable price is the flagship of the Bakery that opens from 08.00 am till 10.00 pm. It sells many kinds of products such as Mini Black Forest, Fruit Pie, and Banana Danish—some of the customer favorite bread. With its flexible pricing, it combines the ingredients of different qualities. Erik, the owner, tells us that he uses the best quality margarine. As for the bread flours, there could be a combination of quality 1, 2, and 3 ingredients tailored to the customers' demand.

At this time, Ola Bakery already has three branches in the city of Yogyakarta, located in Banguntapan, Seturan, and Maguwoharjo. These three branches provide an easily accessible location for customers. Ola Bakery put customer satisfaction on top priority, so it always serves quality bread or cakes. "We have never used preservatives for all of our products," the owner said. Ola Bakery serves fresh products every day and provides fairly good quality products at affordable prices. It has the mission to produce high-quality bread and cakes with no preservatives and to educate people about healthy and hygienic bread.



Figure 1. Example of Ola Bakery's Products



Figure 2. Ola Bakery Gowok

III.2. Partner 2

CV. Dirgantara Engineering is a company that supplies a variety of Servers, Notebooks, Desktop PCs, Printers & Scanners, UPS, LCD Projectors, Networking equipment, computer repair service, peripheral, hardware and software, audiovisual system, CCTV, information system, Airfreight packaging and strapping, and X-ray. The company is dedicated to providing solutions and services related to information technology for individual, office, and business, more specifically for basic and higher education institutions.

The company is committed to providing customers with reliable hardware and software with flexible and sustainable maintenance services to meet the demands of its customers. The company was born in September 2012 (formerly an informal enterprise) when it started its computer store. As time goes by, it becomes a legal entity with a CV. Dirgantara Engineering as its company name, and is located on Jalan Babarsari TB 17 No. 2A Caturtunggal, Depok, Sleman, Yogyakarta.

Later, the company decided to diversify its activities to serve not only retail customers in general but also government and private agencies, especially those focusing on education. After the decision has been made, the company ventured to introduce itself to education agencies about its focus and dedication to serving customer needs in terms of IT solutions and to keep up with the advancements of information technology.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

IV.1. Qualitative Analysis

Our qualitative analysis was conducted using an in-depth interview technique concerning a number of discussions about the impact of Covid-19 on MSMEs in terms of sales, business mechanism, and the psychological state, and even on BPR in the near future. The research team conducted in-depth interviews with our partners on several things and the summary of their answers.

IV.2. Partner 1: Ola Bakery

We assumed that the Bakery is greatly helped by its working with online delivery Apps, either Go Food or Grab Food. Moreover, in the current situation, the Application is supposed to play a role in maintaining stable sales revenue, even though this can be not exactly true. Our partner gives the following response.

Ola Bakery has joined online delivery Apps since October 2019 based on suggestions and requests from customers. "How come the Bakery can't use the application for both ordering and payment?" some customers asked. We finally joined the Apps although, from the start, it seemed less profitable for us because it requires a fee of 23%, which means we have to increase our product prices or reduce profits. Increasing the prices of our products will be the last resort, in consideration that customers understand that the prices in our store will be different from those in the delivery service Application. It is not uncommon in many other parties. Thus, it is justifiable to increase the price of the product in proportion to the delivery service fee.

As the Covid-19 pandemic requires many people to stay at home or to implement WFH policy, this collaboration certainly provides optimum results when customers need food products and, at the same time, do not want to leave their house. However, the sales turnover after that collaboration turned out to be less promising. Why is that so?

This collaboration has not provided significant benefits. This is because our products are snack foods, which are not the basic necessity like heavy foods in the form of rice and side dishes. If asked whether the collaboration is beneficial, we'll answer yes it is. At least we lost nothing. We have nothing to complain about, and the same goes for our customers. Application or technology is quite familiar and simple to use. As for the cash flow, our partner made the payment directly into our bank account. The food business that falls into a category like ours is greatly impacted during the pandemic because our products are complementary foods and not the direct substitutes for main foods.

This pandemic clearly has an impact on sales turnover and ongoing business processes, as well as requiring owners and employees to make adjustments that need careful considerations. The same goes for marketing strategy; there is a need for generating new ideas other than collaborating with the third party with all the consequences. It is also necessary to organize business processes so that it can run "normally" during the pandemic, with all the optimism that must be built together with staff and teams.

Ola Bakery doesn't lay off its employees during the pandemic. We've tried to have a discussion with all of our employees about how to survive by gradually change the working hours. The previous two shifts have changed to 1 full-time work schedule during Covid-19 because of a working hour and service limitation. The previous overtime work is no longer required because of the drastic drop in sales, and the production takes place only once every two days. Even the employees come to work on an alternate schedule as has been agreed upon. This is a mutually beneficial choice to avoid termination of employment. All employees are still paid, albeit less than that in normal conditions. We hold a discussion with employees, and, in the end, we realized that this is not an easy choice, and we are willing to compromise.

The employee team is also starting to realize that it's not possible to just sit and wait for customers to come; the team started to promote our products on various media. We have social media accounts for promotion and product updates; they serve the function of combined telemarketing and information technology. Despite difficulties in the current situation, we continue to maintain relationships with our partners in the hope that they will return to our product once the economic condition improved. We all have to realize that customers don't just come, except those who are the big fans of the taste of our products. Collaboration with online applications must be maintained. We cannot do product updates on social media only by uploading a photo once and then hoping that customers will be interested in observing it. There must be innovative product promotion, new photographs, new products, and even collaborative effort with other parties such as café or other local food and beverage stalls.

Below are the social media platforms that our research partner used this far:

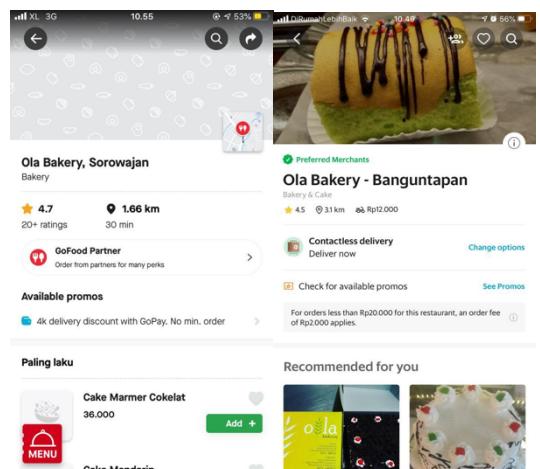


Figure 1. Social Media Marketing and Collaboration
(clockwise from left: IG, FB, Go Food and Grab Food)

IV.3. Partner 2: Dirgantara Engineering

This enterprise that specializes in technology and information is assumed to have been less affected by the pandemic in terms of sales turnover and collaborative partnership. So what will happen if it turned out that its sales turnover has decreased drastically? Has this enterprise also implemented a WFH policy for all of its staff since the beginning of the pandemic? We need to find out this, considering that it is precisely at this time that the need for technology and information has increased significantly. A sharp increase occurred in demand for software during the WFH policy implementation and also for some equipment that this far available only in the office. How will the enterprise respond to this?

When WFH and quarantine policy was implemented for the first time, we can not do this to our employees. Why? Because it is precisely in this time that the demand for information technology systems requires immediate fulfillment. So, the employees continue to work their normal hours, although we give them a flexible work schedule. As long as they have accomplished the scheduled tasks for today, we'll allow them to go home. In fact, it is not infrequent that they have to provide technical assistance on Saturday and Sunday. We try to retain our employees, considering that the demands for our services remain high. The real impact we felt at the start of the pandemic was that some partners sent us a payment commitment letter but then proposed a monthly installment scheme.

This is quite burdensome for us, especially at the moment when strong cash flow is needed. However, we have to understand this in order to build together the present and future cooperation. Some of our partnership collaboration projects have been postponed and even canceled for the reason of the covid-19 pandemic when, in fact, we have already provided the items for the project, and it is impossible for us to return them to the supplier for a pandemic reason. Yes, we know this is unfair, but we have to keep our business running.

How about the collaboration with the third party today? Is it helpful or just the same? Also, how about the product supply for the service? Is it hampered or not?

Cooperation? Well, there are many forms of cooperation. For example, an inter-regional delivery service is really helpful to us. When our staff has difficulties with inter-city and inter-provincial delivery because of movement restriction, courier service could be the best choice at this moment. Unfortunately, our technicians faced difficulties in inter-city and inter-island transportation in April-May 2020. Consequently, some of their tasks remain unfinished and, thus, payment for the work was also delayed.

Cooperation with the online marketplace for the transaction has been really helpful, although serving online users is not our core business. However, we finally take this into consideration during the pandemic, for example, with Tokopedia as our online sales partner. We have already served many governments

and private agency partners, which means that serving our customers through online Application is not our core business or priority. However, we finally take this into consideration. This also helps us in purchasing certain items that were difficult to find at the suppliers. Therefore we use the online Application for items urgently needed by partners. Technical constraints remain in the courier service companies, and this is understandable because some of them experienced traffic problems. This resulted in an unexpected price increase for several items.

What efforts will make during the pandemic and in the long run? Will the business run as usual, or will there be changes in the future? Will there also be changes in staff composition, working system, time schedule, and even cooperation with partners?

We have many things to do in the field that certainly impossible to accomplish on an online platform or in the house. Therefore we find it difficult to change our work system. We specialize in a sector that involves many technical works in the field. We only put emphasis on coordination between managerial staff and field staff using a teleconference platform without requiring physical presence. However, when some staff is having problems describing the works to be done, they certainly need to hold a face-to-face meeting to avoid high-risk situations.

V. CONCLUSION

The results of quantitative and qualitative analysis and interviews with research partners indicate that BPR is, consequently, a mandatory process. However, adjustments are needed because the conditions of each industry may differ from one another. One of the dominant forms is customer and big partner data that facilitate us to communicate periodically without depending on the form of cooperation with the third party that requires synergy analysis.

1. Ola Bakery uses customer database as the big data. It greets not only customers that physically present in its store but also those present in an online communication platform on smartphones.
2. Dirgantara Engineering uses data on its partners to provide periodical maintenance service without being asked to do so or to ask, on its own initiative, its business partners, whether it is the time to replace certain hardware or equipment.
3. Synergy and collaboration with mutually supporting parties, such as the government, for the works that involve online application platform, administration, and local and national events.

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