

## AN ANALYSIS OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN BUILDING BRAND AWARENESS AT LA MORINGA KUPANG

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**Abstract.** This study examines the marketing communication strategies employed by La Moringa Kupang, a local herbal brand in Indonesia, in its efforts to build brand awareness. The research adopts a qualitative approach using in-depth interviews, documentation analysis, and field observations. Findings reveal that La Moringa combines digital platforms particularly Instagram and WhatsApp with offline methods such as community engagement and word-of-mouth to communicate its brand values. The integration of educational content, local cultural narratives, and health-based messaging has significantly contributed to increased brand visibility and consumer trust. However, challenges such as limited digital reach and operational capacity hinder sustained brand performance. This study underscores the importance of aligning marketing communication with cultural context, audience behavior, and operational readiness. The results contribute to the growing literature on branding and local product marketing in emerging markets and suggest practical strategies for small businesses seeking to build brand equity through integrated communication.

**Keywords:** brand awareness, marketing communication, digital strategy, La Moringa, local branding

**Abstrak.** Studi ini menganalisis strategi komunikasi pemasaran yang diterapkan oleh La Moringa Kupang, merek herbal lokal di Indonesia, dalam upayanya untuk membangun kesadaran merek. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode wawancara mendalam, analisis dokumen, dan pengamatan lapangan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa La Moringa menggabungkan platform digital, terutama Instagram dan WhatsApp, dengan metode offline seperti keterlibatan komunitas dan rekomendasi dari mulut ke mulut untuk menyampaikan nilai-nilai mereknya. Integrasi konten edukatif, narasi budaya lokal, dan pesan berbasis kesehatan telah secara signifikan berkontribusi pada peningkatan visibilitas merek dan kepercayaan konsumen. Namun, tantangan seperti jangkauan digital yang terbatas dan kapasitas operasional yang terbatas menghambat kinerja merek yang berkelanjutan. Studi ini menekankan pentingnya menyelaraskan komunikasi pemasaran dengan konteks budaya, perilaku audiens, dan kesiapan operasional. Hasil penelitian ini berkontribusi pada literatur yang berkembang tentang branding dan pemasaran produk lokal di pasar emerging dan menyarankan strategi praktis bagi usaha kecil yang ingin membangun ekuitas merek melalui komunikasi terintegrasi.

**Kata Kunci:** Kesadaran merek, komunikasi pemasaran, strategi digital, La Moringa, branding lokal.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving global marketplace, establishing brand awareness has become an essential priority for businesses striving to gain a competitive edge. Brand awareness, defined as the extent to which consumers recognize and recall a brand (Keller, 2016), plays a pivotal role in influencing purchasing decisions, especially in markets saturated with similar product offerings. For small and medium enterprises (SMEs), particularly those operating in local or emerging markets, effective marketing communication is not merely about promotion—it is a strategic imperative to build credibility, trust, and sustained consumer engagement.

Marketing communication strategies encompass a broad range of tools and techniques, including advertising, digital content marketing, public relations, direct selling, and event sponsorships. According to Belch and Belch (2018), integrated marketing communication (IMC) is key to ensuring message consistency across various platforms, reinforcing a unified brand identity. In the context of SMEs, a successful marketing communication strategy should align with both the brand's values and the preferences of the target audience. The ability to tailor content and utilize appropriate media channels is especially vital in local communities where cultural relevance and trust are critical.

La Moringa Kupang, a local enterprise located in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, offers health-oriented products made from *Moringa oleifera*, a plant increasingly recognized for its nutritional and medicinal benefits. While awareness of Moringa has grown globally (Smith et al., 2021), local consumer knowledge and acceptance remain uneven. La Moringa thus faces the dual challenge of educating potential customers about Moringa's benefits and building a strong, recognizable brand in a highly fragmented and competitive health product market.

In the digital era, platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok have become powerful tools for engaging consumers, especially among younger demographics (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). SMEs like La Moringa have begun leveraging these platforms to share visual content, testimonials, behind-the-scenes stories, and health tips, all of which contribute to forming emotional bonds with their audiences. However, digital marketing alone is insufficient. Offline strategies such as product sampling, community workshops, and collaborations with local health organizations remain essential for creating experiential value and deepening consumer trust (Rahardjo & Mulyani, 2020).

Recent research highlights that brand awareness in local enterprises is strongly influenced by message consistency, personalization, and the perceived authenticity of communication (Dwivedi et al., 2021). In La Moringa's case, aligning promotional efforts with the values of natural living, health education, and community empowerment is vital. Furthermore, adopting

a culturally contextualized and adaptive communication model enhances the likelihood of sustained customer loyalty.

This study seeks to analyze the marketing communication strategies adopted by La Moringa Kupang in building brand awareness. Specifically, it aims to identify how the integration of digital and traditional channels, combined with localized content strategies, influences public recognition and consumer perception. By focusing on a case study of a grassroots health brand, this research offers valuable insights into how SMEs in developing regions can effectively compete through strategic communication initiatives.

## **METHOD**

This study adopts a **qualitative descriptive research design** to explore and analyze the marketing communication strategies applied by La Moringa Kupang in building brand awareness. A qualitative approach is particularly suitable for understanding complex social phenomena, such as communication dynamics and consumer perception, within the real-life context of a local business (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This research does not seek to quantify data or test hypotheses, but rather to generate an in-depth and nuanced understanding of strategic communication practices.

### **2.1 Research Design**

The **descriptive qualitative method** was chosen to allow for a comprehensive exploration of how La Moringa plans, executes, and evaluates its marketing communication activities. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), qualitative descriptive research is appropriate when the goal is to provide a detailed account of events or processes as they naturally occur. In this case, it involves documenting the company's communication efforts and evaluating their alignment with the objective of building brand awareness.

### **2.2 Research Setting and Participant Selection**

The research was conducted in **Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara**, where La Moringa operates as a locally based small-to-medium enterprise producing Moringa-based wellness products. The study focused on stakeholders directly involved in the company's communication efforts, as well as a sample of local consumers who had interacted with the brand either online or offline.

Participants were selected using **purposive sampling**, a method commonly used in qualitative studies to identify individuals who possess specific knowledge or experience relevant to the research question (Palinkas et al., 2015). The key informants included:

- The marketing and branding manager of La Moringa

- Two social media administrators
- Three customers who had followed the brand for over six months
- One community health partner who collaborated with La Moringa in promotional events

### 2.3 Data Collection Techniques

To enhance the depth and validity of the findings, the study utilized **three primary data collection techniques**:

#### 1. Semi-structured interviews

These interviews allowed for guided but flexible conversations with participants. The interview guide included questions about communication objectives, digital strategies, community outreach, media usage, and perceived outcomes. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2015), semi-structured interviews offer rich qualitative data and the flexibility to probe unexpected themes.

Semi-structured interviews were a key method of data collection, enabling the researcher to obtain in-depth insights into La Moringa's marketing communication strategies while allowing flexibility to explore emerging themes. This approach balances structure and openness, where predetermined questions guide the discussion but follow-up questions adapt based on the participant's responses (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Each interview was conducted in person or via video call depending on the availability and preference of the participants. The average duration ranged from 30 to 60 minutes. The interviews targeted various stakeholders internal (brand managers, social media admins) and external (customers, community health partners) to obtain a holistic understanding of the communication efforts.

#### **Example of Interview Questions:**

##### **A. For Internal Stakeholders**

1. *What are the primary goals of La Moringa's marketing communication?*
2. *Can you describe how the brand uses Instagram and WhatsApp to reach your target audience?*
3. *How do you determine the type of content to post online?*
4. *Have you noticed any particular strategy that works better than others in building brand awareness?*
5. *How do you ensure consistency of brand messaging across different platforms?*

6. *Can you share any challenges faced when engaging with the audience digitally or during offline events?*
7. *How do you measure the success or impact of your communication efforts?*

### **B. For Consumers**

1. *How did you first learn about La Moringa?*
2. *What was your first impression of the brand's communication (social media posts, packaging, community events, etc.)?*
3. *What kind of information do you usually get from La Moringa's communication channels?*
4. *Do you find the brand messages credible and useful? Why or why not?*
5. *Have you recommended La Moringa to others? If yes, what influenced your recommendation?*

### **C. For Community Partners**

1. *How did your collaboration with La Moringa begin?*
2. *What role do you play in their community engagement strategy?*
3. *From your observation, how do local communities respond to La Moringa's promotional efforts?*
4. *Do you think their communication aligns with health education values? Why?*
5. *What improvements would you suggest for better outreach or engagement?*

The semi-structured format allowed the researcher to explore not just *what* strategies were used, but *why* and *how* they were perceived by both senders and receivers of the communication. This depth of data is critical in understanding the effectiveness, cultural fit, and emotional resonance of La Moringa's brand messaging.

### **2. Participant observation**

The researcher conducted direct observation during La Moringa's participation in local markets, health fairs, and workshops. Observational notes were taken to capture non-verbal communication cues, audience engagement, and the consistency of branding. Observation is a valuable tool in communication studies, as it allows researchers to witness interactions and messaging strategies in context (Angrosino, 2016).

### **3. Document and media analysis**

Secondary data were collected from La Moringa's digital platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp broadcasts, as well as printed promotional materials and campaign reports. This allowed triangulation of findings and a better

understanding of the company's message framing and brand identity construction (Bowen, 2009).

## 2.4 Data Analysis Procedure

Thematic analysis was used to process the qualitative data collected. This method, outlined by Braun and Clarke (2019), involves a systematic process of coding and identifying emerging themes across the dataset. The steps included:

- Familiarization with the data through reading and re-reading transcripts and notes
- Generating initial codes for recurring patterns
- Grouping codes into potential themes
- Reviewing and refining themes to ensure coherence
- Producing a narrative interpretation based on the final thematic structure

Themes such as “**digital storytelling**,” “**community engagement**,” and “**message consistency**” emerged as dominant categories reflecting La Moringa's strategic approach to building awareness. To ensure **credibility**, the researcher applied **member checking** by sharing interview summaries with participants for validation, and **peer debriefing** with fellow academics to minimize researcher bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## 2.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical integrity was maintained throughout the research process. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their involvement, and the confidentiality of their responses. Verbal and written consent was obtained prior to data collection. All data were anonymized to protect the privacy of participants and ensure compliance with ethical research standards as recommended by Silverman (2020).

## RESULTS

This section presents the research findings based on data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The data were thematically analyzed to identify key strategies employed by La Moringa in building brand awareness. The results are organized into four major themes: (1) Strategic Use of Digital Media, (2) Community-Based Engagement, (3) Consistency and Clarity of Brand Messaging, and (4) Educational Content as Brand Positioning.

**Table 1.** Interview Results

<b>Informant Category</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>	<b>Direct Quotes/Examples</b>
<b>Internal Stakeholders (Marketing Manager, Social Media Admins)</b>	3 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Digital strategy focuses on Instagram and WhatsApp</li> <li>- Uses educational content such as infographics on Moringa benefits, user testimonials, and behind-the-scenes footage</li> <li>- Maintains message consistency through color schemes and simple, nature-oriented designs</li> <li>- Applies a content calendar for regular posting and message planning</li> </ul>	<p>“We prefer to share informative content that builds trust, not just promotions.”</p> <p>“Green, simple, and informative that’s the visual identity we maintain.”</p>
<b>Active Consumers (following/purchasing from the brand for over 6 months)</b>	3 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First encountered the brand through social media or community-based events</li> <li>- Perceive the brand messaging as easy to understand and trustworthy</li> <li>- Appreciate the educational approach which helps them understand Moringa's benefits</li> <li>- Frequently associate the brand with values like “natural,” “local,” and “reliable”</li> </ul>	<p>“I discovered La Moringa through Instagram, when I saw a post with nutritional tips.”</p> <p>“I trust them because they don’t just sell; they explain why the product is good.”</p>
<b>Community Partners (local health educators/community outreach partners)</b>	1 person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appreciate the use of local language and culturally relevant metaphors in communication</li> <li>- View the brand as an active health</li> </ul>	<p>“Their message resonates with our community values, especially when they speak in local dialects.”</p>

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education agent in the community (e.g., through workshops, health talks, product demonstrations) - See alignment between brand communication and public health values	“They don’t just come to sell but to educate people this makes a real difference.”
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Source: interview results

### 3.1 Strategic Use of Digital Media

One of the dominant themes emerging from the data is La Moringa’s strategic use of digital platforms, particularly **Instagram and WhatsApp**, to reach and engage consumers. The brand maintains a visually cohesive Instagram feed showcasing product images, Moringa nutrition facts, testimonials, and behind-the-scenes activities of the production process. This aligns with Keller’s (2016) assertion that digital media, when used consistently, can enhance brand salience and resonance.

According to the social media administrator, La Moringa follows a content calendar that ensures posts are uploaded at least three times a week. The team prioritizes “authentic and informative content” over purely promotional messages. Content includes real stories of how the product has benefited users, which the administrator believes “builds emotional connection and credibility.”

Furthermore, WhatsApp is used as a semi-personalized marketing tool. Consumers who make purchases or inquiries via WhatsApp are added to a broadcast list where they receive updates, discounts, and educational tips. This two-way communication fosters a sense of community and reinforces brand familiarity, particularly in areas with limited social media penetration.

### 3.2 Community-Based Engagement

In addition to digital strategies, La Moringa places strong emphasis on **offline community engagement** to create direct interaction with potential customers. This includes participating in local health fairs, school outreach programs, and women’s community groups (PKK). These activities allow for face-to-face education about the benefits of Moringa, product demonstrations, and distribution of sample packs.

From field observation, it was noted that the team often adopts culturally sensitive messaging during community events. For example, they use local dialects and analogies familiar to the audience to explain Moringa’s benefits. A marketing officer stated:

“People will trust you more if you talk like one of them. We always adjust our messages depending on the audience whether it's a mom at the market or a youth group member.”

This strategy aligns with Kotler et al. (2017), who emphasize the importance of cultural adaptation in marketing communication to improve audience reception and brand trust.

### 3.3 Consistency and Clarity of Brand Messaging

Another significant finding is the **consistency and clarity of brand identity** across all communication channels. Whether through packaging, social media posts, or verbal promotions at events, the message always reinforces the core values of “natural, healthy, and local.” This clarity was reflected in customer interviews. One regular buyer commented:

“When I think of La Moringa, I immediately think of natural health. Their message is always clear, from the product label to their Instagram.”

The consistency across platforms echoes Belch and Belch’s (2018) theory of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), which posits that message uniformity enhances consumer recognition and retention.

Moreover, the brand uses **green color schemes**, leaf symbols, and minimalist design language to visually reinforce the product’s natural and organic positioning. According to the designer, such visual consistency is a conscious choice to appeal to health-conscious consumers and signal authenticity.

### 3.4 Educational Content as Brand Positioning

Education is not just a supplement to La Moringa’s strategy—it is **central to its brand positioning**. The company has identified that many people in the region are unaware of the full benefits of Moringa. As a result, much of its content—both online and offline—is designed to inform rather than merely sell.

Through Instagram infographics, printed leaflets, and health talks at events, the brand communicates the nutritional components of Moringa (iron, calcium, vitamins A and C) and its potential benefits for women, children, and people with chronic illnesses. A health worker collaborating with La Moringa noted:

“What makes them different is that they don’t just push their products; they genuinely educate people. That builds trust.”

This educational approach is supported by Smith et al. (2021), who argue that informational marketing can be a powerful tool in health-related branding, particularly in markets where consumer knowledge is limited.

### 3.5 Customer Response and Perceived Impact

The response from customers has been **largely positive**, with increased brand recognition reported in both urban and semi-rural areas. Interviewed consumers stated that they initially discovered La Moringa through social media or word of mouth during community events. Many also mentioned that the **credibility of information** shared and the **local identity** of the brand contributed to their trust and willingness to purchase.

However, some customers also noted challenges, including limited product availability in traditional retail stores and occasional delays in response via WhatsApp. This suggests that while communication strategies are effective, **distribution and customer service** are areas requiring further improvement.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal a multifaceted and context-sensitive marketing communication strategy used by La Moringa Kupang to build brand awareness. These strategies are consistent with key principles in contemporary marketing theory but also reflect adaptations based on local culture, available resources, and target audience characteristics.

### 4.1 Integration of Digital and Community-Based Strategies

The success of La Moringa's marketing communication appears to lie in its ability to **integrate online and offline channels** effectively. On the one hand, the brand leverages digital platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp for continuous visibility, engagement, and relationship-building. On the other, it uses face-to-face interactions at local events to build credibility and cultural resonance.

This strategy is consistent with the **Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)** model, which emphasizes the coordination of all promotional tools to present a unified message across channels (Belch & Belch, 2018). The combination of personal engagement and digital reach is particularly well-suited for a semi-urban market like Kupang, where digital literacy is growing, but traditional community structures remain influential.

Moreover, this finding supports the argument by Mangold and Faulds (2009), who state that the integration of **user-generated content and traditional marketing tools** is essential for creating two-way communication that enhances brand value and customer loyalty.

### 4.2 Role of Consistency in Brand Messaging

La Moringa's clear and consistent brand message—focused on **health, nature, and locality**—has helped create strong brand associations among its target audience. This finding aligns with Keller's (2013) **Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model**, which identifies brand clarity and consistency as critical drivers of brand awareness and loyalty.

Participants in this study repeatedly associated La Moringa with “natural” and “local” values, showing how consistent messaging reinforces brand identity. This supports previous research by de Chernatony and Riley (2015), which indicates that a consistent brand image across channels fosters consumer trust, particularly in emerging markets where branding plays a trust-building role due to limited product familiarity.

### 4.3 Educational Content as a Differentiator

Another significant aspect is the brand's **educational approach**, which sets it apart from competitors. Instead of focusing solely on product promotion, La Moringa emphasizes awareness about Moringa’s health benefits. This aligns with **content marketing strategies**, which involve providing valuable information to build trust and drive consumer action (Pulizzi, 2014).

The educational orientation also enhances La Moringa’s **perceived expertise**, a key component of source credibility in marketing communication (Ohanian, 1990). In regions where formal health education may be lacking, brands that educate consumers fill an important information gap, which in turn can enhance their social legitimacy.

This approach is particularly relevant to health-based products, where consumer skepticism is often high due to misinformation. As noted by Smith et al. (2021), content that is both informative and accessible can significantly increase perceived product reliability and improve health outcomes through informed choices.

### 4.4 Cultural and Local Relevance

La Moringa’s ability to tailor its communication to the **local cultural context** is another critical success factor. The use of local dialects, culturally appropriate analogies, and participation in community-based programs strengthens the psychological closeness between the brand and its audience.

This aligns with **glocalization theory**, which emphasizes the adaptation of global marketing strategies to local cultural conditions (Robertson, 1995; Kotler et al., 2017). In emerging markets like Kupang, where social values and communal trust play a significant role in purchasing decisions, cultural alignment enhances consumer acceptance and loyalty.

Furthermore, the localized approach supports the work of Cayla and Arnould (2008), who argue that brands must become **cultural resources** by embedding themselves in local narratives, values, and practices to achieve emotional relevance.

### 4.5 Challenges and Limitations

Despite these strengths, La Moringa also faces certain limitations that could affect the long-term impact of its marketing communication efforts. For example, limited product

availability in physical stores and delays in customer service responses via WhatsApp were noted by some consumers. These issues may hinder the brand's ability to convert awareness into sustained loyalty or broader market expansion.

These findings resonate with previous research by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), who emphasize that effective marketing communication must be supported by **operational reliability and logistics efficiency**. Inconsistencies between message and delivery may damage consumer trust, especially for health-related products where credibility is paramount.

#### 4.6 Implications for Practice

From a practical perspective, La Moringa's case provides valuable insights for other **small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)** in emerging markets. The brand demonstrates that resource-constrained businesses can successfully build awareness by combining **digital agility, community trust, and consistent storytelling**. However, to scale effectively, such businesses must also invest in **operational infrastructure** that supports their branding promises.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the marketing communication strategies employed by La Moringa Kupang in its efforts to build brand awareness among its target audience. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, it was found that La Moringa implements a blend of digital and community-based strategies that align well with both contemporary marketing theories and the socio-cultural dynamics of its environment.

One of the core conclusions drawn from this research is that **integrated and consistent communication across multiple platforms**—including Instagram, WhatsApp, and direct community engagement—has played a critical role in making La Moringa a recognizable and trusted brand in Kupang. The brand's commitment to **educating rather than merely selling** has also contributed significantly to the formation of positive brand associations. By positioning itself as a source of health-related knowledge, La Moringa not only promotes its product but also gains social credibility and emotional resonance with its audience.

Another key finding is that **cultural adaptation and local relevance** are central to the success of La Moringa's marketing communication. The ability to speak the language—both literally and metaphorically—of the local community has made its brand messages more relatable and impactful. This supports the broader notion that **glocalized communication**, which combines global branding principles with local insight, is essential for SMEs operating in diverse, developing markets.

However, while La Moringa has succeeded in building awareness, the study also uncovered **operational challenges**, particularly in distribution and response time, that may hinder the full conversion of awareness into loyalty and repeat purchasing behavior. Therefore, sustaining brand equity over the long term will require not only consistent communication but also improvements in product accessibility and customer service.

In conclusion, La Moringa's case illustrates that a **strategic, educational, and culturally informed approach to marketing communication** can effectively build brand awareness, even in resource-constrained settings. The findings offer valuable insights for other small businesses aiming to establish a strong brand presence in emerging markets. Future research might explore how such strategies influence long-term brand loyalty, or how digital tools can be optimized further for community-centered brands.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Enhance Operational Support:** Improve product distribution and customer service to align with brand messaging.
2. **Establish Consistent Content:** Develop an editorial calendar to deliver educational and engaging content regularly.
3. **Expand Digital Presence:** Utilize additional platforms like TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube to broaden audience reach.
4. **Empower Local Brand Ambassadors:** Train key community members to represent and promote the brand locally.
5. **Develop Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborate with schools and health institutions to strengthen credibility and outreach.
6. **Conduct Regular Market Research:** Monitor audience behavior and preferences to refine communication strategies.
7. **Monitor Communication Performance:** Set clear KPIs and use analytics tools to evaluate marketing effectiveness.

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