

Marketing Strategy Analysis of Okra Leaf Guest House Syariah Bontang to Improve Competitiveness

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ABSTRACT

The competition in the sharia hotel industry is growing, driven by increasing interest in halal tourism, which emphasizes services aligned with Islamic principles. Okra Leaf Guest House Syariah in Bontang, a sharia-based accommodation, faces challenges in boosting its competitiveness. This study analyzes the marketing strategies applied by Okra Leaf to strengthen its position using a case study approach involving semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. The findings show that Okra Leaf differentiates its services through sharia principles, such as prayer facilities and halal food, which have been positively received by customers. However, digital marketing and customer relationship management (CRM) remain underutilized. The SWOT analysis highlights the strength of authentic sharia services, while digital infrastructure is identified as a weakness. The study recommends improving digital marketing and optimizing CRM to enhance competitiveness. Implementing these strategies can help Okra Leaf expand its market and increase customer loyalty.

Keywords: Marketing strategy, Halal tourism, Sharia hospitality, CRM, SWOT analysis, Digital marketing

INTRODUCTION

Competition in the hotel industry is becoming increasingly intense, particularly with the growing interest in halal tourism, which is gaining popularity among domestic and international tourists. Halal tourism emphasizes services aligned with Islamic sharia values, making this segment appealing to accommodation businesses, including sharia guest houses. Okra Leaf Guest House Syariah is one of the accommodations that adopts the sharia concept, where all services are aligned with Islamic principles. Although this business has significant potential, Okra Leaf's competitiveness in a highly competitive market still needs to be enhanced through effective marketing strategies. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the marketing strategies implemented by Okra Leaf Guest House Syariah to strengthen its competitiveness in the face of increasingly complex competition.

Previous research has discussed the importance of marketing strategies in enhancing the competitiveness of sharia hotel businesses. (Ahmad and Noh, 2020) stated that sharia hotels that can differentiate their services from conventional hotels can attract more loyal customers, particularly by highlighting halal values and adherence to Islamic principles. Additionally, (Fauzi, 2021) emphasized that the use of digital technology, such as marketing through social media and online booking applications, is key to expanding

the market reach of sharia hotels. Nasution (Nasution, 2019) also demonstrated that good customer relationship management (CRM) in sharia hotels can improve customer satisfaction and loyalty, which ultimately contributes positively to a company's competitiveness.

However, while much research has discussed marketing strategies in sharia hotels, most of the focus has been on large-scale hotels with extensive networks. Little attention has been given to medium- or small-scale sharia accommodations, which actually have unique challenges and opportunities in enhancing competitiveness. For example, Wahyuni (Wahyuni, 2021) focused more on the role of star hotels in adopting digital marketing strategies, while empirical studies on the marketing strategies of sharia guest houses, like Okra Leaf, remain limited. Thus, this study attempts to fill this gap by providing a more in-depth analysis of the marketing strategies implemented at Okra Leaf Guest House Syariah, a medium-scale sharia accommodation.

One of the main issues faced by Okra Leaf Guest House Syariah is the lack of visibility in an increasingly competitive market. Despite offering unique sharia-based services, Okra Leaf has not fully utilized modern marketing technology to expand its reach. According to Saifullah and Hassan (Saifullah and Hassan, 2020), one of the important factors influencing customer preference for sharia hotels is the ease of accessing information through digital platforms. To address this challenge, Okra Leaf needs to maximize the use of social media and online booking applications to attract Muslim tourists seeking sharia-based accommodations. Furthermore, appropriate market segmentation is also important to reach the target audience that aligns with the profile of the guest house.

In formulating a more effective marketing strategy, Okra Leaf can utilize a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats). Munir and Khalid (Munir and Khalid, 2018) pointed out that the main strength of sharia hotels lies in their ability to offer a lodging experience that adheres to religious values, giving them an advantage over conventional hotels. However, this study also highlights the weaknesses in the application of technology and the limitations of marketing budgets, which often pose challenges for medium-scale accommodations. Therefore, Okra Leaf can capitalize on the strength of its authentic sharia services while continuously finding innovative ways to overcome threats from competitors through more creative and digitally-oriented marketing strategies.

Based on this SWOT analysis, Okra Leaf can adopt several marketing strategies designed to enhance its competitiveness. One such strategy is maximizing the use of digital platforms and social media that align with the preferences of Muslim customers. Bakar and Othman (Bakar and Othman, 2021) showed that social media and halal tourism content marketing can be effective tools for increasing brand awareness and attracting new customers. Additionally, Okra Leaf could consider influencer marketing by engaging Muslim influencers to promote its services to a wider audience. This

marketing strategy would not only increase exposure but also build Okra Leaf's reputation as a trusted sharia accommodation.

To ensure that the marketing strategies implemented are effective, Okra Leaf needs to use measurable success methods. Rahayu (Rahayu, 2019) emphasized the importance of measuring Return on Marketing Investment (ROMI) to assess how marketing investments contribute to revenue growth. Moreover, customer satisfaction surveys can provide valuable feedback to evaluate whether the marketing strategies implemented have successfully improved the brand image and attracted loyal customers. This way, Okra Leaf can continuously adjust and optimize its marketing strategies to remain relevant and competitive.

The aim of this research is to analyze marketing strategies that can be implemented by Okra Leaf Syariah Guest House to enhance its competitiveness in the Islamic hospitality market. By integrating a SWOT analysis and applying appropriate digital marketing strategies, it is expected that Okra Leaf can strengthen its position in this industry. Overall, this research seeks to contribute to the literature on Islamic hospitality marketing, particularly for medium-sized accommodations that often receive insufficient attention. It is hoped that the implementation of efficient marketing strategies will enhance Okra Leaf's competitiveness and increase customer loyalty through Sharia-based services.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing strategies play a very important role in ensuring the success of sharia businesses, especially in the sharia hotel industry. Sharia marketing is not only focused on commercial goals but must also consider ethical principles regulated by Islamic sharia, such as honesty, integrity, and social responsibility (Kartajaya & Sula, 2016). As halal tourism develops, the need for innovative marketing strategies aligned with Islamic values becomes more urgent. Therefore, this study focuses on the marketing strategies applied by Okra Leaf Guest House Syariah to increase its competitiveness in the face of intense competition.

Sharia Marketing Theory

One of the main theories underpinning this research is the concept of sharia marketing. Hasan (2017) states that sharia marketing must be based on ethics, transparency, and social responsibility. Sharia marketing views customers not just as consumers but also as individuals entrusted to be served well. In the context of Okra Leaf Guest House, implementing sharia-based marketing strategies is highly relevant because their target market is Muslim tourists who seek services in accordance with Islamic principles. This approach enables Okra Leaf to offer a lodging experience that aligns with its customers' religious beliefs, which in turn can enhance customer loyalty and trust.

The Concept of Competitiveness in the Halal Tourism Industry

Competitiveness in the sharia hotel industry is heavily influenced by a company's ability to provide unique added value compared to competitors. According to Porter (1980), competitiveness can be achieved through differentiation strategies, market focus, and operational efficiency. In the sharia hotel sector, differentiation is often manifested in the form of sharia-based services such as the provision of prayer facilities, halal food, and an environment that supports Islamic values (Kadir & Jamaludin, 2018). Okra Leaf Guest House can leverage these services to enhance its competitiveness, especially by emphasizing uniqueness that is not offered by conventional accommodations.

Previous Research on Sharia Hotel Marketing

Several previous studies have discussed the importance of marketing strategies in enhancing the competitiveness of sharia hotels. Ali and Yusof (2019) found that sharia hotels that can highlight the uniqueness of their services tend to gain more loyal customers. On the other hand, Hassan's (2020) research emphasized that digital marketing strategies, such as the use of social media and optimized websites, can expand the market reach of sharia hotels. These studies show the importance of combining sharia approaches with modern technology to create more effective and efficient marketing strategies.

The Role of Digital Technology in Sharia Marketing

Digital technology has become an essential component in marketing the sharia hotel industry. Saifullah (2020) found that the use of digital platforms such as social media and search engine optimization can help sharia hotels increase visibility and reach more customers. This technology allows sharia hotels to communicate Islamic values to a broader audience, including international Muslim tourists. For Okra Leaf Guest House, digital marketing strategies can help increase brand awareness and attract customers seeking accommodations that meet sharia standards.

SWOT Analysis as a Marketing Strategy Approach

One tool that can be used to formulate effective marketing strategies is a SWOT analysis. Munir and Khalid (2018) explained that a SWOT analysis helps companies identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the market. In the context of Okra Leaf Guest House, their main strength lies in the authentic sharia services, while the weakness is the lack of optimal digital marketing infrastructure. Opportunities include the growing demand for halal tourism, while threats come from other accommodations that also target Muslim tourists. By conducting a comprehensive SWOT analysis, Okra Leaf can design more precise strategies that are responsive to market dynamics.

The Importance of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in Sharia Marketing

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) also plays an important role in sharia marketing. Nasution (2019) noted that effective CRM can increase customer satisfaction and loyalty through more personalized interactions. In the context of sharia hotels, CRM

can be used to ensure that the services provided meet the specific needs of Muslim customers, such as requests for halal food or prayer facilities. By implementing effective CRM, Okra Leaf Guest House can build long-term relationships with customers, ultimately increasing loyalty and strengthening its market position.

Based on theoretical reviews and previous studies, it can be concluded that the marketing strategies implemented by Okra Leaf Guest House Syariah are crucial to enhancing its competitiveness in the sharia hotel industry. The implementation of sharia marketing concepts, digital technology, SWOT analysis, and CRM are key factors supporting the success of marketing strategies. This research is expected to contribute to the literature on sharia hotel marketing, particularly for medium-scale accommodations that have received less attention. With the right marketing strategies, Okra Leaf Guest House is expected to strengthen its market position and increase customer loyalty through sharia-based services.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a case study method to explore the marketing strategies of Okra Leaf Guest House Syariah in Bontang in-depth. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to examine marketing phenomena in real-life contexts, especially when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly defined (Yin, 2018). The case study approach provides flexibility for researchers to delve deeply into the unique aspects of specific sharia-based businesses, where Islamic values are the main attraction. Thus, this method helps gain a more comprehensive understanding of the application of sharia marketing strategies and their impact on the competitiveness of accommodations in a competitive market.

Data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather information from management, marketing staff, and several customers selected through purposive sampling, ensuring that participants had relevant knowledge and experience (Palinkas et al., 2015). According to Creswell (2014), this method provides flexibility in exploring participants' views more deeply. Participatory observation was conducted directly at the Okra Leaf Guest House location to observe interactions between staff and guests, as well as how sharia services were implemented in daily operations. Additionally, document analysis was conducted on marketing reports, digital marketing strategies, and the guest house's business plans to understand the marketing policies that had been implemented. The combination of these various methods was designed to enrich the data obtained, producing a deeper understanding of the marketing strategies applied.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, an effective method for identifying and analyzing patterns or themes that emerge from qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process began with coding the data from interviews, observations, and documents, which were organized into thematic units relevant to the research objectives. After coding, the identified themes were further analyzed to understand marketing strategy patterns that influence Okra Leaf Guest House's competitiveness. Data validity and reliability were maintained through method triangulation, where results from interviews, observations, and document analysis were compared to strengthen research findings (Denzin, 2017). With this approach, the research is expected to provide more accurate and in-depth results, as well as make a significant contribution to the sharia marketing literature.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Observations and Interview Results

This study found that Okra Leaf Guest House Syariah in Bontang has implemented sharia-based marketing strategies well, but there is still room for improvement, particularly in digital marketing and customer relationship management (CRM). Based on interviews with management and marketing staff, Okra Leaf relies on product differentiation that focuses on sharia services, such as the provision of prayer facilities and halal food. Field observations also showed that customers responded positively to these sharia services. This is consistent with the findings of Ali and Yusof (2019), who stated that sharia service differentiation can increase customer loyalty in the sharia hotel industry.

Implementation of Differentiation Strategy

Okra Leaf has utilized a differentiation strategy based on sharia principles, where the services provided, such as halal food and an environment conducive to religious activities, become the main attraction. Based on the interview results, the management mentioned that Muslim tourists tend to choose accommodations that offer facilities supporting their worship practices. This finding aligns with the research by Kadir and Jamaludin (2018), which shows that sharia facilities such as these are key factors in enhancing the competitiveness of sharia-based accommodations. However, Okra Leaf still needs to strengthen this differentiation strategy by emphasizing a more personal and consistent guest experience.

Limitations in Digital Marketing

Although Okra Leaf Guest House has strengths in its sharia services, the research findings reveal that the guest house has not fully optimized digital marketing. Interviews with marketing staff indicate that they have not maximally utilized social media and search engine optimization to increase visibility in a broader market. This aligns with Hassan's (2020) research, which states that sharia hotels that utilize digital marketing strategies can significantly expand their market reach. Therefore, Okra Leaf needs to strengthen its digital presence through technology-based marketing strategies.

SWOT Analysis: Strengths and Weaknesses

Based on the SWOT analysis, Okra Leaf's main strength lies in its authentic sharia services and adherence to Islamic values. However, the weakness identified is the limited digital marketing infrastructure and underutilized marketing budget. These weaknesses hinder their potential to reach a broader audience, especially younger Muslim generations who are more active on digital platforms. This confirms the findings (Munir and Khalid, 2018), who revealed that digital infrastructure is one of the key elements in enhancing the competitiveness of sharia hotels.

Opportunities in Halal Tourism

From the perspective of opportunities, the demand for halal tourism continues to grow along with the increasing global awareness of the needs of Muslim tourists. Data from the Global Muslim Travel Index (2019) shows rapid growth in the halal tourism market, and this becomes an opportunity for Okra Leaf to further promote its accommodation as a top choice for Muslim tourists who prioritize sharia services. If Okra Leaf can capitalize on this trend with stronger marketing strategies, they will be able to increase their market share in the halal tourism segment Primadona et al., (2024).

Threats from Competition

The main threat faced by Okra Leaf is the increasing competition in the sharia hotel industry, both from other accommodations that also target the Muslim segment and from conventional hotels that are starting to offer halal services. Based on interviews with the management, they realize that other guest houses around Bontang are also beginning to focus on halal services, so they must continue to innovate to maintain their competitiveness. This finding is consistent with Porter (Porter, 1980), who emphasized that in the face of intense competition, companies must continuously differentiate and innovate.

Implementation of Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

The research also shows that Okra Leaf has not fully optimized CRM as part of its marketing strategy. Although the management is aware of the importance of maintaining relationships with customers, the interviews revealed that there is no structured CRM system in place to track customer preferences or offer more personalized experiences. According to Nasution (2019), effective CRM implementation in sharia hotels can increase customer loyalty through more personal and sharia-compliant services. Therefore, implementing a more formal CRM system could help Okra Leaf improve customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Table 1

SWOT Analysis Conducted on Okra Leaf Syariah Guest House:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Authentic Sharia-based services	Lack of digital marketing infrastructure
Worship facilities and halal food	Limited marketing budget
Opportunities	Threats
Increased demand for halal tourism	Competition from other hotels offering halal services

Figure 1
Digital Marketing Strategies That Should Be Implemented by Okra Leaf:



CONCLUSION

"Okra Leaf Syariah Guest House has implemented an effective Sharia-based marketing strategy, but still faces some weaknesses in digital marketing and CRM implementation. To enhance its competitiveness, this guest house needs to strengthen its digital presence and optimize customer relationship management. The significant opportunities in halal tourism can be seized if they can adapt to technological advancements and market trends. As a strategic move, Okra Leaf can further innovate in their Sharia-compliant services and leverage digital technology to expand their market reach, ensuring their competitiveness in the increasingly competitive Sharia-compliant hospitality industry."

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