

THE ROLE OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION IN BRIDGING DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR THE 'BUNDA COLLECTION' FASHION MSME

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ABSTRACT

The sustainability and growth of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia is highly dependent on adaptive business strategies and effective utilization of social networks. This study aims to analyze how business development strategies and the role of networking support the success of Bunda Collection, a fashion MSME in Klaten, in developing from a micro scale to national and international levels. This research uses a qualitative case study approach with data collection methods through interviews, observation, and document analysis to gain in-depth understanding. The results showed that Bunda Collection succeeded through the implementation of comprehensive strategies, including product innovation, marketing digitalization, and operational efficiency. Networking proved to be an important factor in every phase of development, from gaining initial market access, expanding the reseller network, to surviving the crisis and pandemic. The synergy between a well-planned strategy and a strong network, which is also supported by organizations such as IWAPI, results in competitiveness, market expansion, and solid business resilience. This study confirms that the integration of the two is key to the success of MSMEs..

1. INTRODUCTION

Because they contribute to job creation, income distribution, and strengthening the local economy, MSMEs are one of the important pillars of the Indonesian economy (Melati et al., 2022). In the fashion industry, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) face challenges beyond the production and distribution processes, including a competitive market dynamic and changes in consumer patterns. This situation requires MSME players to rely on their technical business skills and develop flexible and sustainable business development strategies.

Business strategy and social networking are often considered two key components in the development of MSMEs. By using business development strategies, businesses can plan how to grow, develop new products, and take advantage of market opportunities. Conversely, social networking offers support, opportunities for cooperation, and access to information. However, in practice, these two components do not work automatically. Both require a communication process that can connect actors, build trust, and align interests in business relationships (Ishak & Sholehah, 2021).

Business communication, viewed from the perspective of communication science, is a strategic process that shapes relationships, meanings, and coordination of actions between business actors, rather than merely an activity of conveying messages (Afriaris & Windartini, 2020). Communication is

essential for building trust, establishing relationships, and utilizing social networks to develop a business. Therefore, communication can be considered a tool that integrates the use of social networks with business development plans.

As a growing local fashion SME, Bunda Collection provides an appropriate empirical context for investigating the role of business communication. During its development, Bunda Collection has used a business approach and built and utilized social networks with various parties. These conditions help us understand how business communication is carried out and how it functions to connect social network dynamics with business development plans.

Previous studies conducted by (Nurwidia et al., 2025), (Rupina Rupina et al., 2024), (Aryani et al., 2023), and (Ajonbadi et al., 2024) show that business development strategies and the strength of social networks greatly influence the success of MSMEs. Some studies emphasize the role of networks in expanding market access and resources, while others emphasize the role of business strategies in maintaining business sustainability. However, most studies still discuss strategies and networks as separate factors or only emphasize one another.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the role of business communication in assisting the development strategies and social networks of Bunda Collection fashion MSMEs. This study differs from previous studies, which tended to discuss strategy and networking descriptively and separately. Instead, this study focuses on analyzing communication as a mechanism that connects the two. Therefore, it is hoped that this study will not only contribute theoretically to business communication studies, but also contribute practically to the advancement of fashion MSMEs.

2. METHOD

This study was conducted using a qualitative approach and case study. Rather than measuring the relationship between variables quantitatively, this study aims to understand the process and meaning of business communication in the development of MSMEs. Therefore, a qualitative approach was chosen. In the empirical context of the Bunda Collection fashion MSME, the case study method was used to study the phenomenon of business communication comprehensively.

This research was conducted at Bunda Collection Convection, located on Jalan Klaten-Boyolali, RT.08 RW. 04, Kwaon, Dusun 1, Jemawan, Jatinom District, Klaten Regency, Central Java. This study involved the owner of Bunda Collection (Mrs. Erwina Kusumarini) and the manager and social media administrator, who is also her son, as parties involved in the business development and social networking of Bunda Collection. The information was selected randomly because they were directly involved in the decision-making process, business communication practices, and business networking. Thanks to this technique, the researcher was able to obtain data that was relevant and in line with the focus of the study.

Data was collected through documentation and in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews were used to explore perspectives, experiences, and business communication practices used in social media management and business development. Business archives, promotional materials, and other supporting documents related to Bunda Collection's business communications were included in the documentation. The combination of these two methods was intended to enhance the data and improve understanding of the phenomenon under study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 *Business Development Strategy*

Figure 1.
Bunda Co Brand Logo



The results of the study show that the communication habits of Bunda Collection business owners are very important for the development of their businesses. Business owners and various related parties interact, negotiate, and exchange ideas about the strategies implemented, not naturally.

3.1.1 Market and Development

Figure 2.
Bunda Collection Facebook



Figure 3.
Bunda Collection Instagram

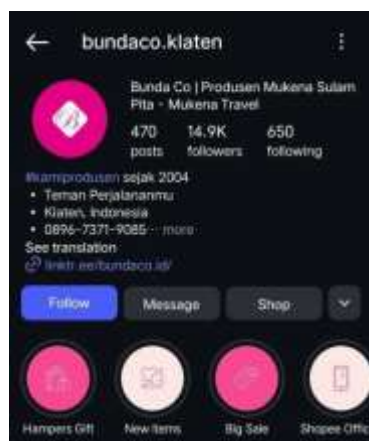


Figure 4.
Bunda Collection Tiktok



Market and marketing development is one of the important elements in Bunda Collection's business strategy. The main objective of this development is to attract new customers and expand the market by utilizing various digital media. Bunda Co has established professional accounts on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, which serve as digital storefronts to display and introduce its product catalog. In this way, Bunda Co can not only showcase its best products, but also interact directly with consumers, listen to feedback, and build a loyal community. This is in line with finding (Putra & Syafiola, 2025), which emphasizes that a brand is considered successful if it implements comprehensive digital branding to increase sales. In addition, finding (Assa & Harahap, 2025) also states that social media is the key to business development, especially in shaping brand identity.

“Bunda Collection also has several social media platforms, which are intended to showcase products as a display window and also to develop market reach,” said the manager and social media admin of Bunda Collection.

3.1.2 Product and Service Development

In product and service development, Bunda Collection is always committed to delivering unique innovations that are in line with market trends. Since its establishment, Bunda Collection has adapted to the ever-changing needs of consumers. Bunda Collection's success in delivering suitable products was also evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. Amidst various challenges, Bunda Collection quickly adapted and introduced Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) products. This step not only reflects Bunda Collection's ability to innovate, but also its dedication to contributing in emergency situations. By producing PPE, Bunda Collection not only meets market demand, but also actively contributes to supporting medical personnel and the community. Bunda Collection's innovation is not limited to products, but also includes services. Bunda Collection always strives to improve the consumer experience through quality after-sales services, such as product warranties and responsive customer support. With this method, Bunda Collection not only offers products, but also builds customer trust and loyalty.

3.1.3 Operational Development

Figure 5.
Production Process by Bunda Co's Tailors



Operational development is one of Bunda Collection's top priorities to improve efficiency and productivity. The shift from manual sewing machines to more efficient technology has enabled Bunda Collection to increase production capacity and product quality. The number of employees, which was previously only one person, has gradually reached a total of 150 employees. This operational development also includes employee training and skills improvement. Bunda Collection conducts training to enhance employee capabilities so that they can contribute better to the production process. Thus, Bunda Collection focuses not only on business development but also on the continuous improvement of human resources. Overall, Bunda Collection's market, product, and operational expansion reflects the company's strong commitment to innovation and adaptation to change. With the right strategy, Bunda Collection has successfully built a strong brand and become one of the major players in the garment sector in Indonesia.

Figure 6.
Manual Sewing by Hand



Figure 7.
Modern Sewing Machine



3.2 The Central Role of Networking

From the beginning, Bunda Collection was founded on a solid network, a synergy between Erwina's production expertise and her husband's expertise in building relationships and markets.

3.2.1 Founding Phase

It all started when Erwina's husband was looking for market opportunities and reconnected with an old college friend. This meeting resulted in a business agreement offering Mrs. Erwina to display her hijab collection in his store. This offer became the main driving force that changed everything. With enthusiasm, Mrs. Erwina produced high-quality hijabs, and it turned out that these items sold well in the market. The trust given by her husband's friend became a great motivation to continue working. The surge in demand created tremendous momentum, and from there, Bunda Collection was born.

“At that time, I was only offered to display my hijab collection, but it turned out to be a big hit,” said Mrs. Erwina.

With passion and hard work, Mrs. Erwina and her partner decided to launch Bunda Collection, a business that not only emphasizes products but also the principles of trust and quality.

3.2.2 Growth Phase

After an optimistic establishment phase, Bunda Collection entered a dynamic growth phase. Mrs. Erwina's husband continued his role as a market driver. He was directly involved in negotiations, gathering information, and communicating with various parties, including relevant institutions. With an expanding network, Bunda Collection began to gain recognition among fashion industry players. The peak occurred when this network successfully brought Bunda Collection across national borders for the first time, showcasing its products in Jordan. This exhibition not only served as a promotional event, but also as an opportunity to introduce Bunda Co products to the global market. The success in Jordan was followed by a number of other international exhibitions, which further strengthened Bunda Collection's position in the international market. In addition, Mrs. Erwina's husband also successfully reached the national market, resulting in Bunda Collection having around 244 resellers spread across Indonesia. With a solid network, Bunda Collection not only grew in sales but also in its image as one of the most trusted brands in the clothing sector.

Figure 8.
Visiting the exhibition in Yodania



"At that time, my husband was always lobbying for various opportunities. He was very enthusiastic... until finally we were able to travel around the world."

3.2.3 The Resurgence Phase

However, the business journey was not always smooth. Bunda Collection faced theft issues that forced them to cease operations. In this uncertain situation, the network that had been established previously proved to be a lifesaver. Amidst the difficulties, help came from one of Mrs. Erwina's acquaintances. This sincere offer was given free of charge, giving Bunda Collection the opportunity to bounce back and start over. With renewed enthusiasm and help from those closest to them, Mrs. Erwina and her partner were committed to reviving the business they had built. They learned from their difficult experiences and were determined to be more vigilant in managing their business. This phase of revival became a time for reflection and strengthening Bunda Collection, which increasingly understood the importance of networking and community support in facing challenges.

3.2.4 Adaptation Phase

When the world faced the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, many businesses were forced to cease operations. However, for Bunda Collection, new opportunities opened up through the connections they had built. A friend of Mrs. Erwina's husband, who worked as a healthcare worker in Yogyakarta, suggested that they produce Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which was very difficult to find at the time. Bunda Co accepted this challenge with enthusiasm and dedication to participate in the emergency situation. In a short time, they adapted quickly, utilizing existing resources to produce quality PPE. The result was an extraordinary moment that demonstrated Bunda Collection's adaptability and resilience. Through this step, Bunda Co was not only able to survive the crisis but also proved that they could innovate and make a positive impact on society. This adaptation phase showed that Bunda Collection is a business that focuses not only on profit but also on social concern and responsibility toward the surrounding environment. Throughout this challenging journey, Bunda Collection has demonstrated that with commitment, hard work, and the support of a strong network, every challenge can be overcome and turned into an opportunity for growth and development.

"Believe it or not, this joglo house is the result of our sales during the pandemic when we sold PPE at that time. It was just for fun," said Mrs. Erwina's child, who contributed the most to the success of Bunda Collection.

Through the IWAPI organizational network, the Bunda Collection market has been able to grow and operate more smoothly. These stories are concrete evidence. For Bunda Collection, a network isn't just about who you know, but about how genuine relationships and mutual trust can become the strongest foundation in business, whether during growth, difficult times, or amidst changing times.

3.3 The Impact of Strategy and Networking on Success

Impact of Business Development Strategy

The business development strategy used by Bunda Collection has had a great effect on the progress and success of the brand. One of the main effects is the increase in brand popularity and awareness. By utilizing various marketing channels, such as social media and collaborating with influencers, Bunda Collection has managed to increase its brand exposure among customers. Engaging and informative content, such as product reviews and promotional videos, not only captured attention, but also increased trust among customers.

In addition, Bunda Collection showed great aptitude for adjusting to changes. In the ever-changing fashion industry, the ability to capture market trends and demands is key to success. Bunda Collection continuously introduces appropriate new products, such as party hijab and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during the pandemic. This ability not only responds to consumer needs, but also illustrates Bunda Collection commitment to remain adaptable in the ever-changing market.

Professionalization in operations is also one of the positive effects of the business development strategy. By investing in the latest technology and staff training, Bunda Collection has been able to improve production efficiency and quality. A more planned and organized process allows Bunda Collection to meet increased demand without compromising on quality standards. All of this plays a role in building Bunda Collection reputation as a trusted and quality brand.

The Impact of Networking

Social networking also plays a crucial role in Bunda Collection's success. Broad market access is one of the main benefits of an established network. By building strong relationships with various parties, including resellers, distributors, and other industry players, Bunda Collection can expand its market area both locally and internationally. This network not only supports product distribution, but also provides valuable data on market trends and consumer desires.

Expansion from local to international has been one of Bunda Collection notable achievements. By holding exhibitions and collaborating with other brands, Bunda Co has successfully presented its products to the global market. This not only increased sales, but also strengthened Bunda Collection position as one of the main actors in the convection industry.

Networking also played a crucial role in saving the business in times of crisis. When Bunda Collection faced challenges, such as the theft disaster and the COVID-19 pandemic, a solid network came to the rescue. Support from friends and business associates enabled Bunda Collection to recover and adapt quickly. For example, during the pandemic, the available network supported Bunda Collection to shift to PPE manufacturing, which was a critical need at that time.

In doing so, Bunda Collection has demonstrated that the right business development strategy and a strong network are a winning combination for success. By increasing brand awareness, adaptability, and professionalism in operations, plus the support of a solid network, Bunda Collection was able to not only survive, but also thrive and grow in the face of challenges.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study found that business communication plays a strategic role in connecting business development strategies and social networks of Bunda Collection fashion MSMEs. Communication not only serves to convey information, but also serves as a means to build relationships, trust, and collaboration during the business development process. Businesses can connect their use of social networks with a continuous communication approach. According to this study, business development strategies and social networking strategies are two dimensions that are interrelated and interact with each other. Because business communication helps connect the structural dimension (development strategy) and the relational dimension (social networking), MSMEs can grow and survive in a dynamic business environment. These results provide a theoretical basis for communication science research, particularly for developing perspectives on business and organizational communication in the context of micro, small, and medium enterprises (SMEs).

This study has limitations, mainly because it conducted a case study on one MSME. As a result, the findings cannot be generalized broadly. In addition, the research data is highly dependent on documentation and interview results due to the depth of information provided by informants. To improve understanding of the role of communication in business development, further research is recommended to use a comparative approach involving more than one MSME or combining qualitative and quantitative methods.

According to the theoretical benefits of this study, business communication should be viewed as a strategic process that combines elements of social relations and business planning. However, in practical terms, this study can be a reference for MSME actors in developing more focused business communication practices to support business sustainability and strengthen social networks.

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