How Can a Marketing Strategy Improve the Competitiveness of Calligraphy MSMEs?

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

The development of Indonesian MSMEs is currently relatively fast, causing competition among MSMEs. The competition among MSMEs currently requires MSMEs to increase their business competitiveness, so they have sufficient potential to continue to compete with other MSMEs. MSMEs are still faced with the low ability to determine their marketing strategy so it is considered as one of the causes of the low competitiveness of MSMEs. This study aims to determine and reveal the role of marketing strategies on the competitiveness of MSMEs. This research is categorized as quantitative research with correlational research design. This research was conducted on 30 Calligraphy MSMEs located in Semarang Regency, Central Java the research subject being 30 Calligraphy MSME owners who were directly involved in the management and operation of the business. The data collection technique used is a questionnaire. The data analysis method used was SEM analysis. The findings of this study indicate that marketing strategies play a positive role in increasing the competitiveness of calligraphy MSMEs in Semarang Regency, Central Java Province. These findings have implications for the need of Calligraphy SMEs to be able to continue to develop their marketing through the current digital platform because this marketing strategy will be able to help the promotion process and provide value to the consumers.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the sectors that play an important role in the community's economy is Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises abbreviated into MSMEs. The fast-moving globalization of trade encourages the contribution of MSMEs to become one of the main actors, so that the MSME sectors can become the main driving force of economic growth through high resources and job opportunities in the community (Mutalemwa, 2015; Dvouletý & Blažková, 2019; Chandra et al., 2020). The effective participation of MSMEs in the economy has many advantages, as shown by the successful development of a number of countries with dynamic MSME sectors, so that entrepreneurship development is closely related to the strength of MSMEs to be able to grow and develop (Lim et al., 2020; Waspiah et al., 2020).

Many MSMEs from various sectors are spread throughout Indonesia, especially in Semarang Regency, but only a few MSMEs are able to provide a large enough influence on the surrounding community. In fact, MSMEs should be able to have a good impact on the surrounding community and not only pursue individual profits for business owners (Bismo et al., 2021). Of the many MSMEs in Semarang Regency, MSMEs in the calligraphy sector are one of the sectors that have quite a big impact on the community in Semarang Regency. A number of business actors in the Calligraphy sector in Semarang Regency have a lot of positive impacts on the surrounding community because these MSMEs are able to create many employment opportunities for the surrounding community. The large number of workers who are absorbed in this business activity can help the local community's economy; For example, the surrounding community is involved as labors in this business sector.

The area of Semarang Regency, Central Java Province, is bordered with Semarang City and Demak Regency in the north, Grobogan Regency and Boyolali Regency in the east, as well as Boyolali Regency and Magelang Regency in the south and it has many MSMEs in the field of Islamic calligraphy. However, the main problem of these MSMEs is the length of production time. This becomes an obstacle in production

because it takes a long time to be able to produce quality calligraphy products. Consequently, it has an impact on increasing the competitiveness of these MSMEs. The marketing process is also one of the main problems faced by these MSMEs. A number of business actors who choose to run a business in the calligraphy sector require them to maintain their business and provide something innovative for their business in order to have high competitiveness so that they are able to compete with other MSMEs.

Several previous studies have been carried out to see the relationship between the power of marketing strategies and the competitiveness of the MSME sector. Building competitiveness can be done through various efforts, one of which is through marketing. Many calligraphy MSMEs in Semarang Regency still ignore the marketing of their products or make the marketing of their products in the last important matter and do not prioritize the marketing of their products even though marketing is the most important part of the activities of a business because it will reflect the success of the company and can provide high competitiveness for the company. This makes it difficult for some MSMEs in this sector to maintain their competitiveness because they do not understand the issue of the right marketing strategy. This has implications for the importance of calligraphy MSME business actors to understand and implement marketing aspects for their business continuity, especially those related to the right marketing strategy in order to increase the competitiveness of MSMEs (Hamdani et al., 2020). This is the main thing that becomes an important concern for the authors to conduct a research on the influence and role of marketing strategies in increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs. So that the main objective of this research is to find out and prove that marketing strategy has a role in increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs.

There are several perspectives of previous research in looking at the relationship between marketing strategy and the competitiveness of SMEs. In the first perspective, marketing strategy focuses on market orientation which emphasizes how SMEs focus which generally looks to the external market rather than the company's internal focus on satisfying customer needs and providing better value than competitors (Hise, 1965; Tokarczyk et al., 2007; Kaleka & Morgan, 2017). The second perspective, marketing strategy is seen as a dynamic capability resource that determines various aspects of a company's growth including competitiveness (Chaudhary, 2014; Keshari, 2020).

However, the literature also shows some inconsistent findings regarding the right perspective in looking specifically at the contribution of marketing strategies to competitiveness in the size of MSMEs, especially those related to the importance of marketing strategies in determining various aspects of business performance that are consistent with the dynamic ability of entrepreneurs to influence growth. or market share, thus having an impact on business competitiveness (Al Badi, 2018).

To fill this inconsistency, a study is needed to see the contribution of marketing strategy to competitiveness in the size of MSMEs seen from the capacity of MSMEs that can sense market desires, tastes, preferences and proactively rearrange, configure and build harmonious relationships that satisfy customers. Furthermore, MSMEs with target market relations capacity can be an effective tool that can develop important cultures and practices towards customer preferences, and this consistently encourages MSMEs to be competitive.

This study focuses on aspects of strategic marketing which account for the business environment changes that must provide greater value to customers. Many studies on marketing strategies in the context of organizational performance have been carried out, especially those related to increasing sales and business competitiveness (Lockett, 2015). However, studies on marketing strategies in the context of marketing innovation in the digital era and their impact on competitiveness, especially in calligraphy MSMEs, still have gaps due to the lack of attention to innovation aspects within the knowledge-based theory framework.

Knowledge-based theory of a company considers that knowledge is the most strategically significant resource of a company because knowledge-based resources are usually difficult to imitate and complex, and they are the main determinants of sustainable competitive advantage and superior company performance (Nason & Wiklund, 2018). This knowledge is embedded and carried through various entities including organizational culture as well as identity, policies, routines, documents, systems, and employees. The knowledge-based theory perspective was built to expand the resource-based view (RBV) which was originally proposed by Penrose (1959) and later developed by Wernerfelt (1984) and Barney (1991). In this study, competitiveness is seen as the impact of marketing strategies that utilize knowledge-based information technology.

In the context of the theory of organizational knowledge creation (Nonaka & Toyama, 2003; Nonaka & Toyama, 2005) which has been applied to various fields, but this perspective is still very rarely applied in the context of the use of knowledge in marketing strategies, there is a dearth of research on knowledge transfer in the field of marketing (Koehler et al., 2019), especially in its implementation in marketing strategies. In an increasingly global business environment, the creation and transfer of marketing knowledge through a knowledge-based approach to marketing will become increasingly

important as a determinant of competitive advantage and business viability, especially in calligraphy MSMEs.

Ichijo and Kohlbacher (2007), develop a conceptual framework for knowledge-based marketing and the essential processes of marketing knowledge that are co-created with key players in the business ecosystem. Facing today's dynamic business environment and intense competition, knowledge-based marketing has become an important determinant of a company's competitive advantage (Cai & McKenna, 2021). Thus, the main objective of this study is to reveal the role of marketing strategy on the competitiveness of MSMEs based on the resource-based view (RBV) and the theory of organizational knowledge creation.

2. METHODS

This research is categorized as quantitative research with correlational research design. Correlational research is used to determine the functional relationship between two or more variables. In this study, marketing strategy was the independent variable and competitiveness was the dependent variable through structural equation modeling analysis. The object of this research was calligraphy MSMEs in Semarang Regency, Central Java Province. The population of this study was all calligraphy MSMEs in Semarang Regency, Central Java Province as many as 30 MSMEs. Thus, based on the number of populations and data analysis techniques used, the entire population of calligraphy MSMEs became the research sample. The variables studied used the following sub-variables and indicators.

Table 1. Variable, Sub Variable, and the Indicators

| Variable	Sub-Variable	Indicators
Marketing strategy	1. Product	a. Product quality. b. Various kinds of interesting products. c. Innovative products.
	2. Price	a. Pricing is based on market share. b. The selling price has the ability to compete.
	3. Distribution	a. The targeted consumers/buyers. b. The number of intermediaries in the distribution channel.
	4. Promotion	a. Promoting the product directly to the homes of potential consumers or buyers and promoting it through digital media. b. Promoting the product by contacting consumers who have already purchased the product previously via phone or digital media (Whatsapp).
Competitiveness	1. Human resources capability	a. Employee's superior competence
	2. Competitor environment	a. Giving discounts to consumers who buy products in large quantities. b. Different products from other MSMEs. c. Warranty for the sold products.
	3. Customer satisfaction	a. Always answering calls from consumers. b. Giving services in a friendly and agile manner. c. Accepting critiques and suggestions via digital platform.
	4. Productivity	a. The raw materials and finished goods are sorted before being processed. b. Production activities are carried out every day and are always monitored.

Source: Theoretical Studies and Previous Research (2022)

In this study, the data collection technique used was a questionnaire as the authors' data source to ask questions or propose some statements to respondents to find out the views, opinions, attitudes, and answers to the statements related to marketing strategies and competitiveness of calligraphy MSMEs in Semarang Regency, Central Java Province. Each item in the questionnaire had five alternative answers and a weighted score using the following interval scale.

Table 2. Measurement Scale

Score	Category
5	Strongly Agree
4	Agree
3	Neutral
2	Disagree
1	Strongly Disagree

The paradigm models related to marketing strategy and competitiveness variables can be seen in the following figure.
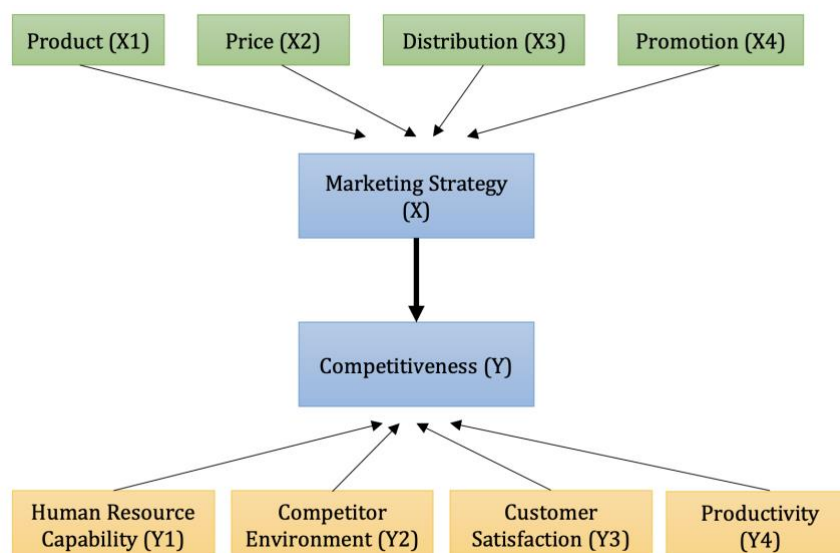
Figure 1. Research Paradigm Model
Source: Theoretical Studies and Previous Research

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

To ensure that the instrument can be trusted as a data collection instrument in this research, the validity and reliability tests of the instrument were carried out. The questionnaire consisted of 9 elements and was used to evaluate the marketing strategy. The questionnaire was distributed to 30 respondents with the following results in Table 3. The result of the validity test of the marketing strategy instrument showed that all instrument items were in the valid category and deserved to be used as an instrument in this research. The instrument validity test was also carried out for the competitiveness variable. The questionnaire consisted of 9 elements and was used to assess the competitiveness variable. The questionnaire was distributed to 30 respondents with the following results in Table 4.

The results of the calculation of the validity of the competitiveness instrument showed that all items of the instrument were valid so they were worthy of being used as an instrument in this research. The next step was to do a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The decision rule in the reliability test was that if the result of r_{count} had a value equal to or greater than the value of r_{table} ($r_{count} \geq r_{table}$), the instrument was declared reliable, otherwise, the item was considered to be unreliable if the result of r_{count} had a value less than the value of r_{table} ($r_{count} < r_{table}$). The test of instrument reliability was carried out using the IBM SPSS version 21.

Table 3. The Result of the Validity Test of Marketing Strategy Instrument

No. Item	r_{count}	r_{table}	Info
1	0,654	0,361	Valid
2	0,501	0,361	Valid
3	0,561	0,361	Valid
4	0,579	0,361	Valid
5	0,754	0,361	Valid
6	0,406	0,361	Valid
7	0,678	0,361	Valid
8	0,589	0,361	Valid
9	0,444	0,361	Valid

Source: Data Processing Result (2022)

Table 4. The Result of the Validity Test of Competitiveness Instrument

No. Item	r_{count}	r_{table}	Info
1	0,512	0,361	Valid
2	0,477	0,361	Valid
3	0,429	0,361	Valid
4	0,634	0,361	Valid
5	0,755	0,361	Valid
6	0,660	0,361	Valid
7	0,448	0,361	Valid
8	0,537	0,361	Valid
9	0,611	0,361	Valid

Source: Data Processing Result (2022)

Table 5. The Summary of Instrument Reliability Testing

No.	Variable	*Corbach's Alpha*	Conclusion
1	Marketing Strategy	0,855	Reliable
2	Competitiveness	0,853	Reliable

Source: Data Processing Result (2022)

Based on Table 5, it can be concluded that the instrument used to measure the marketing strategy and competitiveness variables was reliable so that each item of the statements to measure the variables in this study could be used. Data collection for marketing strategy variables was carried out and filled in by 30 respondents who owned calligraphy MSMEs in Semarang Regency, Central Java Province with the respondents' answers as follows.

Based on Table 6, it shows that the respondents believe that the right marketing strategy is a marketing strategy that pays attention to product quality, various attractive and innovative product variants, and prices that are in accordance with the market and have the ability to compete, and also know the targeted consumers, pay attention to the number of intermediaries that are involved in distribution, as well as how to promote products through various means and media. Furthermore, data collection on the competitiveness variable was carried out and filled in by 30 respondents who owned calligraphy MSMEs in Semarang Regency, Central Java Province with the respondents' answers as follows.

Based on Table 7, it shows that the respondents believe that to increase competitiveness through the aspect of implementing the right marketing strategy, it can be seen from the superior competence of employees in marketing products, giving discounts to consumers when buying products in a certain amount, providing guarantees for sold products, serving consumers in a friendly manner, being able to accept input and suggestions, and paying attention to the management of raw materials and finished goods in order to provide deeper information and explanations about products to consumers, as well as monitoring production activities carried out every day which will affect many products to be marketed. An alternative model that describes the relationship between the two latent variables in this research is as follows.

Table 6. Description of Marketing Strategy Variable

| Indicators	Distribution of Respondents' Answer					Mean Score	Info
	SDA	DA	N	A	SA		
Product Quality	-	-	-	6	24	4,80	Very Good
Various kinds of interesting products	-	-	-	6	24	4,80	Very Good
Innovative Products	-	-	-	6	24	4,80	Very Good
Pricing is based on market share	-	1	1	13	15	4,40	Very Good
The selling price has the ability to compete.	-	-	-	12	18	4,60	Very Good
The targeted consumers/buyers.	-	1	-	17	12	4,33	Very Good
The number of intermediaries in the distribution channel.	-	1	-	16	13	4,36	Very Good
Promoting the product directly to the homes of potential consumers or buyers and promoting it through digital media.	-	-	-	10	20	4,66	Very Good
Promoting the product by contacting consumers who have already purchased the product previously via phone or digital media (Whatsapp)	-	-	-	15	15	4,50	Very Good
Marketing Strategy						**4,58**	**Very Good**

Source: Data Processing Result (2022)

Table 7. Description on Competitiveness Variable

Indicators	Distribution of Respondents' Answer					Mean Score	Info
	SDA	DA	N	A	SA		
Employee's superior competence	-	1	-	17	12	4,33	Very Good
Giving discounts to consumers who buy products in large quantities	-	-	-	16	14	4,46	Very Good
Different products from other MSMEs	-	-	3	18	9	4,20	Good
Warranty for the sold products	-	-	-	9	21	4,70	Very Good
Always answering calls from consumers	-	-	-	14	16	4,53	Very Good
Giving services in a friendly and agile manner	-	-	-	9	21	4,70	Very Good
Accepting critiques and suggestions via digital platform	-	2	3	11	14	4,23	Very Good
The raw materials and finished goods are sorted before being processed.	-	-	-	13	17	4,56	Very Good
Production activities are carried out every day and are always monitored.	-	-	-	15	15	4,50	Very Good
Competitiveness						**4,46**	**Very Good**

Source: Data Processing Result (2022)
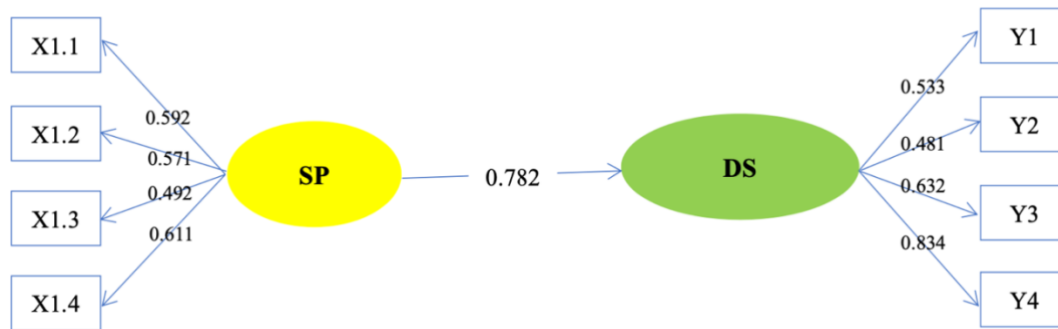
Figure 2. Structural Model Fit
Source: Data Processing Result (2022)

Figure 2 shows that the structural model has met the criteria for the suitability of the structural model. This can be seen from the significant effect of exogenous variables to endogenous variables. The suitability of the model can also be seen from the value of the coefficient that meets the criteria for the determination of the structural model analysis. The result of the fit test for the research structural model can be seen in the following table.

Table 8. Structural Model Fit

Fit Indices	Coefficient	Criteria	Quality
Chy-square (X^2)	61,93	Small (nonsignificant)	Good, Satisfactory
P-Value	0,615	≥0,05	Good, Satisfactory
Df	61	-	
Cmin (X^2/Df)	1,015	≤2,00	Good, Satisfactory
RMR (standardized)	0,042	≤0,08	Good, Satisfactory
RMSEA	0,00	≤0,08	Good, Satisfactory
GFI	0,99	≥0,90	Good, Satisfactory
AGFI	0,99	≥0,90	Good, Satisfactory
CFI	1,00	≥0,94	Good, Satisfactory
IFI	1,00	≥0,94	Good, Satisfactory
NNFI atau TLI	0,99	≥0,94	Good, Satisfactory
AIC (Model)	64,98	Small, relative	Good, Satisfactory

Source: Data Processing Result (2022)

All fit levels have met the required standard criteria. The Lambda coefficient (λ), determination (R2), and T-Value of each manifest variable that constructs exogenous and endogenous variables, can be seen in the following table.

Table 9. The Manifestations of the Structural Model Constructs

No.	Variable	Manifest	λ	R²	T-value
1	SP	X1	0,60	0,05	3,63
		X2	0,57	0,05	5,85
		X3	0,49	0,04	4,43
		X4	0,61	0,05	5,63
2	DS	Y1	0,53	0,05	5,85
		Y2	0,48	0,04	4,35
		Y3	0,63	0,05	5,90
		Y4	0,83	0,07	7,34

Source: Data Processing Result (2022)

Each manifest that constructs the two latent variables meets the validity criteria. It can be seen in the standard loading value (λ ≥ 0,40) and the value of R2 ≤ λ. In accordance with the results of the analysis and model above, it can be tabulated the coefficients of direct influence between variables as follows.

Table 10. The Conclusion of Direct and Indirect Effects Between Variables

No.	Testing	Coefficient Effect			T-value	Conclusion
		Direct	Indirect	Total		
1.	SP → DS	0,782	-	0,782	6,96	Significant

Source: Data Processing Result (2021)

The findings of this study indicate that marketing strategy plays a role in increasing the competitiveness of Calligraphy MSMEs in Semarang Regency, Central Java Province. Based on the results of data processing, marketing strategy plays a positive role in increasing the competitiveness of calligraphy MSMEs in Semarang, Central Java, which is obtained 78.2%. Thus, it can be seen that marketing strategies have an effect on increasing the competitiveness of calligraphy MSMEs in Semarang Regency, Central Java.

Discussion

This research shows the results that marketing strategies play a positive role in increasing the competitiveness of calligraphy MSMEs in Semarang Regency, Central Java Province. The results of this study are in line with studies conducted by several previous researchers who found that marketing strategy has a positive and significant effect on competitiveness (Cha et al., 2020). Several previous studies have shown that marketing strategy has a positive and significant effect on competitiveness because of the innovation aspect within the framework of knowledge-based theory in the form of innovation in marketing strategies by utilizing technology.

The competitiveness of MSMEs which is characterized by its competitive growth is characterized by the process by which MSMEs achieve, maintain greater customer satisfaction, enhance employee capabilities, and experience significant growth in returns and profits. The competitiveness of MSMEs which is marked by their competitive growth is also seen from the state of MSMEs that are capable, innovative, and business experts, consistently increasing their market share with high inventive practices in their operations, maintaining productivity, and consistently increasing sales growth and profitability. Therefore, the effectiveness of market-driven strategies for MSMEs can affect the responsive and tactical ability of MSME actors in satisfying the needs of target customers and consistently and continuously configuring capabilities and resources in their business organizations to achieve competitive growth.

To increase the competitiveness of calligraphy MSMEs through marketing strategies, recent research highlights several effective approaches. One strategy that has emerged is the use of social media as a powerful marketing tool. According to research by Tjahjono et al., (2020), the use of platforms such as Instagram and Facebook has proven effective in increasing the visibility and reach of calligraphy MSME products. By utilizing digital marketing techniques such as the use of relevant hashtags and attractive visual content, calligraphy MSMEs can reach a wider market and gain a larger market share.

Apart from that, collaboration with influencers or communities related to arts and culture is also an effective strategy. Research by Chen and Lin (2021) shows that collaboration with influencers or communities who have an interest in calligraphy art can increase brand awareness and consumer trust in MSME products. By utilizing existing networks and getting recommendations from leading figures in the art industry, calligraphy MSMEs can improve their reputation and attract the attention of more consumers.

Finally, product differentiation is also key in increasing the competitiveness of calligraphy MSMEs. According to research by Wang et al., (2020), developing calligraphy products that are unique and different from competitors can help MSMEs attract market attention. This can be done through developing innovative designs, selecting high-quality materials, or providing personalized customer service. By paying attention to consumer needs and preferences and offering unique added value, calligraphy MSMEs can differentiate themselves in the market and increase their competitiveness in the industry.

Apart from that, it is very important for calligraphy MSMEs to pay attention to the right pricing strategy. According to research by Li and Wu (2020) setting prices in accordance with product value and market conditions can influence the competitiveness of MSMEs. Based on market analysis and research on consumer preferences, calligraphy MSMEs can determine pricing strategies that are attractive to consumers while maintaining decent profits. By paying attention to the economic and psychological factors that influence the perception of product value, MSMEs can optimize their pricing strategies to increase their competitiveness in the market.

The findings of Pasaribu et al., (2020) show that application-based online media marketing variables have a significant effect on company competitiveness. Likewise, information technology-based marketing has a positive and significant impact on the competitiveness of micro, small, and medium enterprises (Zainal et al., 2018; Hasan, 2020). Horid (2020) found that the marketing model (product, price, location, promotion) had a partial effect on competitiveness, as well as online marketing products which had a positive and significant effect on the competitiveness of MSMEs. In order to survive and be competitive, it is necessary to improve product quality and product promotion through oral and mobile phones (Moy et al., 2020; Muafi, 2020). The company's marketing variables have a significant influence on competitive variables through marketing strategies consisting of products, prices, sales, and advertising strategies (Indrianti & Tiorida, 2019; Wang et al., 2020; Kanth & Prasad, 2022).

Furthermore, competitiveness marked by the competitive growth of MSMEs can be seen from the sustainable market responsiveness of MSMEs and their capacity to immediately respond to changing customer desires through the effective use of strategic market resources (market orientation, intensity of competition, and technological dynamics) and for business players. MSMEs with the ability to identify and promptly meet customer expectations. These findings have implications for the need for Calligraphy SMEs to be able to continue to develop their marketing through current digital platforms because this marketing strategy will be able to help the promotion process and provide value to consumers.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this research indicate that marketing strategy plays a positive role in increasing the competitiveness of Calligraphy MSMEs in Semarang Regency, Central Java Province. These findings have implications for the need for Calligraphy MSMEs to be able to continue to develop their marketing through the digital platforms currently available because this marketing strategy will be able to help the promotion process and provide value to consumers. Calligraphy MSMEs are expected to be able to develop the quality of human resources, by promoting breakthroughs and new ideas that are more effective for company development through the use of knowledge in marketing strategies.

The theoretical implication of the findings of this research is to look at strategic knowledge-based marketing in an effort to explain the role of knowledge in marketing strategy as well as the process of creating and managing marketing knowledge through the use of technology in marketing activities. The aim is to bridge strategic management and knowledge management in understanding and analyzing the knowledge-based marketing process to gain and maintain a competitive advantage for Calligraphy MSMEs

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