

# Marketing Communication Strategy of Al Quran Publisher in the Covid-19 Pandemic Crisis

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**Abstract.** This research was conducted to find out the marketing communication strategy of Al Quran publisher through an innovative program that was run to increase sales during the pandemic. Through qualitative approach with case study on one of the publisher of Al Quran which was established a few months before the pandemic and then had to fight crisis like the current one. The results showed that during the pandemic, everyone is required to follow health protocols to reduce the risk of being exposed to the virus or transmitting it to others. People also tend to focus on fulfilling their primary needs. Because Al Quran is not the primary need for society, even in Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim. Masks and hand sanitizers are more important than Al Quran. To survive in the midst of the crisis, Al Quran publisher used marketing communication strategy consisted of advertising (conventional and online ads); sales promotion (brand ambassador, celebrity endorsement, and giveaway); public relations and publicities (collaboration partners and event sponsorships); direct marketing (cooperation with bookstores); interactive marketing (using interactive contents on YouTube Channel). This strategy is considered successful as a solution as evidenced by increased sales. This research is expected to provide input for publishing companies to create innovative programs as a solution to the crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Marketing, Marketing Communication Strategy, Publisher, Crisis, Al Quran, Pandemic.

## 1. Introduction

Marketing communication strategy plays an important role in determining the company's revenue. Soemanagara said marketing communication is a form of communication aimed at strengthening marketing strategies, in order to achieve wider segmentation. This research can also be said as an effort to strengthen customer loyalty to products, namely goods and services owned by the company [1].

Business practices around the world have been disrupted during the Covid-19 pandemic has brought major changes and has impacted almost all aspects of human life. In the midst of the Covid-19 Pandemic, many companies are starting to go bankrupt due to declining revenues, this has made the world economy, including Indonesia, depressed to the point of going into a recession, moreover, there is no certainty when this virus pandemic will end.

During the pandemic, people tend to focus to fulfil their primary needs, the needs that must be fulfilled to survive. Meanwhile, the Al Quran as the Holy Book of Muslims, is not a primary need, even in Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim. So that the Al Quran publisher is also

affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Sales of Al Quran products experienced a sharp decline. This is a challenge for many business actors to survive in times of crisis, especially for companies that produce non-primary needs, such as Al Quran publishers.

In the midst of the pandemic, Al Quran publishers are required to be creative and use various strategies in order to survive and avoid the crisis. In addition, the existence of competition with other Al Quran publishers that have already been established increases the challenges that must be faced by Al Quran publisher which tend to be new and still trying to get consumers.

Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia is a company engaged in the publishing of the Al Quran which was founded in November 2019. Several months before Covid-19 was declared as the pandemic by WHO. However, thanks to the right marketing communication strategy, within two years of its establishment, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia already has three branch companies, in Bandung, Jakarta and Surabaya.

Innovative product as part of the marketing communication strategy used during the pandemic which is designed to increase the company's sales turnover is Al Quran Personal Qustomize, which is a product customizing the name on the cover of the Al Quran. Through this program, Al Quran products can be ordered by including the consumer's name on the cover of the Al Quran so that it feels more exclusive for consumers. What is special, consumers can order this product in retail or in large quantities.

There are several previous researches that are related and relevant to the research conducted, First, research conducted by Pandu Setio Wibowo which was published in the Journal of Professional Communication Volume 5, Number 1, 2021. This research aimed to determine marketing communication strategy to increase purchasing power and maintain awareness of the Sharp brand by consumers during the Covid-19 Pandemic [2]. However, this research did not conduct research specifically on one promotion program, while the research conducted by researchers specifically only examined the Al Quran Personal Qustomize product.

Second, the research conducted by Niko Al-Hakim published in PIKMA Journal Volume 3 Number 2, 2021. This research aimed to provide an in-depth analysis about the marketing communication strategy of Sate Taichan “Goreng” during large-scale social restrictions in Indonesia [3]. However, this research does not clearly show the increase in Taichan satay sales during during large-scale social restrictions in Indonesia. While researchers are able to provide data on sales of Al Quran Personal Qustomize during 2020 and 2021.

Third, Marina Wardaya’s research in 2016, published in Journal The WINNERS, Volume 17 Number 2 showed that the children's book marketing communication strategies in the social media of the publisher that is Facebook and Twitter has successfully received positive response from consumers who show their interest and desire to buy children books offered. Consumers also follow the event being posted on the social media [4]. However, Wardaya only focused on the use of social media, while researchers focused on all of marketing communication media used by the publisher. In fact, researchers found conventional media still used as marketing communication media.

Forth, research by Yohanes Dicky and Alvanov Z. Mansoor in 2020. This research showed that marketing communication strategy to increase brand awareness and how that marketing strategy can also affect sales [5]. But unfortunately, marketing communication method used in this research focused on direct marketing using social media Instagram while researchers observed five activities on marketing mix, consisted of advertising, sales promotion, public relations and publicities, direct marketing, and interactive marketing.

And the last, research that has been conducted by one of the research team in 2020. Published in the 3rd International Conference on Business, Economics, Social Sciences, and Humanities (ICOBEST) 2020. Results of research conducted by Wulandari showed that the advantages of using Online Marketing Communication (OMC) is to maintain the existence of their brands and increase revenue, these large and well-established companies choose WhatsApp Business as the OMC media which are usually used by companies that are relatively new or not really popular. Based on customers’ experience, the existence of WhatsApp Business is very helpful in order to obtain what they need, including beauty products, especially during pandemic, so customers don't have to leave their home, they only need to use their smartphone, shopping is now as easy as sending message [6]. However, clearly that this

previous research only focused on online or digital marketing communication media, which is WhatsApp Business to be exact. While researchers try to observe more thoroughly the marketing communication strategy that is conducted as a solution in the midst of a crisis, both online and offline.

in order to increase sales. So, this research was conducted to find out the marketing communication strategies used by Al Quran publisher through innovative product used to increase sales of Al Quran products during the pandemic. The researchers describe the Al Quran Personal Qustomize product as a marketing communication program and also company solution during the crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic using five sub-focuses, namely: advertising, sales promotion, public relations & Publicities, direct marketing and interactive marketing. Novelties of this research are (1) provide an input for publishing companies or other companies with non-essential products or services to have such an innovative product to increase product sales in times of crisis or when there is a decrease in sales volume; (2) marketing communication strategy plays an important role to make the company survive in the midst of crisis even if the products or services offered is not a primary products or services.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Marketing Communication Strategy

The marketing communication strategy starts from a simple concept of how the development of a company's marketing strategy really depends on how the strategy is linked to the company's business plan. Thus, it is clear that corporate communication will lead to the company's vision and mission in achieving future goals [7].

Soemanagara said that marketing communication aims to achieve three stages of the company aimed at consumers consisting of:

1. The stage of changing knowledge. In this first stage, the consumer knows the existence of a product, what the product was created for, and who the product is addressed to, thus the message conveyed shows important information about the product;
2. Attitude change stage. In consumer behavior, this attitude change is determined by three elements, according to Sciffman and Kanuk: Cognition, Affection, and Conation, if these three components show a tendency towards a change, it is very likely that a positive change will occur, this positive change leads to desire. to try the product, the higher the consumer's preference for a sponsored message, the more likely the consumer is to buy the product;

Behaviour change stage. This last stage is intended so that consumers do not switch to other products, and get used to using them [1].

### 2.2. Marketing Mix

According to Kotler & Keller [8] the marketing mix is a collection of marketing variables used for targeted marketing purposes, consisting of:

1. Advertising is the presentation of non-personal information about sponsor-funded products, brands, companies or outlets. Advertising aims to influence consumers' images, beliefs, and attitudes towards products and brands, as well as consumer behaviour. In fact, advertising can be considered image management, namely creating and imprinting images and meanings in the minds of consumers. In general, the available media can be grouped into print media, electronic media, outdoor media, and bottom-line media. Sales promotion
2. Sales promotion is a direct inducement to consumers to buy a product. Consists of a diverse set of incentive tools, mostly short term, designed to encourage quicker purchase of a product/service. Promotions can be done through discount programs or offering value-added (premiums) if consumers want to buy products [9]. Sales promotions can generally be divided into two parts, namely consumer-oriented sales promotions and trade-oriented sales promotions. Consumer-oriented sales promotions are aimed at users or end users of an item or service which includes the

- provision of coupons, discounts, sweepstakes with prizes. Meanwhile, trade-oriented sales promotions are aimed at those who act as marketing intermediaries, namely retailers, wholesalers and distributors.
3. Public relations and Publicities. Public Relations is closely related to the world of marketing. The role of public relations at this time is very helpful for companies in achieving the goals set, financial goals and objectives to internal or external companies. In the current modern era, public relations activities are not only focused on the internal and external public scope, but have tended to support marketing programs so that public relations activities have become part of the marketing program. Public relations are an important factor in supporting marketing. The role of public relations indeed applies to connecting between companies and parties who will enter into a deal or cooperation with the company. Public Relations programs include: publications, events, investor relations, exhibitions and sponsoring several events. Publicities refers to non-personal communication about products, services, or ideas that are not directly paid for by an institution, therefore, its form is often disguised as news, editorial reviews, or simply announcements about institutions, organizations, or products, the advantage of this kind of promotional media is its credibility. Consumers are slightly more confident in publicities because they have the perception that the writing is unbiased. The types of Publicities include: press releases, social media, product placements, and partnerships.
  4. Direct marketing is the use of direct consumer channels to reach and deliver goods and services to customers without using an ordering intermediary. Direct marketers can use a number of channels to reach individual prospects and customers, such as mobile intermediaries. The types of direct marketing are: personal selling, telemarketing, e-mail, catalogues, kiosk market

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1 Research Design*

This research was conducted with a qualitative approach. Moleong stated that qualitative research is research that intends to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by research subjects by means of descriptions in the form of words and language, in a special natural context and by utilizing various natural methods [10]. Researchers focus intensively on a particular object who studies it as a case. A case study is simply defined as an in-depth, detailed, and detailed investigation or examination process on a particular or special event that occurred [11]. Therefore, case study is considered as the right method to achieve the research objective of obtaining an in-depth understanding of marketing communication strategies with a special program used during the crisis due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The case study was conducted at Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia because this company was only established a few months before Covid-19 spread throughout the world. The innovative product being researched is the Al Quran Personal Customize.

#### *3.2 Data Collection Technique*

The research data collection technique used literature study, online data search, non-participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Informants were selected using a purposive technique, namely the technique of determining informants by determining certain criteria to produce samples that can logically be considered representative of the population [12]. Where key informants are selected with the criteria of having comprehensive information about the program being researched, being a member of the company involved and being part of the program being researched directly. Meanwhile, the supporting informants were selected based on consumer who had purchased the Al Quran Personal Qustomize product and consumer from the competitor of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia or in other words, potential consumer who has the purchasing power of Al Quran Personal Customize but choose to buy the Al Quran from another company (competitor). All research informants showed in the table below:

**Table 1. Research Informants**

<b>Informant Name</b>	<b>Information</b>
Reza Wiraguna	Marketing Communication Manager of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia
Yosep Subiakto	National Sales Administration (NSA) Manager of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia
Setiawati	Consumer of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia
Asep Saripudin	Potential Consumer (Other Publishing Company Consumer)

The validity test of data, researchers used credibility test by increasing persistence and member check. To analyze research data, Miles and Huberman [12] (in Sugiyono, 2015) suggest that activities in qualitative data analysis are conducted interactively and continuously until complete, so that the data is saturated, which consists of: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions drawing (verification).

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Results

Running a business in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic situation has its own challenges. These challenges arise, apart from social restrictions that make people unable to move freely, but also because of the many layoffs or layoffs that have reduced people's purchasing power. This pandemic requires everyone to quickly adjust to new work patterns. Some examples are that workers have to change their activities to work from home. In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic that hit parts of the world, including Indonesia. The impact that is felt by all parties is the economic impact. Many companies went out of business because not many could survive in the midst of the current crisis.

The crisis in the Covid-19 pandemic has not only had an impact on health but also on the economy. The impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the world economy, is considered a "catastrophe" and also much more severe than the 2008 Financial Crisis. At least 220 million people worldwide are expected to remain unemployed in 2021 and layoffs due to the pandemic will not be replaced until at least 2023. That was conveyed by the Chairman of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Guy Ryder [13].

In the face of the crisis due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. It is appropriate for business actors to design appropriate marketing communication strategies to avoid crises due to economic conditions that are no longer the same. Vitamins, masks, and hand sanitizers have turned into primary needs in the new normal era. Al Quran publishers are certainly one of the sectors affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic, because the Al Quran is not a primary need in the new normal era, even in Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim. Especially when the company that published Al Quran was just founded in November 2019, a few months before the WHO declared Covid-19 as the pandemic. This research was conducted using a case study method on Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia which designed an innovative product, namely the Al Quran Personal Qustomize which is a product of customizing consumer names on the cover of the Al Quran as a way to increase marketing and sales of Al Quran products. in the midst of a crisis due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Here are the product designs of the Al Quran Personal Qustomize for 2020 and 2021:



**Figure 1.** Designs of AI Quran Personal Qustomize in 2020 and 2021

The program was designed as a solution to the decline in sales turnover because the company's sales channels (agents and modern stores) were no longer able to absorb sales of AI Quran products during the pandemic. The AI Quran Personal Qustomize product is considered to be able to touch directly to the end user so that consumers who buy this product feel the benefits personally by having their name on the cover. The advantages offered to consumers who buy AI Quran Personal Qustomize products are:

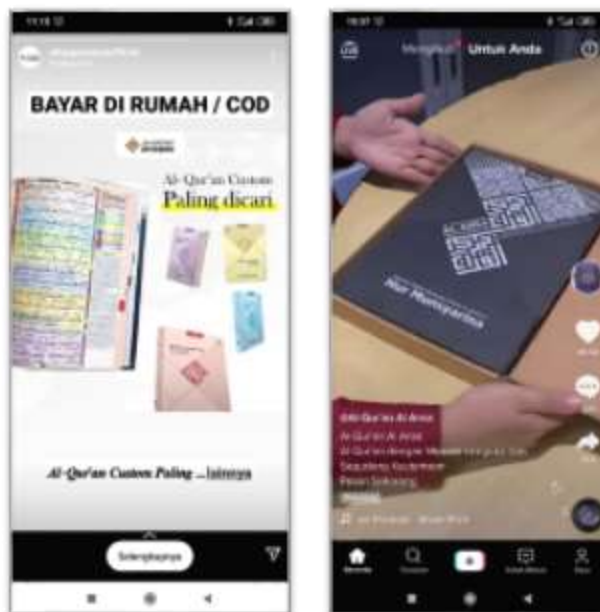
- a. Customize of AI Quran cover with consumer's name
- b. The consumer's name on the cover is printed clearly and firmly
- c. The inside (contents) of the AI Quran which is equipped with 7-8 color boxes making it easier to memorize
- d. Fast turnaround time
- e. Can be ordered individually

In addition to the advantages above, the AI Quran Personal Customize product is made with premium quality product materials, the paper used is QPP paper which lasts up to 30 years, clear prints, attractive designs, and there are tajwid instructions to make it easier Reciting AI Quran. Equipped with color blocks that can be used as keywords in each verse to make it easier to learn and memorize. The price of the AI Quran Personal Customize was also affordable, ranging from Rp.69.000,00 to Rp.180.000,00 with sizes B6, A5 and A4.

It was previously mentioned that in this research, the researchers used five sub-focuses consisting of advertising, sales promotion, public relations and Publicities, direct marketing, and interactive marketing as the marketing communication mix of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia.

#### 4.2 Advertisements

Advertising activities related to the AI Quran Personal Customize product, maximizing advertising through online media, namely Social Media Ads to company partners. This is because Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia has partners who already have a strong brand, so that advertising activities through online media from company partners are considered more capable of reaching a broad target audience. Wiraguna as Marketing Communication Manager explained that as a new company and still in the development phase, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia's branding is not as strong as other AI Quran publishers who have already existed in the AI Quran industry. Therefore, in order to maximize this program, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia partnership with other AI Quran publishers. The examples of advertising through online media of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia partners showed in the pictures below:



**Figure 2.** Advertising through Online Media of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia Partners

Advertisements of the Al Quran Personal Customize product through partners, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia prepares content, design, and advertising targets for each partner. So that each partner can focus on posting advertisements on their social media. For example, At-Taqwa advertises focused products through Instagram Ads, Al-Ansa focuses on advertising through TikTok Ads. So, the implementation of advertising does not conflict with each other and so that the implementation of advertising can be widely spread in all online media and covers a wide audience.

Al Quran Personal Customize advertising activities are also conducted through mass media, namely almost all radio stations in Bandung City. Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia sets target consumers not only from the religious segment but also the general segment as a whole. So that apart from a radio station with a religious segment, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia also advertises on Dahlia 101.5 FM Radio Bandung, which is famous for its dangdut music lover segment. This aims to expand the segment of the audience who know the products of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia. Advertising through radio media is also conducted in a talk show format which includes the insertion of the Al Quran Personal Customize. Figure 3 showed e-flyer of Radio Station Talk Show conducted by Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia as the advertisement of Al Quran Personal Customize:



**Figure 3.** Advertisement of Al Quran Personal Qustomize on Radio Station Talk Show

Advertising through conventional media is also used, including outdoor media advertisements, namely billboards, banners, and posters to introduce the Al Quran Personal Qustomize to consumers who do not use social media. Outdoor media are installed at strategic points in Bandung City. The examples of conventional media as the advertisement of Al Quran Personal Qustomize showed in the figures below:



**Figure 4:** Advertising on Conventional Media (Poster and Billboard)

The targets set by Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia are the Muslim community starting from the age of children to adults. The main target of Al Quran Personal Qustomize is people who have a need to learn and also memorize the Al Quran. Setting targets helps to make the target market clearer and also measurable.

The message designed by Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia in the Al Quran Personal Qustomize advertisement is "Best Gift for Loved Ones" where customizing the name on the cover of the Al Quran can be a gift recommendation to give to others. Subiakto as the NSA Manager explained that Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia invites consumers to continue using the Al Quran and feel the personal benefits of having the consumer's name on the cover of the Al Quran. This is what makes the Al Quran Personal Qustomize product has added value that distinguishes it from the Al Quran from other publishers.

Researchers had the opportunity to interview consumers of the Al Quran Personal Qustomize product, Setiawati said that she knew about the Personal Qustomize Al Quran advertisement from the banners in her area. This proves that, even though in the midst of the Covid-19 Pandemic, many companies, including those that only advertise on online media, still have an influence on the public in buying a product. So that the advertising strategy used by Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia on Al Quran Personal Qustomize product by utilizing online media, mass media, and also conventional media succeeded in making Al Quran Personal Qustomize better known by the public and increasing sales of this product.

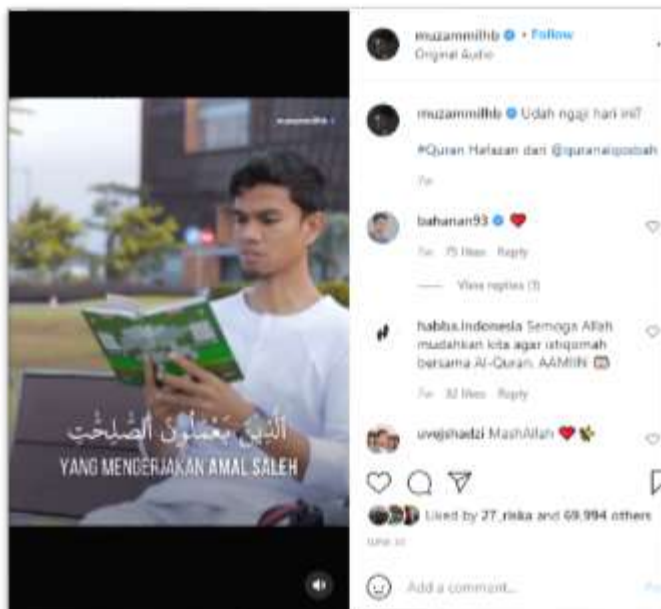
Consumers of competing companies also give appreciation to the Al Quran Personal Customize. Saripudin as a potential consumer who buys the Al Quran from other companies, assesses the Al Quran Personal Qustomize product as a very good Al Quran product with premium quality materials and the consumer's name on the cover. However, Saripudin actually thinks that the advertisement of the Al Quran Personal Qustomize has not been known to many people. Even so, Saripudin acknowledged the quality of the Al Quran Personal Qustomize product which has advantages and is very likely to influence potential consumers to be interested in buying the product.

#### 4.3 Sales Promotions

To achieve marketing success, sales promotion activities are designed by a set of instruments or incentive tools that are useful for stimulating product purchases. The average sales promotion grace period is only for the short term, because this activity wants results in the form of product sales in a fast time (Firmansyah, 2020). Figure below showed the sales promotion activities used related to the Al



Quran Personal Qustomize are by cooperating with Muzammil Hasballah as a Brand Ambassador with the aim of increasing Brand Awareness and encouraging sales figure:



**Figure 5.** Brand Ambassador of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia

The basis for consideration of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia in choosing Muzammil Hasbalah as a Brand Ambassador is because Muzammil Hasbalah is a Qori (reader of the Al Quran) who is young and also has many loyal followers so that he is expected to represent the brand positively and the community becomes more believe in the products they recommend or in other words, increase the trust and credibility of the brand in the eyes of the public.

The results of the researcher's observations, Muzammil Hasbalah is active in promoting Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia products on his personal Instagram account. Muzammil Hasbalah is also active in creating content as a Brand Ambassador of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia to realize the company's identity in the form of appearance, behavior, values, messages and ethics using promotional strategies that aim to strengthen customer-product-service relationships and influence audiences to buy Al Quran Personal Qustomize.

Another sales promotion activity is Celebrity Endorsement to introduce the product. Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia conducted Celebrity Endorsement with several Indonesian celebrities, such as Irfan Hakim, Risty Tagor, Rain n Bal, and Ustadz Subkhi. Through Celebrity Endorsements, the public will pay attention to the Al Quran Personal Qustomize through public statements, especially by people who are already known by most of the Indonesian people, that they use or like the Al Quran Personal Qustomize product. The examples of celebrity endorsement used by Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia as the part of sales promotion activity showed in the fugures below:

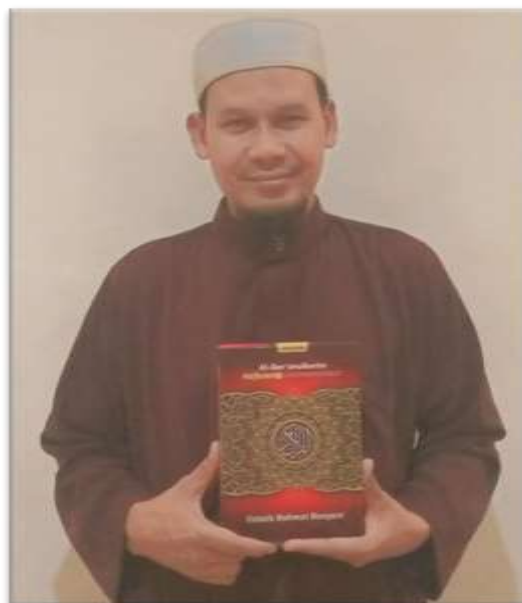


Figure 6. Celebrity Endorsement

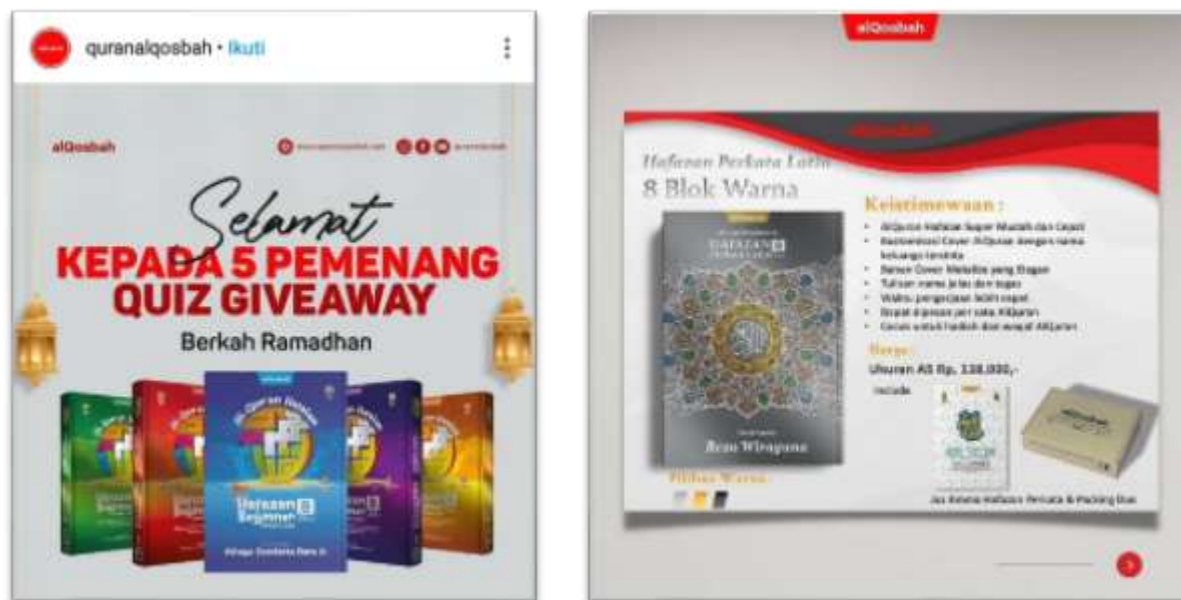
Another sales promotion activity is to provide special prices to attract potential consumers to be interested in placing an order. Special prices are prices that are cheaper than normal prices. Through the observations of researchers, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia provides a special price for the Al Quran Personal Qustomize during the Eid al-Fitr. Al Quran Personal Qustomize product are sold at a price of IDR99,500.00 from the normal price of IDR150,000.00. where this special Eid al-Fitr price can be obtained by consumers at leading bookstores or through the Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia Call Center. The sales promotion message conveyed that the Al Quran Personal Qustomize can be used to memorize the Al Quran as well as understand its translation. In addition, consumers can also use the Al Quran Personal Qustomize as a gift for loved ones, such as mother, father, children, or teachers. Figure 7 showed the promotion price of Al Quran Personal Qustomize for Eid:



Figure 7. The Promotion Price of Al Quran Personal Qustomize for Eid

Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia also conducted sales promotions by providing Al Quran Personal Qostomize as a gift or Giveaway through the official Instagram account @quranalqosbah to stimulate Instagram followers who want to know about Al Quran Personal Qostomize products and increase engagement, namely communication between Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia with consumers or potential consumers who become Instagram followers. In addition to the Giveaway, the sales promotion used by Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia for consumers who buy the Al Quran Personal Qustomize is to provide a free product in the form of Juz Amma. This is of course to increase sales and buyer confidence in the products purchased and to become a positive brand image because the free products provided are also

useful. Figures below showed e-flyer of giveaway and free product posted by Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia on the Instagram account:



**Figure 8.** Giveaway on Instagram & Free Product Juz Amma

Sales promotion activities for business partners and resellers are by holding sales competitions in the form of large and attractive rewards in the form of cars to Umrah Tickets if they reach the target set by Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia. This is to encourage the enthusiasm of partners and resellers to be enthusiastic in promoting and selling the Al Quran Personal Qustomize as much as possible to the specified target. This was conveyed by Wiraguna as Marketing Communication Manager.

In carrying out sales promotions, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia takes advantage of certain times that have the potential to increase sales, such as ahead of Eid. The implementation of sales promotions also looks at sales figures, where sales promotions are used especially when sales numbers decline. Setiawati as a consumer of Al Quran Personal Qustomize assessed that the sales promotion activity of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia was able to attract buying interest. The consideration in buying the Al Quran Personal Qustomize is that apart from being able to include the name on the cover of the Al Quran, it is also due to fast processing, can be purchased individually, and the quality of the product is considered good from the materials used, as well as clear, friendly prints. eyes to make it easier to read and memorize the Al Quran.

Saripudin as a consumer of a competing company considers that the sales promotion used by Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia helps in introducing the company's brand. In addition, when the Al Quran Personal Qustomize is given as a gift to loved ones, it can also be a means to increase brand awareness of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia.

Sales promotion activities used by Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia through Al Quran Personal Qustomize products are designed by a set of instruments or incentive tools that are useful for stimulating product purchases. The benefits of conducting sales promotion activities are increasing sales and income, disseminating product information, getting new consumers, superior products from competitors as well as building product branding. The quality of a product will not reach the ears of the public by itself. Companies need promotions as a means of educating the public regarding the advantages and benefits of products before convincing them to buy. Thus, promotion is used by many companies to grow their product branding in the eyes of the public [14] (Sodexo.co.id, 2020).

#### 4.3 Public Relations and Publicities

In carrying out public relations activities, the company maintains good relations with business partners. Cooperation with partners is one way to build a strong network. The form of collaboration conducted by Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia is the collaboration of the Al Quran Personal Qustomize product with a different design for each partner. Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia has prepared a Personal Qostomize cover design for each of its work partners. So that the designs of each partner are different and more varied and have their own characteristics. Prospective consumers can also choose which cover design suits their taste. But on the side of the Al Quran Personal Qustomize still includes the logo of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia as a form of collaboration and collaboration between brands. Figure 9 showed the examples of design of Al Quran Personal Qustomize as collaboration with partners



**Figure 9.** Design of Al Quran Personal Qustomize as Collaboration with Partners

Another public relations activity is holding virtual Al Quran memorization training through Zoom Meeting. In this activity, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia provides easy techniques for memorizing the Al Quran, participants are given guidance for one month by a mentor who is a Public Relations Officer of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia, namely Ustadz Qodar Ramdani and Ustadz Agus Salim Hasanudin, to memorize Al Quran. This activity also aims to attract consumers to buy Al Quran Personal Qustomize product because every time they purchase Al Quran Personal Qustomize product, consumers can take part in Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia memorizing training. Based on the observations of researchers, Public Relations of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia is directly involved in Online Memorizing training by guiding consumers on easy techniques for memorizing the Al Quran. This public relations activity not only increases the sales of the Al Quran Personal Qostomize but also the image of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia.

Public Relations of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia also provides sponsorship as a way to introduce the company's brand to the public by supporting a program, event, or community organization. Among them are sponsors of social service activities with orphans. By becoming a sponsor of the event, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia can introduce its products, explain the advantages of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia products including the Al Quran Personal Qustomize, and improve the company's image. Al-Quran memorization training and event sponsorship as the public relations activities conducted by Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia showed in the figures below:



Figure 10. Al-Quran Memorization Training and Event Sponsorship

The form of Publicities of the Al Quran Personal Qustomize is conducted through Instagram social media accounts by creating interesting and educational Islamic content. Subiakto said that this was aimed at making brands easier to remember and attracting public attention through the messages conveyed. In addition, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia also publishes corporate social activities on Instagram social media, such as waqf programs, collaboration with business partners, Islamic boarding schools, tahfidz houses and other agencies, which showed in the figures below:



Figure 11, Publicities Activities of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia

The relationship between public relations and marketing is created to add or provide value to the product through its unique ability to demonstrate the credibility of the product message [8]. The function of public relations and Publicities in marketing communications is a very important part of a company. Because public relations itself has a crucial function and role, especially as a driver in a company. The existence of public relations is now increasingly important related to the rapidly growing flow of information. So do not be surprised if then public relations can be considered as the legs in a company. The function of public relations in marketing communications is as a means of connecting the company with the public [15] (Prawiro, 2020).

#### 4.4 Direct Marketing

Direct marketing activities for Al Quran Personal Qustomize products are conducted by authorized resellers of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia and resellers of work partners of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia. Resellers usually post photos of the Al Quran Personal Customize to attract potential customers and then interact with potential customers. Direct marketing activities are also conducted by meeting with potential customers and also getting direct responses from potential consumers. However, due to the Implementation of Restrictions on Community Activities during the Covid-19 Pandemic, more direct marketing activities are conducted by WhatsApp Business as a direct marketing media.

Direct marketing is also conducted in collaboration with the Gramedia Bookstore by employing sales staff to market the Al Quran Personal Qustomize to potential consumers. According to Subiakto as NSA Manager, the consideration in collaborating with Gramedia Bookstore is because Gramedia is the largest bookstore in Indonesia so that it can reach a wider audience.

Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia's collaboration with Gramedia Bookstore is an exclusive collaboration so that there are Gramedia Staff who will provide recommendations for Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia products including the Al Quran Personal Qustomize by explaining its advantages compared to Al Quran products from Indonesia. other publishers. In addition, with strategic product placements such as near the cashier, special shelves for Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia products, and also promotions on Gramedia social media accounts. Figure 12 showed the benefits that will be obtained if consumers order the Al Quran Personal Qustomize through the Gramedia Bookstore include an easy and fast ordering process, getting a discount of 15% for every purchase of IDR300,000.00.



**Figure 12.** Direct Marketing through Cooperation with Gramedia Bookstore

Direct marketing has a high degree of flexibility where the seller, in this case, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia can choose the most appropriate method and time, as well as the most suitable means or media in reaching their target market. The benefits of direct marketing are that Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia can do research, survey, analyze and then create a marketing strategy that is considered effective in selling its products (Harmony, n.d.).

#### 4.5 Interactive Marketing

In conducting an interactive marketing of Al Quran Personal Qustomize, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia creates content on the official Instagram social media @quranalqosbah which aims to educate consumers by presenting knowledge about Islam and the Al Quran as well as content about the Al Quran Personal Qustomize and other Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia products, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia also has YouTube Channel to present interactive marketing content. The results of research observations

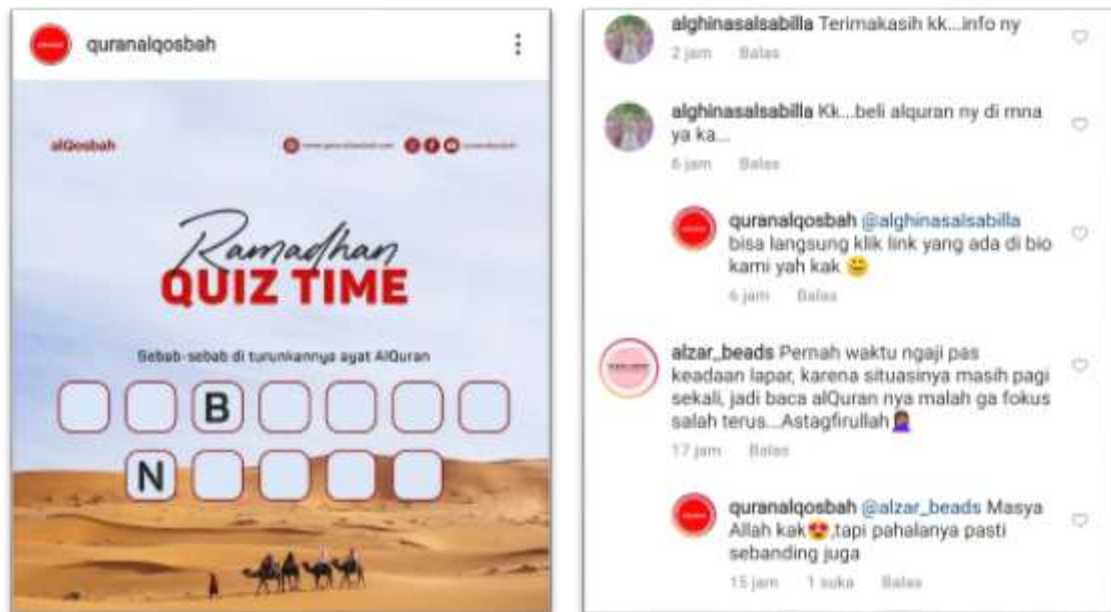
showed in the Figure 13 that Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia more often uses Instagram as an interactive marketing media because Instagram Business has features that support interactive marketing, such as providing insight from followers on the content presented.



**Figure 13.** Interactive Marketing Content of the Al Quran Personal Customize Program

Another interactive marketing used is a two-way interaction by giving consumers the awareness to actively participate. Quizzes, branching content, games, and interactive videos provide a more powerful experience for audiences through two-way interactions [16] (August, 2020). Companies can create interactive content by holding interactive polls and quizzes on Instagram social media which can be a place for consumers to respond and also for potential consumers to be interested in trying a product. Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia held an interactive quiz with Al Quran Personal Customize as a prize for participants who successfully answered the quiz. According to Neil Patel, interactive marketing aims to build strong relationships with audiences in the long term. So, the content created must be relevant in order to create a feeling of need from audiences who have emotional closeness to the content created [17].

In the implementation of interactive marketing, the researchers observed that the interactive marketing used by Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia was good in the interactive content presented. Likewise, with the messages delivered in interactive content. Especially on Instagram social media which is has many features to be used as interactive media with consumers. From the interactive content that is presented, it can attract potential consumers to buy the product, which showed in the Figure 14.



**Figure 14.** Interactive Quiz and Interaction through Comments on Instagram Account @quranalqosbah

The implementation of interactive marketing has an impact on potential consumers to be interested in buying the Al Quran Personal Qustomize or just interacting related to Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia products. Through interactive marketing activities, consumer or consumer can will contact the Call Center or ask questions, and interact more related products from Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia including the Al Quran Personal Qustomize by providing comments on official Instagram @quranalqosbah.

## 5. Discussion

In implementing the marketing communication strategy, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia maximizes the online platforms. The trend of online marketing communication during the pandemic has become an option for various companies in marketing their products. Agung Laksamana observed that the trend of marketing communication during the Covid-19 pandemic, many companies were more active on online platforms [18].

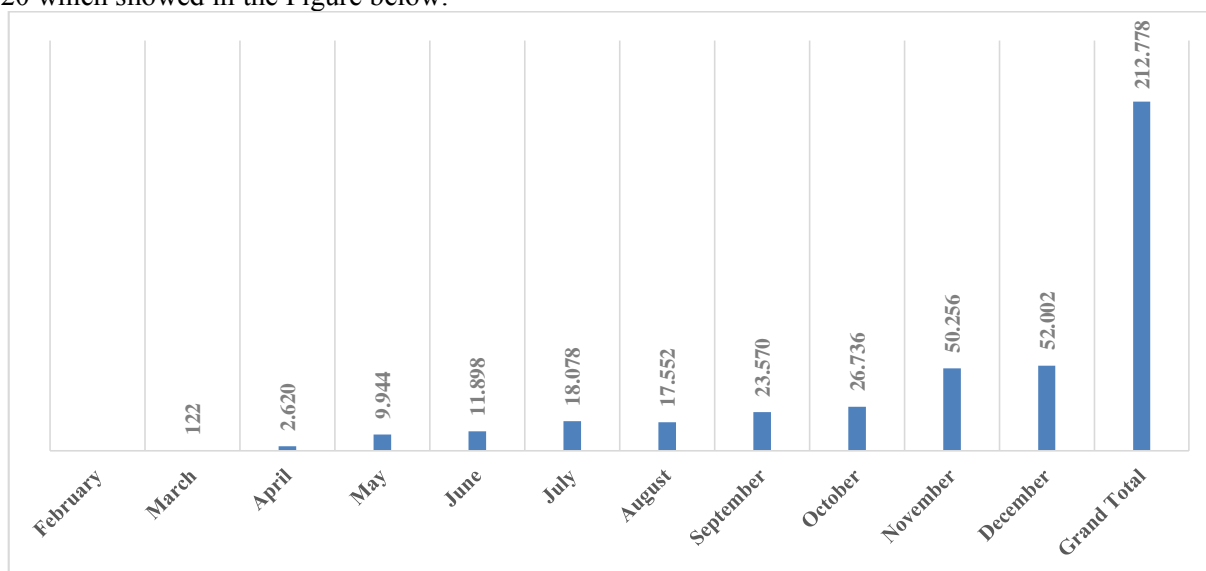
CNET research showed that 58% of mobile phone users find it difficult to leave their devices even for 1 hour. This means that the strategic role of marketing communications is needed to create more digital content. In addition, consumer behavior changes. The trend of consumers shopping online has increased drastically. Even to meet primary needs such as basic food items also through online platforms, the reason is of course, because during the pandemic many people have to work from home and limit their activities out of the house. Consumer behavior in carrying out daily life changes. Work from home, online shopping, is becoming a new behavior because it is much more effective and productive [19].

It can even be said that the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly accelerated the changes we are experiencing. When the pandemic broke out. Technology is no longer an option, but a necessity. All activities must be done online. Based on these changes during the pandemic, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia further maximizes the Al Quran Personal Qustomize marketing communication strategy through the online platforms. But even so, marketing communications through mass media and conventional media are still used because it does not rule out the possibility to get consumers and reach the public who do not use online platforms.

The results showed that the marketing communication strategy used by Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia through the Al Quran Personal Qustomize which consists of advertising, sales promotion, public relations and Publicities, direct marketing, and also interactive marketing, is considered successful in

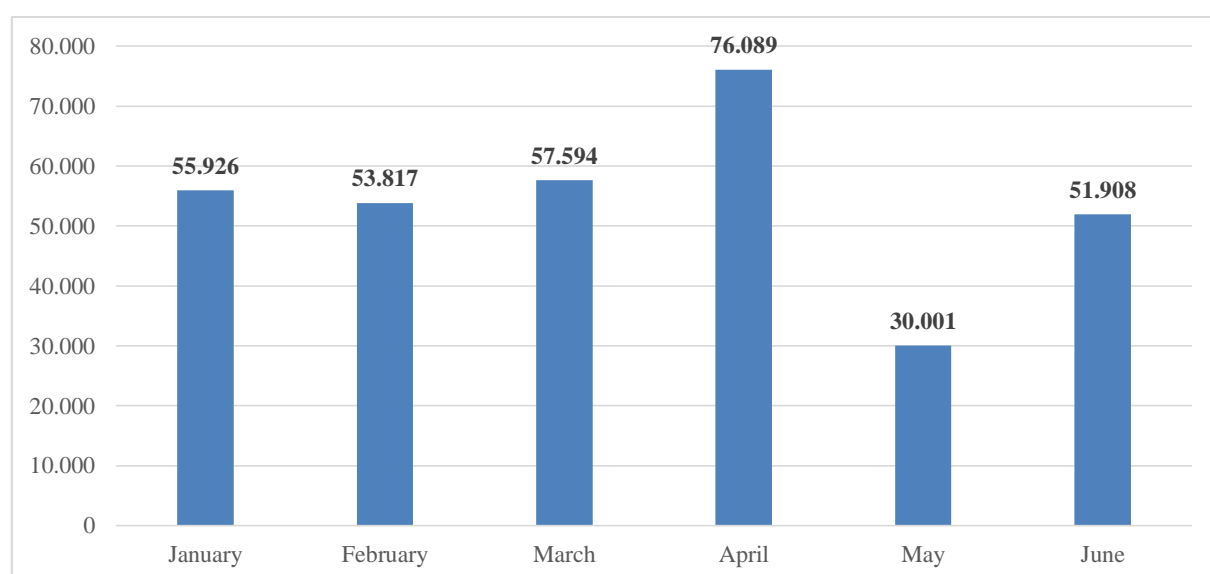


increasing sales in the midst of a crisis due to Covid-19 pandemic. Al Quran Personal Qustomize was released in February 2020, a month later, Covid-19 began to spread to Indonesia. However, based on the sales report of the Al Quran Personal Qustomize, sales increased rapidly from April to December 2020 which showed in the Figure below:



**Figure 15.** Al-Quran Personal Qustomize Sales Chart in 2020

In 2021, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia will still be able to maintain the sale of the Al Quran Personal Qostomize. From January to June 2021, 51,908 copies of the Al Quran Personal Qustomize have been sold. The enhancement of the Al Quran Personal Qustomize is a solution for Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia in surviving the crisis due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia succeeded in making Personal Qostomize Al Quran Products as an innovative solution, this is evidenced by an increase in sales during the Covid-19 Pandemic by 73%. The percentage is calculated from total sales in the last six months in 2020 or July to December 2020 and the first six months in 2021 or January to June 2021 which showed in the Figure below:



**Figure 16.** Al-Quran Personal Qustomize Sales Chart in 2021

With the success of Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia in increasing sales of the Al Quran Personal Qustomize in the midst of the pandemic, the program is considered to have achieved the goal of marketing communication as three stages of change aimed at consumers, namely the stage of knowledge change where consumers know the existence of the product, what for the product was created, and to whom, so the message conveyed showed important information about the product; attitude change stage; and the stage of behavior change, where consumers do not switch to other products, and are accustomed to using them (Soemanagara, 2012).

From the observations of researchers, the Al Quran Personal Qustomize product in addition to generating increased sales during the crisis due to the Covid-19 Pandemic has also become a trend among other Al Quran publishers that follow by making similar products. During the pandemic, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia even added 50 employees to work on the Personal Qustomize Al Quran product. When many other companies, including large companies, held mass layoffs, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia, which is considered a new company, actually managed to increase the company's human resources in the midst of the pandemic.

Although the manufacture of this Al Quran Personal Qustomize product requires more effort because the custom name is done one by one, but through this product, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia managed to get a positive response with many orders during the pandemic. The Al Quran Personal Qustomize product is in great demand by the Indonesian people because it is considered as an innovative Al Quran product that is different from Al Quran products from other companies, in addition to the various advantages offered by this product.

A case study on marketing communication strategies at Al Quran publishers during the Covid-19 Pandemic, in This research Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia through Al Quran Personal Qustomize products, illustrates the importance of marketing communication strategies in a company. Marketing communication is a means used to inform, persuade, and remind consumers, either directly or indirectly, about the products and brands being sold (Firmansyah, 2020).

## 6. Conclusion

Al Quran publishers must be able to produce innovative products as solutions and increase sales during the Covid-19 Pandemic. A case study conducted on Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia as an Al Quran publisher which was newly established in November 2019, which runs a marketing communication strategy through the Al Quran Personal Qustomize product which is a product of customizing consumer names on the cover of the Al Quran. This product is considered successful or achieves its objectives as evidenced by an increase in sales of 73%. The marketing communication strategy used by Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia through the Al Quran Personal Qustomize product consists of advertising, sales promotion, public relations and Publicities, direct marketing, and also interactive marketing aimed not only to the religious segment, but also the Muslim community of Indonesia in general, from young ages to adults by carrying the message "Best Gift for Loved Ones". Besides getting a positive response and increasing sales during the pandemic, the Al Quran Personal Qustomize product has also become a trend among other Al Quran publishers. When many companies went bankrupt, Al-Qosbah Karya Indonesia, as a new company with non-primary products, actually managed to add the company's human resources in the midst of the pandemic.

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