

# The Effectiveness of Using Mandarin Language in Optimizing Business and Marketing Strategies in Indonesia

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## Abstract

The use of Mandarin language is an effective business strategy for marketing local products in the Chinese market. This is particularly relevant considering the presence of numerous foreign companies in Indonesia owned by Chinese investors. When targeting Chinese consumers, the use of Mandarin language becomes essential in conveying information and marketing products. Limited Mandarin language proficiency among marketing personnel can hinder the flow of information from external sources or provide information to customers. Therefore, a good understanding and proficiency in the Mandarin language become key factors in optimizing business and marketing strategies. This research employs a literature study method with the aim of understanding the role and influence of Mandarin language usage in optimizing business and marketing strategies. The population of this research includes individuals working in the business environment, particularly employees who utilize Mandarin language in their work.

## Keywords

Mandarin Language; Optimizing; Strategy; Business; Marketing

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## INTRODUCTION

As a developing country, Indonesia continuously enhances its cooperation with foreign countries in various fields, especially in trade and investment, to improve the welfare of its society. (Lemana, 2017) explain that the current economic situation in the era of globalization has intensified business competition in both domestic and global markets. They further state that consumers' purchasing power is becoming limited, consumers are more critical in their buying decisions, and consumers have numerous alterna-

tives to fulfill their needs. Thus, companies are required to formulate and create appropriate competitive strategies to surpass their competitors. Indonesia has seen the establishment of many foreign companies, which provide several benefits to the Indonesian society, including job opportunities and reduced imports as these goods can be produced in Indonesia. However, a company must continuously maintain and improve its quality to compete with other companies (Assauri Sofjan, 2010).

(Basu Swastha Dharmmesta, 2014) states that the success of a company in achieving its business goals depends on its ability to carry out marketing functions as a crucial department directly related to consumers. According to (Basu Swastha Dharmmesta, 2014), marketing is more than just a department within a company; it requires an orderly and insightful process for market planning. The marketing department is one of the key divisions within a company. In this division, companies must innovate to introduce products and stay competitive in the increasingly tight business competition.

To market domestic products abroad or introduce foreign products for domestic use, global communication tools are needed among companies, and Mandarin language is one of them (Sutami, 2003). The use of Mandarin language cannot be overlooked, as it is currently a global language used in the business field. As known, the use of Mandarin language as a global communication tool has become prevalent in Indonesia to communicate with foreign countries, especially China. Moreover, many Chinese investors have opened Chinese companies in Indonesia, making Mandarin language proficiency one of the qualifications required for working as marketing personnel in these companies (Tjahjadi, n.d.).

It is well known that companies not only compete in the domestic market but also internationally in the global market. For instance, when conducting business such as marketing a product through presentations or advertisements, if the targeted customers are not Indonesians but Chinese, the information is generally conveyed in Mandarin language. This is because many foreign companies in Indonesia are owned by Chinese investors. Similarly, if the products to be marketed are from China, a good Mandarin language proficiency is necessary to accurately and precisely receive information about the products. Therefore, several problems may arise if marketing personnel do not possess sufficient Mandarin language skills, leading to obstacles in receiving information from external sources or providing information to customers. (Natadjaja, 2012) noted the numerous challenges that arise when marketing products to markets different

from the country where the products are made. (Natadjaja, 2012) emphasized the need to study all aspects of a situation and link packaging with the product, company, relevant market, and the company's or brand's image. The effectiveness of using Mandarin language is thus considered as a business strategy to market local products in the Chinese market. Referring to the background of the problem outlined above, the problem can be formulated as follows: 1. What is the role of using Mandarin language in optimizing business and marketing strategies? 2. What is the influence of using Mandarin language on the efforts to optimize business and marketing strategies?

The passage highlights the importance of cooperation with foreign countries, particularly in trade and investment, for the development of Indonesia as a developing nation. It mentions that in the era of globalization, businesses face intensified competition both domestically and globally. Consumers have limited purchasing power, are more critical in their buying decisions, and have many alternatives to fulfill their needs. Consequently, companies must formulate effective competitive strategies to outperform their competitors.

The establishment of foreign companies in Indonesia brings benefits such as job opportunities and reduced imports, as goods can be produced locally. However, to compete with other companies, a company must continuously maintain and improve its quality.

The passage also emphasizes the significance of marketing in achieving a company's business goals. Marketing functions play a crucial role in connecting with consumers and require a systematic and insightful process for market planning. The marketing department is vital for innovation and introducing products to remain competitive in the tight business environment.

Global communication tools are essential for marketing domestic products abroad or introducing foreign products to the domestic market. Mandarin language proficiency is highlighted as a valuable skill due to its prevalence in global business communication, particularly with China. Many Chinese investors have opened companies in Indonesia, making Mandarin language proficiency a requirement for marketing personnel in these companies.

When targeting Chinese customers or marketing products from China, effective Mandarin language skills are necessary to accurately convey and receive information. Insufficient language proficiency can pose obstacles

in obtaining information from external sources or providing information to customers.

The passage also mentions the challenges of marketing products in foreign markets and the need to study various aspects of the situation, including packaging, product-market relevance, and brand image. Using Mandarin language effectively is considered a business strategy to market local products in the Chinese market.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The type of research conducted is literature study. (Kartiningsih, 2015) research, defines literature study as a series of activities related to collecting literature data, reading and taking notes, as well as managing research materials. (Kartiningsih, 2015) further adds that literature study is conducted by researchers with the main objective of finding a foundation to obtain and build theoretical foundations, frameworks of thinking, and preliminary assumptions, also known as research hypotheses. Thus, researchers can group, allocate, organize, and utilize various literature sources in their field. The population in this research includes individuals working in the business environment, including employees who use Mandarin language (Sugiono, 2016).

In the research conducted, the methodology employed is a literature study. A literature study involves a systematic examination and analysis of existing literature on a specific topic. The process typically includes collecting relevant literature data, reading and taking notes on the content, and managing research materials.

The main objective of a literature study, as described by Kartiningsih (2015), is to establish a foundation for researchers to acquire and develop theoretical frameworks, modes of thinking, and preliminary assumptions, which are often referred to as research hypotheses. Through a literature study, researchers can identify, group, allocate, organize, and utilize various literature sources within their field of study.

In the context of this research, the population being targeted comprises individuals who work in the business environment and specifically those who use the Mandarin language. These individuals can include employees, professionals, or any relevant stakeholders involved in business activities. The inclusion of Mandarin language users suggests that the research may focus on exploring aspects related to the use of Mandarin in the business context, such as communication, cultural factors, or language proficiency among employees.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Business Communication**

The objectives of conducting business communication, as stated by (Cangara, 2014), are as follows:

- a) Providing information: The purpose of business communication is to provide information that is related to the business world to other parties.
- b) Persuasion: Another objective of business communication is to persuade other parties so that the information conveyed can be understood effectively. Persuasion is a type of communication used by individuals to influence and convince others. Through persuasion, individuals try to influence the beliefs and expectations of others.
- c) Collaboration: The goal of business communication is to foster collaboration, also known as business cooperation, between individuals. Through effective communication in business, working relationships can thrive and flourish.
- d) Building relationships: Business communication aims to build and maintain positive relationships with various stakeholders, including customers, clients, suppliers, employees, and other business partners. Strong relationships are essential for the success of any business.
- e) Problem-solving: Effective business communication facilitates problem-solving by exchanging ideas, sharing feedback, and seeking solutions to challenges or issues faced by the organization. It helps in identifying and resolving conflicts, making informed decisions, and implementing strategies to overcome obstacles.
- f) Enhancing organizational culture: Business communication plays a crucial role in shaping and reinforcing the organizational culture. It involves communicating the values, mission, and vision of the company, fostering a shared understanding among employees, and promoting a sense of belonging and commitment.
- g) Promoting innovation and creativity: Business communication encourages the exchange of ideas, perspectives, and suggestions, which can lead to innovation and creativity within the organization. It provides a platform for employees to share their insights, propose new initiatives, and contribute to continuous improvement.
- h) Managing and disseminating information: Business communication involves managing and disseminating information within the organization. It ensures that relevant information flows smoothly, accurately, and timely to the intended recipients. This includes internal communication within departments, teams, and levels of hierarchy, as well as external communication with stakeholders outside the organization.

- i) Building and managing the brand image: Business communication helps in building and managing the brand image and reputation of the organization. It involves creating consistent and impactful messaging, maintaining a positive public image, and engaging in effective marketing and promotional activities.
- j) Facilitating decision-making: Effective business communication provides the necessary information and insights to support decision-making processes. It ensures that relevant data, analysis, and recommendations are communicated clearly, enabling stakeholders to make informed decisions that align with the organization's goals and objectives.
- k) Adapting to change: Business communication helps organizations adapt to changing market conditions, customer preferences, technological advancements, and other external factors. It facilitates the communication of change initiatives, manages resistance, and promotes a smooth transition during times of organizational change.
- l) Ensuring legal and ethical compliance: Business communication plays a role in ensuring that all communication activities comply with legal and ethical standards. It includes communicating policies, procedures, and guidelines, promoting transparency and accountability, and addressing any ethical concerns or misconduct within the organization.

### **The Role of Using Mandarin in Optimizing Business and Marketing Strategies**

The need for Mandarin language skills in the working world indicates a high demand for Mandarin-speaking workforce. Currently, there is a significant requirement for Mandarin-speaking employees, especially in the form of oral communication within the business field (Munadzdofah, 2018). While proficiency in Mandarin for import-export purposes is also important, it is not yet a fundamental requirement. Therefore, at present, proficiency in business-related communication skills is more important than Mandarin proficiency in import-export activities. The ability to communicate in Mandarin is highly sought after by foreign companies in Indonesia, particularly in the areas of business and daily oral communication. Furthermore, it can be concluded that oral communication skills are more crucial than written communication skills (Effendy, 2011).

Communicating in Mandarin is essential in the process of international management. According to (Philip R Cateora & John L Graham, 2007), their examination of the role of foreign language proficiency in international marketing demonstrates the importance of language as a key factor in "bringing closer" the market. With the increasing number of professional businessmen and major investors operating globally from the bamboo

curtain country, knowledge of Mandarin's success as a lingua franca has become a vital element in overall business knowledge.

The role of Mandarin is indispensable for competing in the era of globalization. Knowledge of Mandarin is becoming an unavoidable aspect of personal development in Indonesia (Handayani, 2013). Whether one likes it or not, this subject becomes something that needs to be learned by every Indonesian. Undoubtedly, we learn Mandarin for specific purposes, one of which is for business objectives. Many people study Mandarin because they know exactly the benefits they will gain from learning the language.

The use of Mandarin language can play a significant role in optimizing business and marketing strategies. The roles of Mandarin in this context are as follows:

- a) Access to a large market: Mandarin is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, especially in China and related regions such as Singapore, Taiwan, and Malaysia (Ivan Taniputra, 2016). By mastering Mandarin, companies can directly communicate with potential consumers in this vast market, opening new opportunities for business growth and increased sales (Fandy Tjiptono, 2014).
- b) Building strong business relationships: Chinese business culture highly values good personal relationships in partnership and business transactions. Using Mandarin allows you to interact directly with Chinese business partners, building trust and strengthening relationships more effectively. It can also aid in contract negotiations, project management, and obtaining more accurate information.
- c) Understanding consumer preferences: Using Mandarin in marketing and business strategies enables companies to better understand the preferences and needs of Chinese consumers. By directly communicating in their language, companies can gain deeper insights into consumer trends, preferences, and behaviors, allowing them to adjust their products or services more effectively.
- d) Penetrating the Chinese digital market: China has a highly advanced and unique digital ecosystem, with platforms such as WeChat, Tmall, and JD.com dominating the market. To optimize marketing strategies in China, it is important to understand and use Mandarin to communicate with local users, market products or services, and leverage available digital marketing channels.
- e) Strengthening the company's brand and image: Using Mandarin in business and marketing strategies can also help companies strengthen their brand and image in the Chinese market. The use of

appropriate language and adaptation to the local culture will make the company appear more authentic and demonstrate their commitment to the market. This can assist in building brand awareness, consumer trust, and customer loyalty.

The use of Mandarin in efforts to optimize business and marketing strategies allows companies to tap into a vast market potential, build strong business relationships, understand consumer preferences, enter the Chinese digital market, and strengthen their brand. By mastering Mandarin, companies can enhance their chances of success in the Chinese market and related regions.

### **The Influence of Mandarin Language Usage on Business and Marketing Strategy Optimization**

The influence of Mandarin language usage on business and marketing strategy optimization can be significant in the context of businesses operating in the Chinese market or dealing with Chinese clients. Here are some important points to consider:

- a) Access to the Chinese market: Mandarin is the official language of China and is used by the majority of the population in the country. By using Mandarin language in business and marketing strategies, companies can expand their access to the Chinese market and communicate directly with potential customers. This enables companies to better understand the needs and preferences of the market.
- b) Gaining trust and building relationships: In Chinese culture, the use of Mandarin language is considered a sign of respect and care for business partners or customers. By speaking Mandarin, companies can gain the trust of customers and build better relationships. This can strengthen the company's brand image and enhance customer loyalty.
- c) Effective communication: Language is a primary tool in business communication. By mastering Mandarin language, companies can communicate more effectively with Chinese business partners, clients, and suppliers. The use of appropriate language can prevent misunderstandings and improve collaboration between various parties.
- d) Understanding local culture and customs: Mandarin language is not just about words, but also reflects Chinese culture and social norms. By learning Mandarin language, companies will also gain a better understanding of Chinese culture, business ethics, and local



customs. This can help companies in designing business and marketing strategies that are suitable for the Chinese market.

- e) **Competitive advantage:** In the increasingly competitive global market, the ability to speak Mandarin language can be a competitive advantage for companies. Using Mandarin language in business communication can differentiate the company from competitors who do not master the language. This can open up new opportunities, expand business networks, and increase chances of success in the Chinese market. It is important to remember that the use of Mandarin language is just one aspect of a successful business and marketing strategy in the Chinese market. Companies also need to consider other aspects such as product or service adaptation, understanding local regulations, and building strong relationships with business partners and customers in China. In addition to Mandarin language usage, there are several other important aspects to consider in business and marketing strategies in the Chinese market. Here are some things to consider:

1. **Product or service adaptation:** The Chinese market has its own uniqueness, including consumer preferences, buying habits, and market trends. Companies need to adapt their products or services to meet the needs and tastes of the Chinese market. Combining local cultural understanding with relevant product or service innovation will help enhance the company's appeal in that market.
2. **Understanding local regulations:** China has unique business regulations and policies. It is important for companies to have a good understanding of local regulations related to business licenses, import and export regulations, brand protection, and tax policies. Violating regulations can have a negative impact on the company's reputation and hinder business growth. Mastering Mandarin language can also help companies understand and comply with applicable regulations.
3. **Building strong relationships:** Chinese business culture emphasizes strong interpersonal relationships. It is important to build mutually beneficial relationships with business partners and customers in China. This involves efforts in establishing effective communication, respecting Chinese business customs and ethics, and understanding cultural values that are important

to local business partners. Using Mandarin language can help in building better relationships and enhancing collaboration.

4. Leveraging Chinese digital platforms: China has a highly advanced digital ecosystem, with platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, and Alipay dominating the daily lives of the people. Using Mandarin language allows companies to effectively leverage these platforms in marketing efforts, promotions, and interactions with customers. Adapting digital strategies to local preferences and trends can help companies achieve greater success in the Chinese market.

By considering these aspects, the use of Mandarin language in business and marketing strategies can become a crucial element in achieving success in the Chinese market. However, it is important to remember that language is only a communication tool, and business success in China also depends on a deep understanding of the market, product or service adaptation, regulatory compliance, and building strong relationships with business partners and customers.

## **CONCLUSION**

The use of Mandarin language in optimizing business and marketing strategies plays an important and significant role. Some of the roles of Mandarin language in this context include accessing a large market, building strong business relationships, understanding consumer preferences, penetrating the Chinese digital market, and strengthening the company's brand. By mastering Mandarin, companies can leverage the vast market potential, communicate effectively with Chinese business partners and consumers, and gain deeper insights into the culture and local market.

The use of Mandarin language also has a significant impact on the efforts to optimize business and marketing strategies in the Chinese market. This can be seen from the expanded access to the Chinese market, the ability to build strong relationships, more effective communication, better understanding of local culture and customs, and the resulting competitive advantage.

However, it is also important to consider other aspects in business and marketing strategies in the Chinese market, such as adjusting products or services to market needs, understanding local regulations, and building strong relationships with business partners and customers. Mandarin language is just one element of a more comprehensive strategy to achieve success in the Chinese market.

To harness the vast potential of the Chinese market, companies need to consider the use of Mandarin language as one of the factors that can enhance the success of their business and marketing strategies in that market.

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