



## South Sulawesi Astra Motor Dealer Marketing Communication Strategy in Building Honda's Brand Image through Sport Sponsorship

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research is to determine the marketing communication strategy of the South Sulawesi Astra Motor Dealer in Building the Honda Brand Image in South Sulawesi through the Makassar PSM Club. This research uses descriptive qualitative using Marketing Mix 7 P. The data collection technique used is observation, face-to-face interviews, and documentation. The results of the research show that the Marketing Communication Strategy of the South Sulawesi Astra Motor Dealer in Building Honda's Brand Image in South Sulawesi through the Makassar PSM Club. The Astra Motor South Sulawesi Marketing Communication Strategy in building Honda's Brand Image through a partnership with PSM Makassar succeeded in increasing the image and sales of the product. Through a 7P marketing mix approach which includes product, price, place, promotion, people, process and physical evidence, Astra Motor utilizes PSM's strong support base to create positive associations with the Honda brand.

## Introduction

The increasing development of the automotive industry has led to the rapid growth of the two-wheeled vehicle (motorbike) industry in Indonesia. People's mobility is increasing day by day, requiring them to have private vehicles, therefore automotive companies offer various types of motorbike variants in various categories according to consumer needs. In contrast to public transportation, most people prefer to use private transportation, especially motorbikes, to support their daily activities. Various motorbike manufacturers are competing to create types and variants of motorbikes to meet people's needs for transportation (Suchanek et al., 2021; Sumbawati & Cahyani, 2023). Currently, Honda through Astra Honda Motor still controls the motorbike market share due to the many motorbike manufacturers that have emerged such as Yamaha, Suzuki, Kawasaki, TVS and so on. Quoted from Kompas.id, Astra Honda Motor confirmed its share of the national motorbike market with a significant increase in sales of new units throughout the first quarter of 2023. General Manager of Corporate Communication for Astra Honda Motor (AHM) Ahmadn Muhibbudin, said that 1,435,685 units of Honda motorbikes were sold throughout January–March 2023. This figure grew 50.82 percent compared to the same period last year. This sales achievement is 78.7 percent of national motorbike sales recorded by the Indonesian Motorcycle Industry Association (AISI), namely 1,824,073 units.

In South Sulawesi, Astra Honda Motor has partner Astra Motor South Sulawesi as the main Honda dealer for the South Sulawesi, BarTra and Ambon regions. Main dealer is a business entity appointed by the Brand Holder's Sole Agent (ATPM), in this case Astra Honda Motor, to distribute and market products to each dealer's area. Quoted from Astramotor.co.id, Astra Motor opened a representative office for the South, West, Southeast and Ambon Sulawesi regions in August 1991, which is currently called Astra Motor South Sulawesi. Has a vision to

become the Honda motorbike retailer of choice by providing solutions that exceed consumer expectations, and with a mission to provide added value for stakeholders (Apriko, 2021; Meliza & Lubis, 2022). And become a company that has social responsibility and is environmentally friendly. Astra Motor South Sulawesi runs its business using various marketing methods. One thing that is different from competitors is the joining of Astra Motor South Sulawesi to become the main sponsor of the PSM Makassar football club. Most recently, quoted from [jpn.com](http://jpn.com) Astra Motor continues its collaboration with PSM Makassar for the 2023-2024 season. This was conveyed by the Head Astra Motor South Sulawesi region Thamsir Sutrisno, "After achieving glory last season, Honda Jagoanku and PSM Makassar remain of one heart and one spirit. We want to return to being proud, achieving glory and becoming number one in Indonesia," said Thamsir. It is known from Instagram [@hondajagoanku](https://www.instagram.com/hondajagoanku) and [@psm\\_makassar](https://www.instagram.com/psm_makassar) that Honda's support through Astra Motor South Sulawesi for PSM Makassar began in 2018. From year to year, this support is getting bigger. Evidently, in 2021 Honda Jagoanku will become the main sponsor of the club nicknamed Juku Eja. Thamsir said that in the 2023/2024 season, not only the Honda logo will be stuck on the front of the PSM jersey, but also the Astra Motor logo. Astra Motor South Sulawesi Marketing Manager Kresna Murti explained that his collaboration with PSM Makassar is not only limited to sponsorship, but will also carry out various other activities with PSM fans in the 2023/2024 season. Kresna said that Honda Jagoanku and PSM Makassar have the same determination, namely wanting to be the champion of the Makassar community. "Because of that, we always want to fully support the Juku Eja squad in going through every match and achieving the highest achievements in the 2023/2024 season," he said. With this collaboration, Astra Motor often carries out marketing activities, one of which is presenting exclusive Honda motorbike products with special and limited edition PSM livery for several types of motorbikes. Creative designs adorn Honda motorbikes displaying the characteristics of PSM Makassar.

It is known that marketing is a social process in which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want by creating, offering and freely exchanging valuable products with other parties (Saktiendi et al., 2022; Sholihin et al., 2021). Marketers will interact a lot with the public, even though companies have determined segmentation and chosen target markets that suit their products, it cannot be denied that the target public has different characteristics in interpreting the messages conveyed by marketers. For this reason, marketing activities must be supported by an effective communication process (Dahlen et al., 2009; Kitchen & Burgmann, 2010). Thus, communication is an important aspect of the marketing mission and determines the success of marketing. Communication and marketing are essentially things that cannot be separated. Without effective communication, marketing activities will not run well. The relationship between marketing and communications is a close relationship (Martin et al., 2020; Šerić et al., 2020). Communication is the process of conveying messages, both verbal and nonverbal, which are interpreted equally between individual to individual, individual to group, group to group and group to mass (Susmita et al., 2022; Adin & Izzati, 2023). The combination of two studies, namely communication and marketing, produces a new "study" namely marketing communication (Soemanagara, 2008). So according to Pour et al. (2013) the marketing mix is "a series of marketing tools (marketing mix) used by a company to achieve company goals in the target market".

Therefore, marketing activities require an effective communication process so that the messages conveyed by companies or individuals carrying out marketing activities can be well received by potential consumers (Keke, 2022; Silviani & Darus, 2021). Based on the background above, it turns out that there are many marketing communication strategies carried out by Astra Motor South Sulawesi to always be able to meet the company's targets, so the

author feels the need to research more deeply into how the Marketing Communication Strategy of Astra Motor South Sulawesi through the PSM Makassar Club Sponsorship is Increasing the Brand. Image of Honda in South Sulawesi. and South Sulawesi, such as South Sulawesi batik patterns, the Tongkonan Traditional House, butterflies as a characteristic of Bantimurung Maros, Losari Beach, and also of course the PSM attribute attached to the motorbike. Astra Motor South Sulawesi wants to make this motorbike a proof of the greater love and pride that the people of Makassar City have, especially PSM Makassar fans, as well as consumers' impression and confidence in the Astra Honda Motor brand image. Brand image is a series of associations that consumers have in mind towards a brand, usually organized into a meaning. The relationship to a brand will be stronger if it is based on experience and getting a lot of information. Consumers more often buy products from well-known brands, because they feel comfortable with familiar things, assuming that well-known brands are more reliable, always available, easy to find, and have undoubted quality, so more well-known brands consumers choose more often than unfamiliar brands (Faidha, 2023; Djakasaputra et al., 2020; Basuki, 2018).

Sponsorship is a promotional tool for companies to establish cooperative relationships where the company sponsors an event such as sports and music entertainment (Haque-Fawzi et al., 2022). The purpose of sponsorship is to provide information and get to know the company and the company's products better. One of the companies that uses sponsorship activities is Astra Motor. The event held by Astra Honda Motor is one of the dimensions of marketing. In the last ten years, there has been an increase in sponsorship in popular sporting activities such as Indonesian League football matches by establishing sponsorship collaborations with Bank BRI, Badminton activities with PT. Djarum, as well as the Honda Developmental Basketball League basketball match with sponsor Astra Honda Motor. These activities are able to attract the attention of billions of general audiences globally. Sponsorship in these activities has the potential to generate marketing benefits for the sponsoring company and is certainly a more promising method in terms of awareness (Koronios et al., 2022; Dolores et al., 2021; Chadwick et al., 2022). According to Cretu & Brodie (2007) Brand image is a set of consumer beliefs about a particular brand. Brand Image is important and a top priority for business owners. Because consumers will use it as a reference before making a purchase. A good or positive brand image is one that can provide added value to consumers. If a brand has a bad image, it will indirectly impact consumers and it is likely that consumers will not be interested in making a purchase. So in this case companies are required to carry out good and correct strategies so that they can attract the attention of consumers and not be less competitive with other business actors.

## Methods

This research uses descriptive, qualitative research because this is the most suitable approach when exploring the complexities of marketing communication in real-life situations. The use of qualitative method was adopted, as it would enable the gain of a rich understanding of how through partnership with PSM Makassar, Astra Motor South Sulawesi shapes brand image of Honda in the region. By collecting data qualitatively this work ensures that it gets to hear from the horse's mouth and in the process, identifies the meanings behind the visible strategy patterns. A case study, or "single-site, single-method" approach, was taken whereby the relationships between the bounded case, Astra Motor and PSM Makassar, can be fully explored in depth. This framework is very helpful while studying phenomenon in its natural environment since it enables a detailed analysis of the particular marketing strategies and their performances in a certain territory. Because the methodology concentrates on one case, it can examine the

nature and development of the sponsorship relationship as it contributes to the improvement of Honda's brand in South Sulawesi.

This study took place in Astra Motor South Sulawesi located at Jl. Sultan Alauddin No. 57; Mangasa District, Tamalate, Makassar City South Sulawesi. The place was selected purposefully because that is the headquarters of Astra Motor and close to PSM Makassar, the soccer team focuses in this research. The study was conducted continuously for a period of two years, starting from July 2021 to August 2023, enabling understanding of developmental changes in the marketing campaigns undertaken by Astra Motor. It also gave the researcher adequate time to analyze different campaigns and the impact the sponsorship has made in executing their brand-building strategies.

### **Research Participants**

In this research, purposive sampling was used to choose the research participants, with preference for those who had a direct role in the marketing communication strategy or directly impacted by it. For the study, the target subjects consisted of marketing managers/ executives of PT Astra Motor South Sulawesi, officials /staff of PT PSM Makassar, and PSM fan group. Specifically, the selection of these participants was essential as they worked closely with sponsorship and marketing. Their inputs were very much helpful in comprehending the operating mechanisms of the partnership and how it works for Honda and the PSM Makassar fans. Moreover, the other strategies like the use of social networks and other forms of marketing communication were also recorded by third party marketers to get external feedback from the marketing analysts. Altogether, 15 key stakeholders participated in this study: has five from Astra Motor as the official member, five from PSM Makassar as the official member, and five from the supporter.” This sample size was selected to get a diverse response while at the same time keeping it small enough to enable content analysis to be done on the responses obtained.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

Data were collected using three complementary techniques: The three research methods which were adopted in the study were direct observation, semi structured interviews and content analysis. The researcher directly observed and interacted with various events which included PSM Makassar football matches, motorbike exhibitions and road shows. All these factors were significant in the picture since these were the scenes when Astra Motor's marketing plans came into action. They sought to capture the extent of brand exposure; the reactions of PSM supporters as well as the response of the audience to the brand. Observations were made during these events to capture both verbal and non-verbal responses of the target audience regarding the marketing campaigns implemented thus providing pioneers' data source. The interviews were semi-structured and 15 participants were interviewed. This format enabled the researcher to delve deeper on certain aspects as formulated in the objectives and research questions while seeking for general participant-generated qualitative data. I conducted interviews with Astra Motor and the key issues that were explored squared on their marketing goals and their use of PSM Makassar affiliation. In interviews with officials of the PSM the focus was made on the positive impact of the given sponsorship for the club In interviews with fans one could discuss how the given sponsorship changed the perception of Honda among the fans. The transcripts from all the interviews conducted during the study were transcribed and coding for themes was done on them. For document analysis, it was necessary to study internal as well as external documents concerning the marketing strategies. These were marketing reports, social media content, sponsorship documents, press releases among others. This gave further understanding to the strategies used and also helped to double check on the information collected from interviewing and observation.

## Data Analysis

In the context of this study, thematic analysis was used on the data collected, because of it is particularly well suited to large qualitative datasets, where the researcher is interested in comparing and contrasting a large collection of texts. I coded the data collected from the interviews, observations and document reviews according to some generic themes identified with the marketing communication process such as brand exposure, fans' communication, and sponsorship effects. It began with the process of getting an acquaintance with the data where the researcher engulfs himself in a read through the collected data many times. Subsequently, the collected data were meticulously coded and analyzed using priori codes which have been identified in previous literature and post hoc codes which emerged from the current study only. After the programming step, themes were derived from codes through the process of aggregation. For instance, codes that fall under topicals such as jersey codes, event interaction, and promotion through social media were attributed to a more general category labelled 'Building Brand Awareness.' These themes were then reflected on to confirm whether or not they fitted the data and whether or not the themes were mutually exclusive. When the themes were identified, they were labeled and operationalized, and a story was created on how each theme connected to the research questions. In this process due considerations were paid to make sure that the themes reflect on the marketing communication strategies used by Astra Motor and to what extent the organization was instrumental in the branding of the Honda car brand.

## Result and Discussion

### Marketing Communication Strategy for Astra Motor Sulsel in Building Brand Image

Marketing communications strategy is the process of planning and executing ideas, pricing, promotions, and distribution of goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals. Astra Motor South Sulawesi uses various marketing communication theories to strengthen Honda's brand image and increase motorbike sales in the region. The Hierarchy of Effects Model proposes that consumers go through a series of stages on their journey from product awareness to purchase. Astra Motor uses social media and branding on PSM jerseys to increase awareness and interest in the Honda brand. Campaigns such as "My Honda Jagoan, My Jagoan PSM" are designed to develop desire and encourage purchasing action.

Astra Motor South Sulawesi launched various communication campaigns to achieve its goals: 1) The Honda Jagoanku campaign, PSM Jagoanku, uses a slogan that is easy to remember and links Honda with PSM. 2) Special Event Campaign, holding activities such as touring and exhibitions with PSM players to attract attention and increase consumer involvement. 3) Using interesting content on social media to increase interaction with PSM fans and attract the attention of potential consumers. In its implementation, Astra Motor uses a 7P marketing mix approach which includes Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process and Physical Evidence.

### Product

Communication is the basis for the process of conveying messages from the communicator to the communicant. If the communication process takes place without obstacles, then the results of the communication carried out can be said to be successful. According to Duncan & Moriarty (1998), communication is an important process in marketing activities. Communication is the process by which thoughts and understanding are conveyed between individuals, or between organizations and individuals. One form of partnership built between Astra Motor and PSM is

branding on PSM jerseys. Kresna Murti Marketing Manager of Astra Motor South Sulawesi said:

*"The PSM jersey, this has the Honda logo on it. And last year, the name Astra Motor was also on it," (interview on August 1 2024).*

According to Kotler et al. (2015) "Product as anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption and that might satisfy a want or need" (Kotler et al., 2015). A product is anything that a producer can offer for attention, request, search, purchase, use or consumption by the market to fulfill the needs or desires of the relevant market, whether in the form of goods or services. Apart from that, Astra Motor is also active in various collaborative activities with PSM, such as social media activities and roadshows to schools involving PSM players to provide testimonials and motivation to students. PSM Makassar's marketing manager, also said the same thing, according to him PSM Makassar also received significant financial support from Honda, which helped the club face various operational challenges. Apart from that, sales of PSM Makassar jerseys have increased sharply since the collaboration with Honda, with the number of jerseys sold reaching 18,000 units.

*"The last 2 years were booming when we won. Before winning, there was a new surge, which means jerseys were sold for up to IDR 18,000. Rp. 18,000 jersey. IDR 18,000 for that jersey that was sold. And besides that, there are also other equipment. For example, there are clothes that cost Rp. 108,000 or the champion ones that are still plain and are also sold. But if that jersey is now Rp. 18,000, how much is it? Not up to Rp. 19,000, but Rp. 18,000 or so. IDR 18,000 does that mean our supporters' purchasing power is good or what, sir? So that's what surprised me. Yes, this is the season," (interview 02 August 2024).*

In an effort to support Honda's marketing targets, PSM Makassar adopted various strategies.

*"We try to follow what Honda programs are, such as no-bar and roadshows to schools," (interview 02 August 2024)*

PSM Makassar also maximizes digital and grassroots activities to increase visibility and engagement with fans.

*"Untuk menyedot masa karena kita kondisinya mungkin pemain tidak di area kita atau in our environment, yes. Yes, finally what can be done is yes, sir, grassroots activity, no-bar, then roadshows, to schools, then follow Honda's programs, yes. As a brand ambassador, it means yes, in that language, yes, sir, we try to follow what Honda's programs are, although I apologize that some things have not all been fulfilled. Yes, in essence, it means that PSM continues to try to be an ambassador or role model for Honda at all times, yes, sir, like earlier, for example, Honda was having a trading activity, PSM participated, then including grassroots activities, no-bar, as one of them also facilitates supporters that this is a no-bar organized by PSM and Honda," (interview, August 2, 2024).*

Meanwhile, PSM Laskar Ayam Jantan Supporter Chairman Uki Nugraha said that the product offered by Honda, namely motorbikes, has succeeded in attracting the attention of PSM supporters. This can be seen from the enthusiasm of the supporters in following the programs organized by Honda..

*"After Honda has been around for the past 3 years, even in difficult times, PSM still has Honda. Sorry, Honda still exists. We know how we didn't have a stadium. Until financial problems almost relegated, but now we know we are playing outside in*

*Balikpapan, so automatically there is something missing from here. There is something missing for Honda itself, but thank God Honda. And besides our support, there were Honda programs yesterday while in Pare-Pare, apparently there were free tickets for Honda users to be drawn. This is very, very extraordinary, you know, in other cities, the sponsors on the shirts," (interview August 4, 2024).*

### **Price**

Determining the promotional media to be used is based on the type and form of the product itself. Promotion can be measured in general through Tjiptono (2005): 1. The level of attractiveness of the advertisement 2. Publicity of competitors. Promotion is one of the variables in the marketing mix which is very important for companies to implement in marketing products or services which aims to increase the number of sales by influencing consumers either directly or indirectly. Astra Motor utilizes the PSM supporter database to increase sales of Honda motorbikes. This was stated by Kresna Murti.

*"Of course we work on supporters, for example we also work on supporter databases. And of course the leads that we use to pull up motorbike completion," (interview 1 August 2024). With an average of around 10,000-20,000 supporters per match, There is huge potential that can be exploited for motorbike sales.*

In line with PSM Makassar Danang's Marketing, even though the price of PSM Makassar jerseys is relatively expensive, they are still in demand by fans.

*"At that price, our jerseys sell very well, we even have to reorder several times," (interview 2 August 2024).*

### **Place**

Marketing Manager of Astra Motor South Sulawesi said that Astra Motor's promotional strategy includes various activities inside and outside the competition.

*"We definitely support the promotion of both ATL and BTL every match. We have exhibitions, roadshows, and of course touring with players," (interview 1 August 2024).*

According to Sutojo (2009) distribution is an effort/effort to make a product available in places that make it easier for consumers to buy it whenever consumers need it. Apart from that, Astra Motor also has programs for loyal customers, especially PSM fanbase members.

*"We have programs for loyal customers, because they are members of PSM's supporters and fanbase," (interview 1 August 2024).*

Marketing PSM Makassar Danang explained that PSM Makassar held the match in a stadium which had a spectator capacity of up to 18,000 people. In addition, merchandise sales are carried out both directly at the stadium and via online channels. The Chairman of PSM Makassar Supporters also conveyed the same thing that Honda utilized strategic locations, such as stadiums and special parking areas, to get closer to PSM supporters.

*"Exhibitions and special parking at the stadium provide enthusiasm and pride for Honda motorbike users," (interview 4 August 2024).*

### **Promotion**

Determining the promotional media to be used is based on the type and form of the product itself. Promotion can be measured in broad terms through Tjiptono (2023): 1. The level of attractiveness of the advertisement 2. Publicity of competitors.

Promotion is one of the variables in the marketing mix which is very important for companies to implement in marketing products or services which aims to increase the number of sales by influencing consumers either directly or indirectly. One of the media used by Astra Motor in its marketing communication strategy is social media. Krishna says:

*"We use social media to collaborate, the first might be from social media. Then we borrow comments to make our social media content," (interview 1 August 2024). Astra Motor also involves PSM players as brand ambassadors. "We use our players to be one of the world's ambassadors us," (interview 1 August 2024).*

The popularity of PSM really supports Honda's brand image in South Sulawesi.

*"In terms of insight, the popularity of PSM can really support improving Honda's image," (interview 1 August 2024).*

Companies must be able to create effective communication with consumers by paying advertising agencies and effective and attractive sales programs to design the company image and educate salespeople well.

### **Process**

According to Kotler & Keller (2006), the process here includes how the company serves the requests of each consumer. Starting from the consumer placing an order until finally they get what they want. Certain companies usually have unique or special ways of serving their customers. What is meant by internal processes Marketing is the entire system that takes place in the implementation and determines the quality of the smooth delivery of services that can provide satisfaction to users. Astra Motor plans to continue to maintain and develop its partnership with PSM, even though the club is experiencing various challenges.

*"Whatever happens at PSM, we can work together to build the partnership that we have had so far," (interview 01 August 2024).*

The loyalty of PSM supporters is an important asset in Astra Motor's marketing strategy in South Sulawesi. In an interview with PSM Makassar marketing officer Danang Hery, the same thing was also conveyed, according to him, the collaboration between PSM Makassar and Honda has been running since 2018 until now.

*"The club needs partners, in the sense of sponsors, and we are very open to many sponsors as long as regulations allow." (interview 2 August 2024).*

Where, this collaboration is very important because sponsors provide significant support for the club. Honda was chosen as the main sponsor because of its consistent loyalty and support for PSM Makassar.

*"We just see that whatever the product is, and as long as we support each other, we're okay with that. Incidentally, so far Honda has been one of the most loyal to PSN. So we always give priority to Honda and up to now we have never offered it to anyone else. Even at that time, Bosowa himself said, Just install it, Bosowa. I also said no need. Bosowa is still a backup, but there's no need for it. Yes And because our communication is intense, then the cooperation is good, though "Frankly, what is called an event in football is sometimes not fixed," (interview with Danang 2 August 2024).*

Honda's loyalty to PSM Makassar is due to good two-way communication and mutual understanding.

*"Understanding and understanding makes us feel very helpful. Sometimes there are changes in the schedule, there are conditions, for example yesterday we moved the stadium. So what is in the contract can sometimes be this, but yes, mutual understanding. So that's what we consider. It really supports us. It doesn't have to be stiff, it doesn't have to be how much. You have to look for a solution together.*

*Yes, one because communication is two-way, yes. The two also have a mutual understanding of PSM's condition. In fact, when PSM used to say, please try to be confident," (interview 02 August 2024)*

Apart from that, the large number of PSM Makassar fans, especially in Eastern Indonesia, is an attractive market potential for Honda.

*"There is quite a lot of fanaticism from fans or supporters and can be a model for the products they use. One, there are those who are football fans. Like in Eastern Indonesia, coincidentally PSM could be said to be the only club that entered League 1 yesterday. "Even though now there will be... From Eastern Indonesia, right? Yes, North Maluku. Now there is Malut. So because we are the only BSM, that's a large number of fans. And then what's the name?" (interview 02 August 2024 ).*

The Head of PSM Makassar Supporters said that the activation process and promotional program run by Honda were well designed so that they were able to reach their target market, namely PSM supporters.

*"Honda continues to support PSM with programs that touch the supporters directly," (interview 04 August 2024).*

With the tagline "Honda is my hero, PSM is my hero," Astra Motor hopes to link PSM's positive image with the Honda brand. The partnership with PSM is considered effective in increasing Honda's brand image and sales.

*"So far, the collaboration with PSM has been good enough to improve our brand image," (interview 01 August 2024).*

The loyalty of PSM supporters is also used to increase empathy and emotional attachment to the Honda brand.

In line with Marketing PSM Makasar Danang, PSM Makassar is actively promoting through social media, no-bar events and roadshows.

*"These programs help increase visibility and engagement with fans and support Honda's marketing targets," (interview 2 August 2024).*

The Head of PSM Makassar Supporters said Honda's promotional strategy was very effective by holding various programs, such as free tickets and special draws.

*"Honda's activation is more relevant to supporters, providing enthusiasm and pride for Honda motorbike users," (interview 04 August 2024).*

## **People**

The collaboration between PSM Makassar and Honda is supported by intense communication and mutual understanding.

*"Understanding and understanding makes us feel very helped," (interview 02 August 2024).*

According to Lindsey-Mullikin & Munger (2011) people are people who have a role in providing or demonstrating the services provided to consumers when purchasing goods. Deng Uki, chairman of PSM Makassar supporters, also conveyed the same thing, according to him, Honda's support for PSM not only touches the team, but also the supporters.

*"Honda is still there even though the team's condition is not good. This provides great moral support for the team and its supporters," (interview 04 August 2024).*

In this research, restaurant employees play an active role in providing service to consumers during purchases. This people factor plays an active role and can have a positive influence on purchasing decisions, as stated by Kotler & Caslione (2009), the more positive the performance given to consumers, the better the impact. in making purchasing decisions.

### ***Physical Events***

According to Iqbal (2020) "supporting facilities are part of service marketing which has quite an important role. Because services delivered to customers often require supporting facilities in delivery." Based on a survey conducted, Honda's brand image in the people of South Sulawesi is quite good.

*"We conducted a survey that the Honda brand could be said to be number one in their minds," (interview 1 August 2024).*

The 2023 survey shows that 67% of people choose Honda, which shows an increase from previous years. Astra Motor launched various campaigns such as "Honda my hero, PSM my hero" to increase consumer engagement and loyalty.

*"With our tagline, Honda is my hero, we will continue to maintain it," (interview 01 August 2024).*

This message consistency is important to form a strong image in the minds of consumers.

In line with what PSM Makassar Marketing said, Honda's visibility in the PSM Makassar jersey and the various events held together are physical proof of this collaboration.

*"Honda is always a priority in every event we hold," (interview 02 August 2024).*

Meanwhile, Head of PSM Makassar Supporters, Uki, said that Honda's physical presence at the stadium through exhibitions and special parking provided clear evidence of their commitment to PSM and its supporters.

*"Exhibitions and special parking at the stadium provide enthusiasm and pride for Honda motorbike users," (interview 04 August 2024).*

### **Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Astra Motor Dealer Marketing Communication Strategy in Building Brand Image**

In establishing cooperation, there are factors that support and hinder the cooperation, namely:

#### ***Supporting Factors***

Astra Motor has collaborated with PSM Makassar, a football club that has a loyal and strong fanbase in South Sulawesi. This support really supports the marketing communications strategy, considering that PSM is a club that local residents are proud of. This collaboration also creates an association between Honda and PSM, which strengthens Honda's brand image in the region.

*"One of the people's pride is in terms of football or PSM, our hope is that in terms of motorball, with PSM it can be an image for the people of South Sulawesi to improve the brand," (interview: Kresna, 1 August 2024).*

Not only that, Astra Motor uses PSM social media to strengthen its brand image, including through content involving PSM players as ambassadors. Social media that has large followers, such as Instagram, is used effectively to reach a wider target market.

*"There's quite a lot from social media, because their fan base is almost how much on IG? 1 million, right? That's quite okay" (interview: Kresna, 1 August 2024).*

Astra Motor actively carries out various activities such as exhibitions, roadshows and touring with PSM players, which not only increase brand awareness, but also encourage direct interaction with the supporter community. This is a strong supporting factor in marketing communication strategies.

*"We have exhibitions, there are roadshows, there are exhibitions. And of course touring with players" (interview: Kresna, 1 August 2024).*

### ***Inhibiting factors***

Even though PSM Makassar has a large supporter base, the internal and external conditions of the club which are not always stable can be an obstacle. When PSM's performance declines, this can affect public perception of the brand associated with the club.

*"Whatever conditions, if we look at before they won, their position at that time was not good" (interview: Kresna, 1 August 2024).*

When a brand has long been associated with a particular element such as PSM, there is resistance or challenges in introducing a new, different campaign or strategy. Replacing the tagline or marketing message requires time to be accepted by the market, and this can be an obstacle in the process of change or innovation.

*"Because forming a community is not as easy as it is for us, it doesn't just take one or two days, right" (interview: Kresna, 1 August 2024).*

Astra Motor South Sulawesi's marketing communications strategy through partnership with PSM Makassar has succeeded in increasing the brand image and sales of Honda motorbikes. An integrated and consistent 7P marketing mix approach, as well as active involvement with the support community, is the key to success in achieving marketing goals. The collaboration between Astra Motor and the PSM Makassar football club, which has been going on for six years, has proven effective in improving Honda's brand image and preference in South Sulawesi. PSM Makassar was chosen as a partner because it is one of the oldest clubs with a loyal and strong supporter base. This collaboration utilizes social media, content involving players as ambassadors, and engagement with PSM supporters to promote Honda motorbikes. This strategy includes various initiatives such as branding on player jerseys, social media activities, roadshows, and campaigns involving PSM players to provide testimonials and their experiences. The survey results show that Honda has succeeded in being top of mind in minds society with a brand image reaching 67% in 2023 and a market share of around 62% in 2024.

Despite facing internal and external challenges at PSM, the loyalty of the club's supporters remains strong, and Astra Motor is committed to maintaining this partnership. Through various marketing activities, Astra Motor hopes to continue to increase sales of Honda motorbikes and strengthen relationships with PSM supporters. Loyalty and support from the PSM fanbase is a key element in Astra Motor's marketing strategy, with the hope of creating a strong association

between PSM and Honda in the minds of the people of South Sulawesi. The collaboration between PSM Makassar and Honda is an example of how the 7P Marketing Mix strategy can be applied to achieve strong synergy between brands and sports clubs. Good communication, loyal support from sponsors, and the use of various promotional media are the keys to the success of this collaboration. The collaboration between the sports club and the Honda motorbike brand is a strategic step that provides great benefits for both parties. According to Danang, this partnership is very important because sports clubs need sponsors who can provide financial and operational support. Honda, as a sponsor, has shown high loyalty to PSM, making it the main partner that is always prioritized.

Two-way communication and mutual understanding are the main keys to the success of this collaboration. Honda not only supports the club financially but is also actively involved in various club activities. This creates a strong and mutually beneficial relationship. Support from Honda also allows PSM to continue to exist and develop despite facing various challenges, such as changes in schedules and stadium conditions. On the other hand, Honda gets great benefits from this collaboration. PSM's popularity and large fan base in Eastern Indonesia provide large market potential for Honda. The fanaticism of football fans often makes them follow what the players or clubs use, including choosing a motorbike brand. Thus, Honda can take advantage of PSM's popularity to expand its market share. Marketing PSM Makassar also explained that PSM tries to maintain good relations with its supporters, who are considered a valuable asset. A strong and well-organized supporters' community provides consistent support for the club. PSM also provides special programs for supporters, such as discounts for purchasing merchandise, which further strengthens the relationship between the club and its supporters. In achieving marketing goals, PSM and Honda work together in various activities, such as no-bar (watching together), roadshows to schools, and other activities that directly involve supporters. This collaboration also includes the use of players as Honda brand ambassadors, which helps increase brand exposure through social media and other activities.

This collaboration is not only limited to activities in the field but also involves broader marketing strategies. For example, Honda is given space to market its products through booths in stadiums, special parking for Honda motorbike riders, and branding on jerseys. All this helps increase the visibility and sales of Honda products. From the PSM side, collaboration with Honda helps the club in many ways, including significant financial support. High operational costs, including player and staff salaries, as well as match fees, can be covered with the help of sponsors. Despite this, challenges remain, such as stadium management and match logistics, but support from Honda helped overcome many of these challenges. Overall, the collaboration between PSM and Honda is a good example of how a solid partnership can provide great benefits for both parties. PSM gains much-needed support for the club's operations and development, while Honda gains access to a large and loyal fan base, potentially increasing sales and popularity of its brand. Good communication, mutual understanding, and the right marketing strategy are the keys to the success of this partnership. Likewise, the Head of PSM Makassar Supporters, Uki, said that the positive influence felt by PSM Makassar on the support from Honda. During the six years of partnership since 2018, Honda has been a loyal sponsor, even in difficult times such as when PSM did not have a stadium and experienced financial problems. Even though PSM had to play outside a city like Balikpapan, Honda still showed its commitment and loyalty. Honda not only provides financial support, but also contributes through various programs that directly touch PSM supporters. Some of these programs include providing free tickets for Honda motorbike users who are raffled off, providing special parking spaces at the stadium, and organizing exhibition activities involving.

*"I am very, very grateful to Honda. Their support means a lot to us," (interview 4 August 2024).*

Thus, the collaboration between Honda and PSM not only provides benefits for both parties, but also strengthens the relationship between the brands and their consumers.

## **Conclusion**

Astra Motor South Sulawesi's marketing communication strategy in building Honda's brand image through a partnership with PSM Makassar succeeded in increasing product image and sales. Through a 7P marketing mix approach which includes product, price, place, promotion, people, process and physical evidence, Astra Motor utilizes PSM's strong support base to create positive associations with the Honda brand. Collaborative activities such as jersey branding, social media activities, roadshows and the use of players as brand ambassadors play an important role in this strategy.

As for the supporting factors, Astra Motor and PSM Makassar have established cooperation, where the football club which has a loyal and strong fanbase in South Sulawesi really supports the marketing communication strategy, considering that PSM is a proud club for the people of South Sulawesi, thereby strengthening Honda's brand image. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factor is that even though PSM Makassar has a large supporter base, the club's internal and external conditions which are not always stable can be an obstacle. PSM supporters. This shows that Honda understands the importance of establishing good relationships with the club's supporting community, not just with the team. PSM supporters really appreciate the innovative steps taken by Honda. In the past, it has been rare for a sponsor to truly touch the lives of supporters the way Honda does. Many social media accounts are now promoting Honda, showing how much influence and appreciation this sponsor has. According to him, support from Honda has increased their self-confidence and pride as club supporters. In addition, the programs held by Honda, such as providing VIP tickets and special parking, have provided a unique and valuable experience for supporters. In this way, he believes that Honda will continue to innovate and find new ways to support PSM and increase promotion of their products. Support from Honda, especially in difficult times, has left a deep impression and infinite gratitude for PSM supporters. Overall, this partnership is considered very valuable and brings great benefits to both parties. Honda has proven itself to be a loyal and dedicated sponsor, while PSM and the supporting community is very grateful for the continued support, even in challenging circumstances. Thus, Honda's marketing communication strategy through collaboration with PSM is very effective in improving their brand image. Consistent support and programs that touch the supporters directly have made Honda closer to PSM fans. Apart from that, merchandise sales, especially jerseys, show the high purchasing power of supporters. In fact, even though the price of the jersey is quite expensive, sales remain high, showing the loyalty and pride of the supporters towards the club. This is also one of the reasons why Honda remains a loyal sponsor of PSM, because its brand visibility is very high among supporters.

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