BRANDING AND DIGITAL PROMOTION STRATEGIES OF STREET COFFEE MSMES TO ENHANCE SALES COMPETITIVENESS: A CASE STUDY IN KOTABUMI, INDONESIA

STRATEGI BRANDING DAN PROMOSI DIGITAL UMKM KOPI KAKI LIMA UNTUK MENINGKATKAN DAYA SAING PENJUALAN: STUDI KASUS DI KOTABUMI, INDONESIA

Muhamad Ilham[1*], Irsandi[2]

[1*]Bandar Lampung University, Email: muhamadilhham@gmail.com
[2]Bandar Lampung University, Email: irsandi@ubl.ac.id

*email koresponden: muhamadilhham@gmail.com

Abstract

The rapid growth of Indonesia's coffee industry has intensified competition among micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), particularly street coffee businesses that rely on simple concepts, affordability, and accessibility. This study aims to analyze branding and digital promotion strategies implemented by street coffee MSMEs in Kotabumi, North Lampung, to enhance sales competitiveness. A qualitative case study approach was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with business owners and employees, direct observation, and documentation of digital promotional activities on social media platforms. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that branding strategies were implemented through brand identity development, including business name, logo, color consistency, booth design, and product differentiation. Digital promotion strategies mainly utilized Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp Business through product photos, coffee-making videos, and promotional content. These strategies positively impacted market reach, customer acquisition, and sales stability. However, several constraints were identified, such as limited resources, inconsistent visual identity, and suboptimal content management. This study concludes that consistent branding and planned digital promotion are essential to strengthening competitiveness and ensuring the sustainability of street coffee MSMEs.

Keywords : branding strategy, digital promotion, street coffee, MSMEs, sales competitiveness.

Abstrak

Pertumbuhan pesat industri kopi Indonesia telah memperketat persaingan di antara usaha mikro, kecil, dan menengah (UMKM), terutama bisnis kopi jalanan yang mengandalkan konsep sederhana, keterjangkauan, dan aksesibilitas. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi branding dan promosi digital yang diterapkan oleh UMKM kopi kaki lima di Kotabumi, Lampung Utara, untuk meningkatkan daya saing penjualan. Pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif digunakan. Data dikumpulkan melalui

wawancara mendalam dengan pemilik bisnis dan karyawan, observasi langsung, serta dokumentasi kegiatan promosi digital di platform media sosial. Data dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman, yang terdiri dari reduksi data, tampilan data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa strategi branding diterapkan melalui pengembangan identitas merek, termasuk nama bisnis, logo, konsistensi warna, desain stan, dan diferensiasi produk. Strategi promosi digital terutama memanfaatkan Instagram, TikTok, dan WhatsApp Business melalui foto produk, video pembuatan kopi, dan konten promosi. Strategi-strategi ini berdampak positif pada jangkauan pasar, akuisisi pelanggan, dan stabilitas penjualan. Namun, beberapa kendala diidentifikasi, seperti sumber daya yang terbatas, identitas visual yang tidak konsisten, dan manajemen konten yang suboptimal. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa branding yang konsisten dan promosi digital yang terencana sangat penting untuk memperkuat daya saing dan memastikan keberlanjutan MSME kopi jalanan.

Kata Kunci : strategi merek, promosi digital, kopi jalanan, UMKM, daya saing penjualan.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian coffee industry has undergone substantial transformation over the past decade, driven by changing consumer lifestyles, urbanization, and the rapid diffusion of digital technology. Coffee consumption is no longer limited to traditional cafés but has expanded into various business formats, including mobile coffee carts and street coffee vendors that offer affordable, fast, and accessible services. This shift has created new opportunities for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), particularly those operating with low capital and flexible business models. Street coffee MSMEs have emerged as a dominant segment in urban and semi-urban areas, serving students, workers, and daily commuters who seek quality coffee at accessible prices.

Despite these opportunities, the rapid growth of the street coffee sector has intensified competition among MSMEs. Businesses are no longer competing solely on price but increasingly on brand identity, customer experience, and digital presence. In this context, branding has become a strategic necessity rather than a luxury for small businesses. Branding enables MSMEs to create differentiation, build emotional connections with customers, and enhance perceived value (Suminar, 2023; Barki, 2024). Without strong branding, street coffee businesses risk being perceived as generic products that are easily replaced by competitors offering similar prices and menus.

In parallel with branding, digital promotion has become an essential tool for MSMEs to survive and grow in the digital economy. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp Business provide cost-effective channels for small businesses to reach wider audiences, engage customers interactively, and communicate brand values in real time. Digital promotion allows MSMEs to overcome geographical limitations and compete with larger café chains by leveraging visual storytelling, user-generated content, and online engagement (Putri & Zed, 2024). However, effective digital promotion requires strategic planning, consistency, and content creativity capabilities that many MSMEs still struggle to develop.

Lampung Province, one of Indonesia's major coffee-producing regions, represents a paradoxical situation. While the region is rich in coffee resources and local culture, many street

coffee MSMEs in cities such as Kotabumi have not fully translated these advantages into strong brand identities and digital visibility. Field observations indicate that many street coffee businesses operate without consistent visual branding, rely on irregular social media posting, and lack structured promotional strategies. These limitations reduce their ability to attract new customers, build loyalty, and sustain sales growth amid increasing competition.

Although previous studies have explored branding strategies and digital promotion among MSMEs, empirical research focusing specifically on street coffee MSMEs in regional contexts remains limited. Most existing studies emphasize either branding or digital marketing separately, without examining their combined impact on sales competitiveness in small-scale coffee businesses. This research gap highlights the need for an in-depth investigation of how branding and digital promotion strategies are implemented simultaneously and how they contribute to business performance in local street coffee MSMEs.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze branding and digital promotion strategies employed by street coffee MSMEs in Kotabumi, North Lampung, and examine their impact on sales competitiveness. By adopting a qualitative case study approach, this research seeks to provide contextual insights into the practical challenges and opportunities faced by street coffee entrepreneurs. The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically, by enriching the literature on digital branding for MSMEs, and practically, by offering strategic recommendations for small coffee businesses to enhance sustainability and competitiveness in the digital era.

a. Branding in MSMEs

Branding is a strategic process through which businesses create a distinctive identity that differentiates them from competitors and builds meaningful relationships with consumers. In the context of MSMEs, branding extends beyond logos, names, or visual symbols to encompass values, narratives, experiences, and emotional connections that shape consumer perceptions (Oktavianingrum et al., 2023). Effective branding helps small businesses communicate professionalism, reliability, and uniqueness, which are essential to building trust in competitive markets.

Previous studies emphasize that MSMEs often underestimate the strategic value of branding, treating it as a secondary activity rather than a core business function. However, consistent visual identity, clear brand positioning, and coherent storytelling significantly enhance brand recognition and customer loyalty (Suminar, 2023). In small-scale businesses such as street coffee MSMEs, branding plays a particularly crucial role because physical spaces are limited and customer interactions are brief. A strong brand identity enables businesses to remain memorable despite these constraints and supports long-term customer retention.

Moreover, branding serves as a tool for emotional differentiation. Consumers increasingly choose products not only based on functional benefits but also on symbolic meaning and lifestyle alignment. For street coffee MSMEs, branding can communicate values such as local identity, authenticity, simplicity, and community, which resonate strongly with

urban youth and daily commuters. Thus, branding becomes a strategic asset that transforms small coffee vendors into recognizable and trusted brands.

b. Digital Promotion and Sales Performance

Digital promotion refers to the use of online platforms and digital technologies to communicate marketing messages, engage customers, and drive sales. For MSMEs, digital promotion offers an affordable and scalable solution to overcome resource limitations. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp Business enable businesses to showcase products visually, share stories, and interact directly with customers in real time (Sari et al., 2023).

Research has consistently shown that engaging digital content significantly influences purchase intention and customer loyalty (Haiqa et al., 2025). Visual content, short videos, and interactive features such as polls and comments create two-way communication that strengthens emotional connections between brands and consumers. For street coffee MSMEs, digital promotion is especially important because it compensates for limited physical visibility and allows businesses to reach customers beyond their immediate location.

Furthermore, digital promotion enables data-driven marketing through engagement metrics such as likes, shares, comments, and reach. These metrics allow MSMEs to evaluate the effectiveness of promotional strategies and adjust content based on consumer responses. Studies indicate that consistent digital promotion positively impacts sales performance by increasing brand awareness, attracting new customers, and encouraging repeat purchases (Putri & Zed, 2024).

c. Street Coffee Business Characteristics

Street coffee businesses are characterized by mobility, limited physical space, and operational flexibility. They typically operate using portable booths or carts and serve high-traffic areas such as campuses, markets, and roadside locations. Their competitive advantage lies in fast service, affordable pricing, and informal customer relationships, which create a casual and accessible coffee experience.

However, these advantages are accompanied by significant challenges. Limited physical space restricts brand exposure, and operational simplicity often leads to minimal branding efforts. Therefore, digital promotion becomes a strategic necessity rather than an optional activity. According to Prastyo and Maduwinarti (2025), street coffee businesses that actively utilize digital platforms achieve higher visibility, stronger customer engagement, and better sales performance compared to those relying solely on offline promotion.

In addition, customer relationships in street coffee businesses are often personal and informal, providing opportunities to build strong emotional bonds through consistent branding and storytelling. When supported by digital promotion, these relationships can be transformed into long-term loyalty and advocacy, allowing small businesses to compete effectively with larger café chains.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

a. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design with a case study approach to explore branding and digital promotion strategies implemented by street coffee MSMEs in Kotabumi, North Lampung. A qualitative approach was selected because it allows for an in-depth understanding of business practices, perceptions, and contextual factors that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement alone. Case study research is particularly suitable for examining complex social and business phenomena in their real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

The study focused on four street coffee MSMEs operating in Kotabumi: Zee Coffee, Coffee Campus, Kopi Setapak, and Kopi Aduk Aren. These businesses were selected purposively because they represent active street coffee MSMEs that utilize branding and digital promotion in varying degrees. The use of multiple cases within a single geographical area strengthens analytical generalization and allows cross-case comparison of strategies and challenges.

b. Data Collection

Data were collected using three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document analysis.

First, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight informants, consisting of four business owners and four employees who were directly involved in branding and promotional activities. The interviews explored brand identity development, promotional strategies, perceived effectiveness, challenges, and future plans. Each interview lasted between 25 and 45 minutes and was recorded with participant consent.

Second, direct observations were conducted to document physical branding elements such as booth design, logo usage, color consistency, packaging, and customer interactions. Observations also captured daily promotional activities, including discounts, customer engagement, and digital content creation processes.

Third, document analysis included the examination of social media content (Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp Business), promotional materials, and sales records. These documents provided objective evidence of branding consistency and promotional intensity, supporting data triangulation and enhancing research credibility.

c. Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Interview transcripts and observation notes were coded using thematic analysis, focusing on recurring patterns related to branding, digital promotion, and sales performance. Thematic categories were continuously refined through iterative comparison across cases. Triangulation of sources and methods ensured the validity and reliability of the findings.

3. RESULT AND DISCCUSSION

a. Branding Strategy Implementation

The findings reveal that branding strategies among street coffee MSMEs in Kotabumi primarily focused on developing a simple yet recognizable brand identity. This included the selection of unique business names, logo creation, and the use of consistent colors across booths, packaging, and digital content. However, the level of branding maturity varied significantly among cases.

Zee Coffee and Coffee Campus demonstrated relatively strong brand consistency, utilizing uniform color schemes and visual layouts across offline and online platforms. In contrast, Kopi Setapak and Kopi Aduk Aren showed inconsistencies in logo usage and visual style, which weakened brand recognition.

Product differentiation also emerged as a key branding element. Businesses emphasized signature menus, local coffee beans, and distinctive flavor combinations to create perceived uniqueness. This differentiation contributed to higher customer recall and repeat purchases, particularly for coffee-based beverages.

b. Digital Promotion Practices

All cases utilized social media as their primary promotional channel, with Instagram and TikTok being the most frequently used platforms. Content types included product photos, short videos of coffee preparation, customer testimonials, and promotional announcements. WhatsApp Business was used mainly for catalog sharing and customer communication.

However, digital promotion intensity and consistency differed among MSMEs. Businesses with regular posting schedules and visually appealing content reported higher engagement rates and increased customer visits. Conversely, irregular posting and low-quality visuals limited promotional effectiveness.

c. Impact on Sales Performance

The implementation of branding and digital promotion strategies was found to positively influence sales performance. Monthly sales data indicated that coffee-based products contributed more than 60% of total revenue, suggesting that brand positioning around core products was effective. Informants reported that social media promotions directly influenced customer visits, particularly among younger consumers who discovered the business through Instagram and TikTok.

Nevertheless, sales growth remained unstable due to inconsistent promotional efforts and limited human resources. This finding suggests that while branding and digital promotion create positive outcomes, their impact is highly dependent on consistency and strategic planning.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reinforce existing literature on the strategic importance of branding and digital promotion for MSMEs in competitive markets. Consistent brand identity was found to enhance customer recognition and trust, supporting previous studies by Suminar

(2023) and Oktavianingrum et al. (2023), which emphasize the role of visual consistency in brand recall.

Digital promotion emerged as a critical mechanism for overcoming physical limitations of street coffee businesses. Consistent with the findings of Sari et al. (2023) and Haiqa et al. (2025), this study demonstrates that engaging digital content increases customer interaction and purchase intention. The effectiveness of short-form video content on TikTok and Instagram Reels further confirms global trends in digital marketing, where visual storytelling plays a central role in consumer engagement.

However, this study also reveals that the main barriers to successful branding and digital promotion are internal, including limited human resources, lack of digital marketing skills, and absence of structured content planning. These challenges align with the findings of Sinaga and Kunci (2024), who highlight resource constraints as a major obstacle for MSME digital transformation.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the branding literature by illustrating how brand identity, digital promotion, and sales competitiveness interact in small-scale street coffee businesses. Practically, the findings suggest that MSMEs should adopt simple branding guidelines, content calendars, and basic digital analytics to improve promotional effectiveness and sustain sales growth.

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