

BRANDING STRATEGY OF TRADITIONAL SUWEG LAPIS GENGGONG PRODUCTS IN REACHING CONSUMERS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Hakimah Iskarimah^{*1}, Tri Nadhirotur Ro'ifah²

^{1,2}Universitas Islam Zainul Hasan Genggong, Indonesia

e-mail: hakimahiskarimah00@gmail.com, trinadhiroturroifah@gmail.com

Abstract: This study aims to analyze the branding strategy implemented by Suweg Lapis Genggong, a local MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise), in marketing its traditional products made from suweg tubers through social media platforms. Suweg, a local plant with high economic potential, remains relatively unknown to the wider community. The primary challenge faced by this MSME is its unstrategic store location, which limits direct consumer access. Consequently, adopting a digital branding strategy becomes essential for expanding market reach and increasing visibility. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method, supported by direct observations during internships and in-depth interviews with the business manager. The findings reveal that the effective use of digital media particularly Instagram, TikTok, and Shopee has successfully enhanced brand awareness, attracted consumers from diverse backgrounds, and revitalized interest in traditional food products in today's modern context. Despite these achievements, the MSME still faces several challenges, including a limited number of content management personnel and constraints in product distribution, which hinder the full optimization of its digital branding potential.

Keywords: Branding, Traditional products, Suweg, Social media, MSMEs

Introduction

The development of digital technology today has brought major changes in the world of marketing, especially for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The presence of social media is no longer just a means of communication, but has become a strategic branding tool that helps MSMEs introduce products and expand their consumer reach. According to Prasetyo (2020) in the Journal of Digital Communication, social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and online marketplaces have proven to effectively help local products gain wider public recognition, including traditional products that were previously only marketed in limited local areas.

One example is Suweg Lapis Genggong, a processed product made from suweg tubers, known for its unique flavor and health benefits. This product has increasingly gained consumer trust after obtaining a Halal Certificate, which ensures product safety and aligns with the needs of Indonesia's majority Muslim consumers. As stated by Hakim (2023) in the Journal of Halal Studies, the halal aspect adds significant value to a branding strategy because it builds consumer trust and attracts new market segments.

However, Suweg Lapis Genggong still faces challenges related to its less strategic store location, which is far from crowded areas, schools, and Islamic boarding schools, and not situated along main roads. This makes it difficult for consumers to visit directly. According to

Rahmawati (2024) in the Journal of Digital Economy, these spatial limitations can be effectively overcome through digital branding, as the broad reach of online promotion allows MSMEs to access potential consumers even from outside their local region.

Moreover, branding through social media is not merely about advertising or promotion; it also shapes a positive identity and image of traditional products in modern society. By leveraging creative content, compelling storytelling, and visually appealing designs, traditional products can compete effectively with modern ones. Putri (2021) in the Journal of Creative Economy emphasizes that content creativity plays a key role in enhancing traditional product branding and ensuring that such products remain competitive in an evolving market.

For the writer who conducted an internship, this topic is particularly interesting because it provides direct insight into how an MSME adapts to the digital era. This study employs a qualitative research method to deeply understand how branding strategies are executed, how consumer perceptions are formed, and what challenges MSMEs encounter when using social media as their primary branding platform. Santoso (2025) in the Journal of Media and Communication supports this approach, stating that qualitative methods are essential in analyzing MSME branding strategies in today's dynamic digital landscape.

Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method. The use of this method aims to obtain a clear and in-depth understanding of the branding strategy implemented by Suweg Lapis Genggong MSMEs through the use of social media as a medium to attract attention and reach consumers. This method is considered appropriate because the main focus is to present real and authentic facts from the field without manipulation, relying instead on data obtained through observations, interviews, and relevant documentation in accordance with the research focus.

The research subjects were determined purposively, meaning that the participants were selected based on their direct involvement in branding activities and their in-depth knowledge of the marketing strategies carried out. The subjects consisted of employees of Suweg Lapis Genggong MSMEs involved in digital promotion, consumers of Suweg Lapis Genggong, and official social media accounts used as marketing tools, such as Instagram, TikTok, and Shopee. Through this approach, the collected data are expected to provide a genuine reflection of the actual branding strategies being implemented.

The data collection techniques included direct observation during a two-month internship period, interviews with Suweg Lapis Genggong MSME employees and consumers, and data collection from various official social media accounts of the MSME. The data were analyzed using descriptive analysis, allowing the research to present a clear and comprehensive picture of the branding strategy of Suweg Lapis Genggong's traditional products in reaching consumers through social media platforms.

Results and Discussion

Social media has now proven to be a very effective means of introducing traditional products such as Suweg Lapis Genggong to modern society, especially young people. From the results of an interview with one of the consumers, it is known that digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and the WhatsApp Story feature have an important role as the first door in building awareness about this product. Consumers stated that "Initially, I found out about the

products of the Scarlet Witch through social media, especially Instagram and WhatsApp Story uploads” (Interview with Dzurrotul Afifah, 29 years old, consumer of Suweg Lapis Genggong).

Interestingly, this introduction process does not stop at digital exposure only, but is continued with the reinforcement of personal recommendations (word-of-mouth) given by the people closest to them. This emphasizes that a successful branding strategy in the digital era does not only rely on an attractive visual appearance but must also be able to unite the power of testimonials and recommendations from the consumer's social environment. The combination of the two creates a sense of trust as well as an emotional drive that makes consumers interested in trying the product. However, behind the success of the digital branding strategy, the sub-layer of Genggong faces significant challenges related to less strategic store locations, which can reduce the interest of buyers who prioritize convenience in accessing store locations directly.

In terms of brand management, content creation is carried out in a planned manner and focuses on the needs of the audience, so that each upload can attract attention while reaching the right target market. As the manager explained, “The initial stage in creating content is to research trends and audience needs, then determine the appropriate content theme” (Interview with Rahmawati Ningsih, 22 years old, employee). After that, the team drafts a visual concept and prepares persuasive yet simple copywriting, with a clean modern design so that the brand identity is easily recognizable.

The variety of content created includes short videos, educational materials about the benefits of suweg, and testimonials from customers who have tried the product. These types of content have proven to be effective in increasing interaction and strengthening the trust of potential buyers. Interestingly, even though the team “does not use paid advertising” (Interview with Rahmawati Ningsih, 22 years old, employee), consistency in managing scheduled organic content can bring positive engagement, expand awareness, and ultimately increase sales figures.

However, when viewed from the consumer's perspective, there are still some things that can be improved, especially in terms of visual branding consistency. Consumers assessed that “in general, the branding display of the product is quite good on social media, but it still needs to be improved in terms of uniformity of colors, logos, and design styles to make it easier to remember” (Interview with Dzurrotul Afifah, 29 years old, consumer). If this is corrected, it will certainly strengthen the professional impression and attractiveness of the brand in the eyes of the audience.

In addition, consumers also suggested that the content should not only focus on promotion but also include educational elements about the efficacy of suweg, the story behind the production process, and interactive engagements such as giveaways or polls (Interview with Dzurrotul Afifah, 29 years old, consumer). This approach will help the audience to view the product not just as an ordinary traditional food, but as something full of story value and health benefits, thus creating a stronger emotional bond.

In addition to content, the form of mutual interaction between brand managers and consumers has also proven to be a key element in the success of a branding strategy. The management actively builds communication through various ways, such as “responding to comments and messages in a friendly manner, holding question and answer sessions, and organizing giveaways and quizzes” (Interview with Rahmawati Ningsih, 22 years old,

employee). With this approach, consumers feel valued and involved in the brand's journey, which ultimately fosters a sense of loyalty.

Compared to traditional promotional methods, social media clearly has advantages in the form of speed of information dissemination, wider reach, relatively low cost, and its ability to create personal closeness with the audience. Through a comprehensive and sustainable strategy, Suweg Lapis Genggong is able to make traditional products remain relevant in the modern era and attract new market interest without eliminating the authentic value inherent in the product, even though it must face the constraints of a less strategic location.

Conclusion

Suweg Lapis Genggong as a traditional food made from tubers holds a significant opportunity to maintain its existence in the modern market. Through well-planned digital branding strategies, particularly the utilization of social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Shopee, this product has successfully increased its popularity, expanded its consumer reach, and built a brand image that aligns with contemporary market demands despite the obstacle of a less strategic store location. The primary strength of this product lies in its distinctive taste, nutritional health benefits, affordable pricing, and the halal certification that strengthens consumer confidence. However, several challenges remain, including limited human resources in digital content management, small-scale production, short product shelf life, and inconsistencies in visual branding that need further refinement. By enhancing production capacity, maintaining brand identity consistency, and creating more diverse and educational content innovations, Suweg Lapis Genggong has the potential to build stronger consumer loyalty. When implemented consistently and sustainably, this strategy will enable traditional products like Suweg Lapis Genggong to remain competitive amid intense market rivalry, without losing the authentic cultural value that defines their originality.

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