

Revenue Enhancement of Bakso Bakar King Alim Through Marketing Strategies

Epa Widiyanti¹, M Arif Mustofa², Sri Kadarsih³, Zaenal Abidin⁴, Erwina Kartika Devi⁵, Khusnul Yatima⁶, Siti Fatimah⁷

¹ Institut Islam Al-Mujaddid Sabak; epawidiyanti08@gmail.com

² Institut Islam Al-Mujaddid Sabak; 7ariefherio@gmail.com

³ Institut Islam Al-Mujaddid Sabak; srikadarsih@gmail.com

⁴ Institut Islam Al-Mujaddid Sabak; zaenalabidin@gmail.com

⁵ Institut Islam Al-Mujaddid Sabak; erwinaelkhalifi@gmail.com

⁶ Institut Islam Al-Mujaddid Sabak; khusnulyatima2@gmail.com

⁷ Institut Islam Al-Mujaddid Sabak; sitifatimahsadu@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the marketing strategies implemented by the micro-enterprise Bakso Bakar King Alim, located in Muara Sabak Barat Subdistrict, Tanjung Jabung Timur Regency, Jambi Province, in its efforts to survive and grow amid local market competition. The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques including interviews, observation, and documentation. The findings indicate that the business applies a marketing mix strategy that encompasses product differentiation through grilling techniques and signature seasoning blends, pricing tailored to the local purchasing power, strategic location selection, and promotion that combines digital media such as WhatsApp with word-of-mouth communication. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of digital approaches with the strength of local community networks in expanding market reach and enhancing customer loyalty. The implications of this study may serve as a reference for other micro-enterprises in developing contextual, affordable, and sustainability-oriented marketing strategies, as well as for policymakers in designing MSME empowerment programs based on local potential.

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Corresponding Author:

Epa Widiyanti

Institut Islam Al-Mujaddid Sabak; epawidiyanti08@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's increasingly dynamic economic growth has stimulated the development of various industrial sectors, one of which is the culinary sector, which has experienced rapid growth in recent years (Llewelyn, R. and Williams, 2023; Salendu, 2021). Food is no longer viewed merely as a primary necessity, but has evolved into an integral part of the modern lifestyle. The emergence of constantly shifting consumption trends, the rising demand for practical food options, and the influence of social media on eating behavior have made culinary businesses among the most responsive sectors to changing consumer preferences. Both major cities and developing regions across Indonesia are now filled with a diverse range of culinary ventures, from traditional food stalls and street vendors to modern restaurants offering innovative food concepts. Competition in this sector continues to intensify, requiring culinary entrepreneurs to consistently innovate not only in product development but also in their marketing strategies.

The culinary industry possesses distinct characteristics, as it heavily depends on consumers' perceptions of taste, presentation, and service quality (Collins Asante-Addo, Jonathan Mockshell, Khalid Siddig, 2016). Even minor changes in food trends can significantly affect consumer preferences, compelling business owners in this sector to constantly adapt. Relying solely on delicious taste is no longer sufficient; culinary entrepreneurs must also develop strategies to ensure their products are recognized, remembered, and chosen by consumers amidst a saturated food market (Fatimah, Devi, Wandu, Mun'amah, & Sarwono, 2024). Marketing thus becomes a vital component, functioning as the bridge between the product and its target audience. A well-executed marketing strategy can add value to the culinary product, expand market reach, and foster customer loyalty.

Advancements in information technology—particularly the rise of social media—have brought about a shift in how marketing strategies are formulated within the culinary business. In the past, food promotions relied on word of mouth, banners, or printed flyers. Today, food imagery disseminated through platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook can attract thousands of potential consumers in a short time. Contemporary consumers tend to favor food that is not only delicious but also visually appealing and capable of providing a unique experience. Consequently, culinary business actors are required to build a strong product identity and deliver marketing messages that align with the characteristics of their target markets. Choosing the right promotional channels, offering competitive prices, and employing a personalized approach to consumer engagement are essential elements to be seriously considered in developing an effective marketing strategy.

In the context of local culinary businesses, competition arises not only at the national or global level but also among enterprises operating within the same area. Many food types that were once traditional are now being reimaged through modern cooking techniques, fusion flavors, and contemporary presentation styles designed to appeal to younger generations. One prominent example is bakso, a traditional Indonesian meatball dish that has long been favored by the public (Aldo, Musthofa, & Sunarti, 2025). This product has undergone significant transformation through various iterations, one of which is bakso bakar (grilled meatballs). Utilizing a grilling technique with distinctive seasonings, bakso bakar offers an alternative for consumers seeking a different yet familiar taste (Sutiani, Mustofa, Fatimah, Devi, & Wargo, 2025). Such developments indicate the need for culinary entrepreneurs to continuously explore the potential of traditional products and reintroduce them as innovative menu items capable of competing in modern markets.

Bakso bakar represents a culinary innovation that blends classic flavors with contemporary presentation techniques. Its enticing aroma, unique texture, and the savory-sweet flavor profile resulting from the grilling process make it attractive to a broad audience, particularly young people and street food enthusiasts (Wati et al., 2025). However, the success of such a product in the market is

highly dependent on the marketing strategy implemented by the business owner. Without an effective marketing approach, the significant potential of products like bakso bakar may be overshadowed by competitors and fail to reach their intended market (Sapriandi, Nilfatri, Hidayat, Devi, & Pitri, 2025). The success of a culinary venture is therefore no longer solely dependent on taste, but also on how creatively and relevantly the product is introduced to the public.

An example of a culinary business specializing in bakso bakar is Bakso Bakar King Alim, located in Muara Sabak Barat. This business is characterized by its unique flavor, presentation style, and the overall concept of the food outlet, which combines local atmosphere with a modern twist. Its location in a developing area offers considerable opportunities to capture a broader market, particularly among students, workers, and young families (Fitri, Haeran, Munip, & Devi, 2024). However, the business faces challenges in formulating marketing strategies that can enhance competitiveness and strengthen its position in the local market. Limited visual promotion, underutilization of digital media, and a lack of in-depth understanding of local consumer preferences are among the factors affecting the business's performance. These issues underscore the need for a comprehensive examination of the marketing strategies currently in use and how their refinement could foster sustainable business growth.

Investigating the marketing strategy employed by Bakso Bakar King Alim is important as it enables an analysis of the approaches undertaken and their effectiveness in increasing customer visits and expanding market reach (Bayu, Musthofa, Sunarti, & Nisak, 2025). This study also seeks to explore how the business adapts its product offerings and promotional efforts in response to consumer trends, as well as how it navigates the evolving dynamics of the local culinary market. Particular emphasis will be placed on key aspects such as promotion, pricing, service quality, packaging, and communication with consumers. The findings of this research are expected to not only describe the actual conditions of the marketing strategy implemented but also offer strategic insights that can be applied to similar culinary ventures in other regions.

The primary focus of this study extends beyond viewing marketing merely as a tool to boost sales; it aims to understand marketing as a means of establishing effective communication between culinary businesses and their consumers. In the food industry, emotional engagement with a product often plays a decisive role in purchasing decisions. Therefore, a robust marketing strategy must be capable of building a strong brand image, providing an enjoyable consumer experience, and maintaining long-term relationships (Bayu et al., 2025). With the right approach, local culinary businesses such as Bakso Bakar King Alim not only have the potential to survive amidst intense competition but also to grow, open branches in new locations, expand their market share, and increase profitability on a sustainable basis.

The urgency of this research lies in the importance of formulating marketing strategies that are grounded in the realities of local culinary markets, particularly for food businesses that rely on product innovation as their primary competitive advantage. By conducting an in-depth analysis of the marketing strategy of Bakso Bakar King Alim in Muara Sabak Barat, this study aims to provide practical contributions to the strengthening of the culinary business sector in the region. The research is expected to serve as a useful reference for other culinary entrepreneurs in designing relevant marketing strategies and to inform stakeholders seeking to support the development of the culinary sector as a vital pillar of local economic growth.

2. METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach using a case study method (Kathleen & Macdonald, 2012) to examine in depth the marketing strategies implemented in the development of the culinary

business Bakso Bakar King Alim in Muara Sabak Barat. The researcher aims to understand the dynamics of marketing based on real-world phenomena in the field, with the objective of evaluating the extent to which these strategies contribute to increasing sales of bakso bakar products. Data were collected through direct observation of business operations, in-depth interviews with key individuals involved in the business, and documentation relevant to the research context (Hesse-Biber, 2010). A purposive sampling technique was employed to select informants who are most knowledgeable about the business practices, including the owner and staff directly engaged in daily marketing activities. The active presence of the researcher at the business site was crucial for observing promotional practices, customer interactions, and the visual and digital approaches used in establishing the product identity of bakso bakar.

Data analysis was conducted in three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Drury, Homewood, & Randall, 2011). The data reduction process focused on filtering essential information related to promotional strategies, pricing, packaging, and communication as applied by Bakso Bakar King Alim. Data were presented in a systematic narrative form to facilitate the identification of marketing patterns that emerged throughout the research. Interpretation of the data was accompanied by ongoing verification to ensure that each finding accurately reflected the actual conditions and could be scientifically validated (Frost et al., 2014). To test the credibility of the data, triangulation techniques were employed—including source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and time triangulation—by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation across different time periods. This approach enabled the researcher to build a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the marketing strategies employed by Bakso Bakar King Alim in attracting consumers, strengthening the product's position in the local market, and sustaining the business amid increasing competition in the culinary sector.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Muara Sabak Barat District in Tanjung Jabung Timur Regency, Jambi Province, serves as the location for Bakso Bakar King Alim, a ready-to-eat culinary business that began operating in 2023. Situated in a strategic area that functions as a hub for community activities and public services, Bakso Bakar King Alim has attracted attention from various segments of society, particularly due to its innovation in offering grilled meatballs a unique take on a popular local dish. The region is home to a culturally diverse population, including Bugis, Malay, Javanese, and Minangkabau communities, creating a dynamic culinary landscape that presents distinct market opportunities for the business. The Bakso Bakar King Alim product blends local flavor preferences with a modern concept that is easily accessible to people from various backgrounds. With the vision of becoming a culinary destination for flavorful meatballs and the mission of providing high-quality flavor varieties alongside satisfying customer service, the business is committed to growing as part of Muara Sabak Barat's culinary identity. This initiative not only meets the growing demand for delicious and affordable fast food but also enriches the local food scene through innovation, flavor consistency, and enjoyable dining experiences.

Based on the findings of this study, the marketing strategy implemented by Bakso Bakar King Alim in Muara Sabak Barat relies on a simple yet effective approach. This culinary business was established in 2023 by an entrepreneur with a strong passion for the food industry, aiming to introduce a distinctive taste experience through grilled meatballs enhanced with signature seasoning. In an interview, the owner stated, "I founded Bakso Bakar King Alim because I have a passion for cooking and wanted to share the deliciousness of grilled meatballs with the public." The products offered, such as original and spicy grilled meatballs, are designed to cater to a wide range of consumer preferences. The business markets its products not only through local offline outlets but also via digital platforms

like WhatsApp. Direct observation by the researcher revealed that the production process is conducted hygienically, with a clean and well-organized serving area (Meleko, 2015). Efforts to legalize the business, including obtaining business permits and halal certification, further reflect the owner's commitment to enhancing professionalism and competitiveness in the eyes of consumers.

In terms of promotion, Bakso Bakar King Alim maximizes the potential of social media and direct communication to reach customers. The owner emphasized that platforms like WhatsApp are particularly useful in broadening promotional outreach. Documentation records indicate that promotional activities are routinely carried out via WhatsApp broadcast messages sent to regular customers. One customer, Dea, stated, "I found out about Bakso Bakar King Alim from a friend who recommended the place," while Rehan added, "Yes, I've seen posts from Bakso Bakar King Alim on WhatsApp." Word-of-mouth recommendations serve as a major strength in expanding the consumer base, particularly effective in socially connected communities. These direct and informative promotions have proven to stimulate purchasing behavior. The owner explained in an interview, "With effective promotion, we can increase customer awareness and interest, which ultimately affects our sales." This illustrates the importance of integrating digital marketing strategies with interpersonal relationships to enhance product appeal.

Customer responses regarding service and product quality have been overwhelmingly positive, which plays a crucial role in maintaining customer loyalty. According to interview results, customers appreciate the seller's friendliness and prompt service. As Siti noted, "The service quality at Bakso Bakar King Alim is very good, friendly, and responsive." The strategic and accessible location of the business further adds to its appeal, as stated by Susi, "Yes, the location of Bakso Bakar King Alim is strategic and easy to reach." The unique and savory flavor of the grilled meatballs encourages repeat purchases. Onal expressed, "I keep coming back to Bakso Bakar King Alim because of the delicious taste and good service." Observational data confirmed these remarks, showing a steady stream of customers, especially in the late afternoon and evening. Regular promotional efforts have been effective in increasing purchase frequency, as mentioned by Dea, "Yes, I think the WhatsApp promotional strategy has positively influenced customer purchasing." These findings highlight the role of consistent and well-communicated promotions as a key driver of business success.

Overall, the research findings indicate that Bakso Bakar King Alim has established a positive reputation among local consumers in Muara Sabak Barat. Although it operates on a small scale, the business demonstrates significant potential for growth in the local culinary sector through product innovation. Consumer support is evident from statements such as Gali's: "Yes, I am satisfied as a customer and intend to continue buying from Bakso Bakar King Alim." Product prices are also perceived as fair and reflective of their quality, as affirmed by Zuriah: "Yes, I think the price of Bakso Bakar King Alim's products matches the quality offered." In terms of marketing, while notable progress has been made, customers suggest expanding promotional reach without relying heavily on large-scale events, as noted by Risma. By strengthening digital marketing strategies, maintaining product and service quality, and consistently building brand identity, Bakso Bakar King Alim is well-positioned to evolve into a strong and sustainable local culinary enterprise.

The marketing strategies implemented by Bakso Bakar King Alim in Muara Sabak Barat reflect a deep understanding of the local market conditions and consumer needs. Based on interviews and direct field observations, the business adopts a marketing mix approach encompassing product, price, place, and promotion as its core pillars. The products offered demonstrate distinctiveness, particularly in terms of flavor and presentation techniques, with the grilling process providing a signature taste experience. Flavor variants such as original and spicy are developed by taking into account local consumer preferences, and are served using fresh ingredients and a unique blend of spices that differentiate the products from competitors. This product differentiation serves not only as a branding strategy but also as a means of delivering sustainable added value to customers.

Pricing strategy plays a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions of product value. Bakso Bakar King Alim sets competitive prices by considering cost structures, prevailing market prices, and the purchasing power of the local community. This pricing approach is not solely profit-oriented but aims to balance quality with affordability. The strategy fosters consumer trust in receiving a product whose quality aligns with the price paid. Findings from Cendy Viliarda Loka (2022) further emphasize the significant role of price in influencing purchasing decisions and revenue generation for grilled meatball vendors. Accordingly, a well-formulated pricing strategy functions as an effective competitive tool, especially within the dynamic landscape of micro-enterprises.

Business location selection emerges as another strategic factor contributing to the success of Bakso Bakar King Alim. The business operates in an area that is easily accessible and situated within a zone of high social activity. Interviewed customers highlighted convenience of access as one of the primary reasons for patronizing the establishment. This underscores that strategic location is not merely about visibility but also pertains to purchasing efficiency and comfort. These findings align with Oktafiana's (2019) research, which notes that proximity to busy public areas significantly boosts sales performance for micro-enterprises like grilled meatball vendors. Therefore, careful site selection can significantly increase opportunities for spontaneous visits and repeat purchases (Brüggen, Foubert, & Gremler, 2011).

In terms of promotion, Bakso Bakar King Alim actively utilizes social media platforms, particularly WhatsApp, to engage with and retain customers. The strategy involves disseminating product information, price offers, and maintaining direct communication with consumers through routine broadcast messages. The effectiveness of digital promotion is evident in the positive responses from customers, many of whom reported interest in purchasing after receiving or viewing promotional content. In addition to digital efforts, word-of-mouth marketing also proves highly effective. A significant number of consumers became aware of the business through recommendations from friends or family members. Such informal promotion aligns well with the characteristics of a socially interactive local community. Thus, the integration of digital outreach with interpersonal communication generates a synergistic impact in expanding market reach.

The structured and adaptive implementation of marketing strategies has yielded tangible outcomes in terms of business growth and resilience. The business owner explicitly stated that increased promotional efforts have directly contributed to higher sales figures. This demonstrates that marketing strategies are not merely theoretical frameworks but produce measurable results in day-to-day operations. Marketing thus functions not only as a communication tool but also as a driving force in solidifying the business's competitive position. These strategies offer a clear trajectory for micro-enterprises seeking to develop their capacities independently and sustainably amid competitive pressures.

To enhance competitiveness, Bakso Bakar King Alim displays a high degree of adaptability to market dynamics and consumer expectations. Emphasis on product quality serves as the core of its competitive advantage, supported by hygienic production processes and swift, friendly service. Efforts to maintain cleanliness standards reflect strong awareness of food safety, adding value amid consumer concerns over the hygiene of processed food. Furthermore, a human-centric service approach fosters a pleasant customer experience, which in turn encourages consumer loyalty and repeat purchases. The synergy between product excellence and superior service positions the business favorably in both functional and emotional dimensions of customer perception.

Although the current strategies have produced positive outcomes, there remains significant room for improvement and expansion. Several customers suggested more varied promotional approaches and the use of additional platforms such as Instagram or TikTok to reach a younger and broader market segment. Moreover, the ongoing pursuit of legal registration and halal certification is crucial for enhancing long-term credibility. Legal recognition can open access to new markets, such as

food delivery apps or participation in official culinary fairs. With more mature strategic planning—particularly in the areas of promotion and market expansion—Bakso Bakar King Alim has substantial potential to evolve into a strong and sustainable local food enterprise.

Overall, the marketing strategies of Bakso Bakar King Alim illustrate a comprehensive, adaptive, and contextually relevant approach to micro-enterprise development. The research findings reinforce existing literature suggesting that the integration of product innovation, quality service, strategic location, and effective digital promotion is fundamental in enhancing competitiveness. This business not only manages to sustain itself amidst competition but also shows potential for significant growth by continually strengthening its brand identity and expanding its consumer base. Bakso Bakar King Alim serves as a concrete example of how small-scale enterprises can develop measured, context-aware, and sustainability-oriented marketing strategies.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the marketing strategy implemented by Bakso Bakar King Alim effectively addresses the research question regarding how micro-enterprises can survive and grow amid local market competition. The main findings reveal that the adaptive application of the marketing mix—which includes product differentiation through grilling techniques and unique seasoning, pricing strategies that consider local purchasing power, strategic location selection, and promotion combining digital media and interpersonal communication—represents a practical innovation relevant to the context of small-scale businesses in regional areas. The novelty of this study lies in the integration of digital approaches (particularly via WhatsApp) with the strength of word-of-mouth within local social communities, which simultaneously enhances market reach and consumer loyalty. The implication is that this strategic model can serve as a reference for other micro-enterprises in developing contextual, affordable, and sustainability-oriented marketing strategies, as well as for policymakers in designing empowerment programs for MSMEs based on local potential.

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