

Innovation and Branding Strategies for Tempe as a Creative Industry Product by KOPTI

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Abstract. This study attempts to explore the innovations and branding strategies adopted by KOPTI to create tempeh as an innovative industry value-added product competitive at both local and global levels. The method of data collection used is qualitative techniques by way of in-depth interviews, direct observation of the process of production, and documentation of business and marketing activities. The research shows that KOPTI has implemented a number of innovations, such as selecting quality raw materials, using a more hygienic and efficient fermentation process, and implementing modern, attractive, and green packaging, which makes tempe more competitive in the current market. However, its brand strategy is still influenced by four main challenges: promotion remains traditional, social media and e-commerce are not exploited, and the younger generation is not approached. The debate in the research emphasizes the need for innovative partnership with MSMEs, design networks, or content creators in shaping the image of tempeh as a healthy, cool, and sustainable local product. The impact of this research demonstrates that branding tactics and product innovation need to be balanced in an effort to strengthen KOPTI tempeh as a flagship product of the creative industry that can conquer the national and global markets.

Keywords: Creative Industry, Product Innovation, Branding Strategy, Cooperative, Digital Marketing.

1. Introduction

Throughout recent decades, the creative industries have grown to become one of the world economy's most significant drivers. The creative economy is a principal driver of innovation, value addition, and improved cultural identity through cross-sectoral creative products and services (Rodríguez-Insuasti et al. 2022). Subsequently, the implementation of innovation strategies within Indonesia's creative culinary sub-sector has been able to improve the competitive advantage of small and medium enterprises (Hamdani and Rawita 2023). The creative industry in Indonesia has given an enormous contribution to national economic growth through job creation and the empowerment of local cultural values (Hidayat & Asmara 2017). This evidence shows that the confluence of innovation, culture, and creativity is at the center of the creative economy that has the capacity to connect global processes and local product development initiatives.



In the Indonesian case, traditional commodities such as tempeh have undergone a reinterpretation of their role, not only as a everyday staple in cuisine but also as a source of culture and creative economic value. Tempe, as a traditional fermented food in Indonesia, has a good nutritional and health content that can be processed into a high-value flagship product for the modern market (Romulo & Surya 2021). Innovations in products and packaging are necessary to increase competitiveness (Hamdani & Rawita 2023). Therefore, an innovative strategy of tempeh through product innovation, cultural value packaging, and digital marketing is considered necessary to elevate the status of tempeh to a broader creative industry.

The Indonesian Tempe Producers Cooperative (KOPTI) is at a strategic juncture in this transformation process. Productivity of Indonesian cooperatives is spearheaded by innovation management, digital capability, and partnership networks that enable cooperatives to become catalysts for product innovation and collective marketing (Majid et al, 2022). Digital transformation strategies for manufacturing SMEs can facilitate the success of technology adoption, thereby developing marketing performance (Ghobakhloo & Iranmanesh 2021). These findings are relevant to KOPTI, which organizes tempe producers, disseminates product innovation practices, and coordinates marketing activities through digital platforms. With the concurrent utilization of digital marketing and product development, cooperatives such as KOPTI are able to boost their competitiveness and market penetration while maintaining the cultural value of tempe.

Although some studies such as Sharabati et al. (2024) and Hamdani and Rawita (2023) show that the combination of product innovation and digital marketing has a positive impact on the performance of micro, small, and medium enterprises, there is a research gap in specifically measuring the joint effect of the two dimensions on tempe producer cooperatives. Hence, the objective of this study is to analyze the effect of product innovation and digital marketing on the marketing performance of KOPTI and explore mediating mechanisms such as customer orientation and branding capabilities. By bridging this knowledge gap, this study is expected to make empirical contributions towards improving cooperative strategies in optimizing innovation and digitalization so that local products such as tempeh can compete internationally without losing their local cultural identity.

3. Research Method

3.1 Another example subsection heading

This research uses a qualitative approach with the aim of understanding in depth the innovation process and branding strategy carried out by KOPTI in developing tempeh as a creative industry product. Data collection is carried out through in-depth interviews with cooperative management, tempeh business actors, and other related parties to obtain comprehensive information about production activities, business management, and marketing strategies implemented. In addition, direct observation is carried out at the tempeh production site to observe operational activities, processing techniques, and innovations that are applied in real life in the field. The researcher also conducted a documentation study of cooperative archives, activity reports, promotional media, and digital publication materials used by KOPTI. These three techniques are used in an integrated manner to obtain a complete, factual, and contextual picture of how KOPTI positions tempeh products as part of the creative industry sector through an innovative and culture-based approach.

4. Results and Discussion

This research shows that KOPTI (Indonesian Tempeh Producers Cooperative) has carried out various forms of innovation and development in the tempe production process as part of efforts to make tempeh a creative industry product that has added value and is able to compete in

the wider market. Based on interviews with the head of production, it is known that KOPTI emphatically no longer uses traditional tools in its production process. This is done because the use of traditional tools is considered less hygienic, the production capacity is limited, and it produces inconsistent tempeh quality. To produce tempeh in accordance with food safety standards (BPOM/SNI), KOPTI uses more modern and accurate equipment, so that it can control temperature, moisture content, and hygiene more optimally. The tempeh produced by KOPTI is intended for the middle to upper class market and is distributed to various places such as supermarkets, hotels, and hospitals. This decision is also based on KOPTI's desire not to compete directly with local tempeh entrepreneurs who target the traditional and lower-middle markets. The quality of KOPTI's tempeh is indeed intended for the consumer segment who pay more attention to aspects of cleanliness, health, and product appearance.

In one day, KOPTI is able to produce as much as 70 to 80 kilograms of tempeh, and this amount can increase to around 100 kilograms per day when demand increases, such as during the month of Ramadan. This increase in capacity shows that the KOPTI production process is quite efficient and able to adapt to market needs.

KOPTI tempeh is packaged in attractive, modern, and informative packaging. The packaging already has a composition label, expiration date, and manufacturer identity that adds to consumer confidence. This is one of the main differentiators with local tempeh entrepreneurs, who still use simple packaging such as plain plastic without labels or only given name paper. The packaging from KOPTI not only guarantees product safety, but also strengthens the professional and modern image that this cooperative wants to build.

However, there are still big challenges in branding and marketing aspects. Currently, KOPTI has not marketed its products through e-commerce platforms or social media. This is due to the limitations of human resources who are not familiar with digital technology, as well as the lack of training in managing online sales. In addition, because tempeh is a fresh product, KOPTI is still doubtful about the effectiveness of online delivery which is considered risky to product quality. For distribution, KOPTI chooses to use its own vehicles such as trucks and pick-up cars, so that control over quality and delivery time can be maintained properly. In addition, KOPTI also faces challenges in changing the mindset of people who still think that buying cheap tempeh is better than buying expensive but quality tempeh. According to KOPTI, public education is important so that they understand that quality tempeh is more hygienic and nutritious, and safer to consume in the long term. This awareness needs to be built so that quality tempeh products can be more appreciated by consumers.

Furthermore, KOPTI also has high hopes for the younger generation, both millennials and Gen Z, so that they will not only become tempeh consumers, but also play a role in preserving and developing the tempeh production business as part of Indonesia's cultural heritage. KOPTI hopes that the younger generation can be involved in the production process, marketing, and creative innovation so that tempe can be better known, not only domestically but also in the international market. With the involvement of young people who are more familiar with technology, social media, and market trends, KOPTI's tempeh branding strategy can be improved and adjusted to the times. Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the innovations in the production process carried out by KOPTI are quite mature and directed. However, digital branding and promotion strategies are still aspects that need to be strengthened. The balance between product innovation and adaptive marketing development is the key so that the tempeh produced by KOPTI is able to upgrade as a superior and highly competitive local creative industry product in the national and international markets.

Based on the studies conducted in the field, the SWOT analysis will be explained in Table 1:

Table 1. Results of Internal and External SWOT Analysis on KOPTI

Strength

KOPTI has several main strengths, such as the high quality of tempeh products because it uses selected raw materials and a hygienic production process with the help of modern equipment. Product packaging is also designed in an attractive, informative, and environmentally friendly manner so that it adds to the selling value. KOPTI targets the middle to upper market such as hotels, supermarkets, and hospitals, so that it does not compete directly with tempeh sellers in traditional markets. Its production capacity is stable, with an average of 70–80 kg per day and can increase as demand increases. In addition, KOPTI already has its own delivery fleet, which helps maintain product quality during distribution.

Weakness

On the other hand, KOPTI still has some weaknesses. This cooperative has not used social media and e-commerce as a means of marketing, so its market reach is still limited. The limited ability of human resources in the digital field is also an obstacle in carrying out online promotions. The distribution system used is still conventional and does not yet support direct sales to individual consumers through online platforms. In addition, KOPTI has not collaborated with creative MSMEs that can help develop branding to make it more attractive to the younger generation.

Opportunities

KOPTI has a great opportunity to grow. Currently, the trend of society is increasingly leading to the consumption of healthy food and local products, which is in line with KOPTI's hygienic tempeh products. Younger generations such as millennials and Gen Z also show interest in local products, as long as they are packaged in an attractive way. In addition, there is a lot of support from the government and the private sector in the form of digital training for MSMEs, which can be used to strengthen online marketing. Tempeh products also have export opportunities because they are starting to be known as healthy foods abroad.

Threat

Some of the threats faced by KOPTI include competition from home tempeh entrepreneurs who sell at cheaper prices. Since tempeh is a fresh product, long-distance delivery without proper handling can degrade product quality. If you are unable to keep up with market tastes and modern food trends, KOPTI products can lose appeal. In addition, the slow adaptation to digital technology can make KOPTI lag behind competitors who are more active on social media and other online platforms.

The SWOT analysis indicates that KOPTI has strengths in technical and product terms—raw material selection, hygienic fermentation process with up-to-date equipment, informative and environmentally friendly packaging, stable plant capacity, and own delivery fleet—combined which form the basis for positioning tempeh as a value-added product. These results are in line with tempeh fermentation research identifying fermentation as a process that increases nutritional quality, digestibility, and the creation of functional metabolites that can be used as market differentiators (Purwandari et al., 2024; Górska et al., 2025). Consumer insight also shows that clear, attractive, and sustainability-labeled packaging does matter in terms of perception and purchasing intent—supporting that KOPTI's sustainability packaging efforts underpin product premiumization. SWOT reveals some fundamental weaknesses in digital marketing, digital human capital skills, and creative network collaboration spaces—problems that limit KOPTI's highest possible market reach and target young consumers.

SME management literature holds that the adoption and deployment of digital marketing practices (social media, e-commerce, SEO) have a key role in MSME performance, while human and technical resource constraints are often the main obstacles (Sharabati et al., 2024). Moreover, systematic SME brand review emphasizes the significance of digital channels towards developing brand; without an extensive digital strategy, branding is ineffective enough to create long-term effects (Fluhrer & Brahm, 2025). Cross-sector partnership research also suggests that collaborations with the creative sector can make traditional products more attractive by way of design-driven innovation and co-branding—a viable means of increasing involvement of the younger generation (Klein & Spychalska-Wojtkiewicz, 2020). Practically, KOPTI demands to improve digital capability, an omnichannel strategy (e-commerce + direct selling), and a design collaboration test pilot to solve existing gaps. KOPTI Opportunities (healthy food trends, young people's interest in local foods that are 'Instagrammable', government digital training support, and export potential) can be mobilized because science evidence shows that fermented tempeh products have nutritional advantage and functional properties that can be mobilized as competitive advantages in foreign healthy/vegetarian markets (Purwandari et al., 2024; Górska et al., 2025).

However, low-cost competitor threats, distant-shipping quality vulnerabilities, and digital lag require a grand strategy: (1) cold chain/handling bolstering to keep distribution quality intact, (2) development of a digital communication package focusing on scientific evidence and tempeh's cultural narrative for youth markets, and (3) leveraging government/incubator programs to propel e-commerce—a strategy supported by literature on the requirement of digital competencies and innovative partnerships for SME resilience and growth. By leveraging process innovation (products & packaging) and digital/collaborative branding strategies, KOPTI is able to leverage opportunities into national and global market penetration.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that KOPTI (Indonesian Tempeh Producers Cooperative) has tried to develop tempeh products with various innovations in order to compete in the modern market. These innovations include the use of quality raw materials, hygienic production processes with modern tools, and neat and informative packaging. This distinguishes KOPTI products from traditional tempeh sold in the public market. Tempeh from KOPTI is aimed at middle-to-upper class consumers and has been marketed to places such as supermarkets, hotels, and hospitals. Production KOPTI's daily KOPTI is quite stable, it can even increase when demand increases, such as in the month of Ramadan. However, behind this progress, KOPTI still faces obstacles in terms of digital promotion and marketing because it has not taken advantage of social media and e-

commerce. One of the reasons is the limited technological knowledge among cooperative managers and concerns about the delivery of fresh products such as tempeh through online channels. In addition, another challenge that is no less important is to change the mindset of people who prefer cheap tempeh even though the quality is modest. In fact, quality tempeh is much safer and healthier to consume. Great hopes are also aimed at the younger generation to participate in preserving tempeh as a typical Indonesian food, not only in terms of consumption, but also as business actors who can bring tempeh to be known more widely, including to the international market. Thus, in order for tempeh products from KOPTI to truly upgrade as part of the creative industry, there needs to be a balance between innovation in production and marketing strategies that are more modern and relevant to the times.

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