



Marketing Strategy of Culinary MSMEs: A Case Study of Martabak Manis Serigala in Adiwerna Tegal

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the marketing strategies of Martabak Manis Serigala culinary MSME in Adiwerna District, Tegal Regency. Using qualitative methods, data was collected through interviews and observations, focusing on the marketing mix: product, price, place, and promotion. Findings reveal that the business employs product innovation based on consumer requests, competitive pricing, a strategic location, and simple promotions via word of mouth and WhatsApp. Although sales increased by 25% and 9.26% during 2022-2024, the strategy remains ineffective due to suboptimal digital promotion and limited market reach. Factors supporting success include public interest and customer loyalty, while challenges include limited capital and high competition. The study emphasizes the need for creative marketing strategies to expand market reach and improve performance.

INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the culinary sector play a vital role in driving regional economic development in Indonesia. This sector not only contributes to job creation but also helps preserve traditional cuisine rich in cultural and economic value. Amid increasingly intense competition in the culinary industry, entrepreneurs are required to design efficient marketing approaches in order to survive and grow.

Sweet martabak is one of Indonesia's most popular foods, enjoyed by people from various social groups. Continuous innovation in flavors and toppings has ensured stable demand for this product. One MSME focusing on sweet martabak is *Martabak Manis Serigala*, owned by Akhmad Komaru Zaman and located in Adiwerna District, Tegal Regency. This business is well known for its creativity in flavor variations, diverse portion sizes, and appealing brand identity, enabling it to attract customers despite fierce competition.

Nevertheless, competition among martabak sellers and similar culinary businesses has become increasingly intense, especially with the rise of social media promotion and online food delivery services. This situation requires entrepreneurs to be more innovative in formulating appropriate marketing strategies. Therefore, this study is necessary to examine the marketing strategies implemented by *Martabak Manis Serigala*, including supporting and inhibiting factors, as well as their impact on business sustainability.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Marketing Strategy

Marketing strategy is essentially a comprehensive, integrated, and unified plan in the field of marketing that provides guidance on activities to be carried out in order to achieve a company's marketing objectives. Marketing strategies are systematically and comprehensively designed plans used as guidelines for conducting marketing activities to achieve company goals, namely generating profit (*Marketing Strategies of MSMEs During the Pandemic*, 2021).

Marketing strategy is a comprehensive, integrated, and unified plan in the field of marketing that provides direction for activities to be carried out to achieve company targets through advertising, promotion, sales, product programs, and distribution (Assauri, 2007).

Marketing is one of the main activities that must be carried out by companies producing goods or services to maintain business continuity. This is because marketing is one of the company's activities that directly relates to consumers (Nita et al., 2021).

Marketing is a company's primary task in generating customer satisfaction and long-term consumer welfare as the key to obtaining profit. In marketing products, a marketing mix is required by designing and determining Product, Price, Place, and Promotion (4P) in order to win competition, gain profit, and sustain the business gradually (Yulius, 2023).

Marketing is an interaction that seeks to create exchange relationships. Thus, marketing is conducted both before and after the exchange process occurs in order to create satisfaction for both buyers and sellers (Hari, 2015).

Marketing strategy (the marketing mix) is a set of marketing tools managed and combined by a company to achieve the desired response in the target market (Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G., 2008). Marketing management can be divided into four aspects, commonly referred to as the 4Ps, namely:

1. Product

Product is one of the main elements of the marketing mix. Products can be physical or non-physical. A product is anything offered to the market for use or consumption to satisfy needs and wants. Business owners must ensure that the products they sell are truly beneficial to consumers. The products and services produced must have quality and uniqueness in order to compete in the market.

2. Price

Price is a major determining factor and must be based on the target market, product mix, service, and competition. Price refers to the amount that consumers must pay to obtain the desired product. In other words, consumers will purchase a product if it meets their needs. If competitors offer similar products at lower prices, consumers may switch. Therefore, providing promotions and discounts can help increase sales.

3. Place

A strategic location provides advantages for entrepreneurs because it is more easily accessible to consumers, although it also increases rental and location investment costs. High location costs can be offset by lower marketing costs, whereas less strategic locations require higher marketing expenses to attract consumers.

4. Promotion

Promotion refers to activities carried out by producers to communicate product advantages and to persuade and encourage target consumers to purchase the products being offered.

Martabak Manis Serigala in Adiwerna, Tegal, is a micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) operating in the culinary sector, specifically specializing in sweet martabak products. The products offered include a variety of attractive and high-quality martabak variants. In general, the main ingredients used consist of flour, eggs, and various toppings that characterize sweet martabak. These products are produced through standardized processes, resulting in martabak that are delicious and ready for consumption. Currently, the sweet martabak culinary business is experiencing rapid growth, as reflected in increasing consumer interest and the wide range of innovative product offerings available at each outlet (Purboyo et al., 2023).

Marketing strategy plays a crucial role in the development of this business. Therefore, the implementation of an appropriate marketing strategy is a key determinant of business success. If the marketing strategy is not properly executed, negative impacts may arise, such as stock shortages of products that are in high demand among consumers. In such situations, entrepreneurs need to apply effective approaches to maintain consumer interest by encouraging them to purchase other available products, thereby preventing business losses. The research problem addressed in this study is how the marketing strategy implemented by *Martabak Manis Serigala* in Adiwerna, Tegal, can increase sales.

The objective of this study is to identify and analyze the marketing strategies used to enhance the sales of sweet martabak products.

The penetration pricing strategy, by setting the price at IDR 13,000, was chosen because the company seeks to maximize the function of price as the most flexible element of the marketing mix and the one that most rapidly influences market response, as stated by Kotler and Armstrong (2008). In a price-sensitive market with a high level of competition, low prices become a primary tool to reduce barriers to initial consumer adoption. The pricing of IDR 13,000 is not solely aimed at achieving short-term profits, but rather serves as a strategic instrument to accelerate market penetration, build a customer base, and create a strong perception of value for money. This is consistent with Kotler's view that the marketing mix must be managed in an integrated manner to generate the desired market response, in which price functions both as a signal of value and a driver of initial purchase decisions.

The impact of implementing this penetration pricing strategy is evident in the increased sales volume and the expansion of market share within a relatively short period. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2008), positive market responses such as increased repeat purchases, brand awareness, and early loyalty are indicators of successful marketing mix management. The price of IDR 13,000 enables the product to be more easily accepted by the target segment, encourages trial purchases, and reduces consumers' perceived risk toward new products. In the long term, this strategy can strengthen the company's competitive position because a large customer base creates economies of scale, reduces unit costs, and makes it more difficult for competitors to enter the market with higher prices. Thus, penetration pricing not only affects sales performance but also plays a strategic role in shaping market structure and sustaining the company's competitive advantage in accordance with Kotler's marketing mix framework.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted at the micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) *Martabak Manis Serigala*, a culinary business located in Adiwerna, Tegal. The research period took place from September to December 2025, using sales recap data from 2022 amounting to IDR 432,000,000, followed by IDR 540,000,000 in 2023, and IDR 590,000,000 in 2024, with cumulative data as of December 2024 totaling IDR 1,638,000,000. This study employed a qualitative approach, with data collection methods consisting of interviews and observation. To obtain the data, the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with the owner or manager of *Martabak Manis Serigala* to gain an in-depth analysis of the marketing strategies applied to their products. In addition to interviews, direct observation was also carried out at the business location to observe firsthand the implementation of marketing strategies in practice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Marketing Strategy of Martabak Manis Serigala

The marketing strategy implemented by *Martabak Manis Serigala* in promoting its products is based on the formulation of the marketing mix strategy, which consists of four elements: product, price, place, and promotion.

The company's success in marketing is closely related to its ability to determine the right product, appropriate pricing, effective distribution channels, and efficient promotional activities. The marketing mix—comprising product, price, place, and promotion—is carefully determined by *Martabak Manis Serigala* to ensure customer satisfaction and business sustainability.

Product

The products offered by *Martabak Manis Serigala* are largely made by request according to consumer preferences. However, the company also provides product previews on the menu options, allowing consumers to adjust their choices in advance. The martabak products are divided into two main categories with four flavor variants, namely egg martabak and sweet martabak, with flavors such as cheese, peanuts, and milk. The chocolate variant uses commonly applied chocolate toppings, while the sweet chocolate variant utilizes a combination of chocolate ingredients to produce a higher level of sweetness and richer flavor.

The product strategy of *Martabak Manis Serigala* is oriented toward price and portion segmentation. Product offerings include classic or mini-sized martabak as entry-level products, as well as variants with premium toppings. Product variation refers to the diversity or range of product or service options offered by a company to customers. These variations may include differences in features, design, size, color, taste, model, and other aspects (Andika et al., 2024).

Price

Pricing is one of the most important elements in company management. Prices are determined based on the calculation of required costs (raw material costs, cost of goods sold, and promotional costs), plus the desired profit margin. Prices vary depending on design, materials, and the level of production complexity requested by consumers. By calculating merchandise capital, invested capital, monthly working capital (human resources), initial capital, and final capital, *Martabak Manis Serigala* offers affordable prices ranging from IDR 13,000 to IDR 25,000 per package. Payment methods include cash and debit.

The product pricing range of IDR 13,000 to IDR 25,000 is based on cost calculations and a market segmentation strategy. The IDR 13,000 price for classic martabak reflects the application of a market penetration pricing strategy. Meanwhile, competitors in the surrounding area, such as *Martabak Ireng*, price their products between IDR 19,000 and IDR 35,000, while *Martabak Super Rasa* ranges from IDR 13,000 to IDR 38,000. According to the informant, this pricing strategy is intended to attract high sales volume despite relatively thin profit margins. According to Kotler and Keller (2012), as cited in Nuroni and Suhendar (2016), setting prices as low as possible can help capture a large market share, reduce costs through scale, and allow further price reductions as costs decline.

Place

A good location is one that is strategic and efficient, making it easy for customers and the general public to find. If consumers are unfamiliar with the location, it can be easily tracked via Google Maps, facilitating product purchases. *Martabak Manis Serigala* is located on Jalan Raya Singkil, Adiwerna, Tegal. The business operates daily from 4:00 PM to 11:00 PM. Its selling location is near the *Ayam Geprek Sai* restaurant. As the owner, Akhmad Komaru Zaman pays rent for the shop; therefore, he must carefully consider and select strategic locations to ensure that the products are accessible to the community.

The distribution channel used by *Martabak Manis Serigala* is a direct, digitally based channel with exclusive reliance on WhatsApp. This choice is driven by the high costs charged by third-party food delivery applications in the form of commission fees, which, according to the informant, are incompatible with the small profit margins of MSMEs. The use of WhatsApp is also supported by the close proximity of local customers in Adiwerna, enabling real-time and personalized communication. However, this strategy creates significant operational constraints, particularly difficulties in managing mass orders during peak hours and the absence of integrated logistics. Delivery processes depend on manual coordination with local couriers, requiring individual follow-ups that may reduce service efficiency.

Promotion

Promotion consists of active activities carried out by *Martabak Manis Serigala* to inform, introduce, and influence consumers regarding the products offered. Promotional actions are conducted to encourage consumers to purchase the products. *Martabak Manis Serigala* relies on word-of-mouth promotion as well as WhatsApp-based communication.

The promotional strategy of *Martabak Manis Serigala* is organic in nature and limited in reach. Promotion depends solely on WhatsApp Status features and word-of-mouth marketing from the existing customer base. These limitations result in significant consequences for market growth. The informant stated: "*Finding new customers outside Adiwerna is very difficult. Market growth for martabak tends to be slow, relying only on word of mouth.*" This finding indicates that while the strategy is effective for customer retention, it is less effective for acquiring new customers and expanding market reach, which constitutes a major weakness in the digital promotion aspect.

Results of the Analysis on the Effectiveness of the Marketing Strategy

In 2022, the total recorded sales of *Martabak Manis Serigala* amounted to IDR 432,000,000. In 2023, total sales increased to IDR 540,000,000, indicating a rise in sales volume during that year. In 2024, total sales again increased to IDR 590,000,000, showing continued growth.

Table 1. Sales Data 2022–2024

Year	Total Sales (IDR)
2022	432,000,000
2023	540,000,000
2024	590,000,000

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Business Performance of Martabak Manis Serigala (2022–2023)

The performance of *Martabak Manis Serigala* products in 2022–2023 showed growth and improvement. The performance data for this period are presented below.

Table 2. Product Performance Data of Martabak Manis Serigala (2022–2023)

Description	2022 (IDR)	2023 (IDR)	Growth
Sales	432,000,000	540,000,000	25%

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Based on the table above, sales at *Martabak Manis Serigala* increased by 25% from 2022 to 2023. Sales amounted to IDR 432,000,000 in 2022 and rose to IDR 540,000,000 in 2023.

Product Performance of Martabak Manis Serigala (2023–2024)

The business performance of *Martabak Manis Serigala* in 2023–2024 also experienced growth. The performance data for this period are as follows.

Table 3. Product Performance Data of Martabak Manis Serigala (2023–2024)

Description	2023 (IDR)	2024 (IDR)	Growth
Sales	540,000,000	590,000,000	9.26%

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Based on the table above, sales at *Martabak Manis Serigala* increased by 9.26% from 2023 to 2024. Sales rose from IDR 540,000,000 in 2023 to IDR 590,000,000 in 2024.

Based on sales data from *Martabak Manis Serigala* during the 2022–2024 period, there is a clear upward trend in sales from year to year. Sales increased by 25% from IDR 432,000,000 in 2022 to IDR 540,000,000 in 2023, and then increased again by 9.26% in 2024 to IDR 590,000,000. This positive trend indicates increasingly effective marketing performance. Based on the research findings, the increase in sales was driven by the expansion of marketing strategies, which initially relied solely on walk-in customers and were later developed through broader marketing channels, enabling the business to reach more consumers and increase sales volume.

In addition, *Martabak Manis Serigala* began to expand its product line, which initially focused only on individual-sized sweet martabak, and later expanded to larger-scale products. From year to year, promotional activities became more intensive, and product quality was continuously improved, allowing the business to compete with other similar enterprises.

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that the marketing of *Martabak Manis Serigala* products has been fairly effective, but not yet optimal for wider market expansion. Despite consistent sales growth from 2022 to 2024, the business still relies heavily on word-of-mouth promotion and the WhatsApp platform.

CONCLUSION

The marketing strategy implemented by the MSME *Martabak Manis Serigala* focuses on the marketing mix (4P), which includes product innovation based on consumer demand (by request), competitive and affordable pricing ranging from IDR 13,000 to IDR 25,000 per package, a strategically chosen business location in Adiwerna, Tegal, and simple promotional efforts through word of mouth and the WhatsApp application. Although this strategy successfully recorded sales growth of 25% in 2022–2023 and 9.26% in 2023–2024, overall it has not been sufficiently optimal for broader market expansion. This limitation is primarily due to suboptimal digital promotion and limited market reach, as the business relies solely on the WhatsApp platform, making it difficult to attract new customers outside the local Adiwerna area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Optimization of Social Media

It is necessary to immediately expand promotional activities beyond WhatsApp to visual social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. This aims to reach new customers outside the existing base who have already saved the WhatsApp number.

Local Influencer Promotion

Establish promotional collaborations with local Tegal influencers or food vloggers to leverage their large follower base, which can generate significant benefits and expand brand exposure.

Utilizing Third-Party Applications

Although high commission fees are a challenge, it is advisable to consider joining major food delivery platforms (such as GoFood or GrabFood), focusing on mini or classic portion menus that have high sales volume. This approach is the most effective way to expand market reach beyond the Adiwerna area, which is currently difficult to penetrate. To prevent profit margins from being eroded, a price adjustment (mark-up pricing) strategy should be implemented specifically for these applications by setting slightly higher prices than offline prices to cover platform commission and administrative costs. Sales should focus on mini portions or classic variants with high turnover to remain competitive and profitable.

New Product Development

In addition to accommodating by-request orders, the business should actively develop new product lines aligned with current market trends and consumer needs in order to maintain innovation and competitiveness in a highly competitive market.

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