

FOLKLORE AND LOCAL CULTURE ANALYSIS IN LOCAL PRODUCT MARKETING: STRATEGIES FOR GLOBAL BUSINESS

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Abstract

The problem raised in this study is the challenge local products face in entering an increasingly competitive global market, particularly in integrating local culture and folklore into product marketing strategies. The use of local cultural elements has the potential to be a strong differentiation tool, but it often encounters obstacles in terms of artistic sensitivity and international market acceptance. This research aims to analyze how local culture and folklore can be applied in local product marketing to compete in the global market, as well as to identify the challenges and opportunities companies face in integrating local culture into their marketing strategies. This study employs a literature review approach, where various relevant sources are collected and analyzed to understand the application of local culture in product marketing and explore related challenges and opportunities. The findings of this study indicate that integrating local culture into product marketing can enhance product appeal in the global market, increase consumer loyalty, and build stronger emotional connections with international consumers. However, achieving this success requires in-depth market research and a culturally sensitive approach to avoid miscommunication or cultural distortion.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has brought significant changes to the business world, offering opportunities and significant challenges for local products to enter the global market. One of the primary challenges in this context is how local products can compete with well-established international products. However, behind these challenges lies the great potential that can be harnessed through integrating local culture into product marketing. This culture-based marketing strategy can be key to creating strong product differentiation in the international market.

As global competition intensifies, it is crucial for companies to leverage local culture and folklore as elements in product marketing. These elements not only help create a unique identity for products but also build emotional connections with consumers. According to several studies, incorporating cultural values in marketing can effectively attract consumer

attention, particularly in increasingly heterogeneous international markets (Kusnadi, 2020).

Furthermore, embedding local culture into product branding can add value for consumers while fostering emotional closeness between consumers and the brand. This is especially important as modern consumers tend to seek products that are not only of high quality but also carry deeper meanings related to local culture and traditions. Marketing products showcasing local culture's richness can enhance brand image and create an authentic impression that appeals to global consumers (Dewi & Nugraha, 2021b).

It is essential to understand that local culture and folklore are not just aesthetic elements but also serve as a means to connect products with societal values. In this regard, folklore acts as stories or symbols with deep meanings that can communicate traditional values to consumers. Research by (Saputra, 2022) shows that products incorporating local cultural elements can shape positive brand perceptions, potentially increasing consumer loyalty.

In the global marketing landscape, the concept of local culture in products is becoming increasingly relevant, especially for companies aiming to reach consumers from diverse cultural backgrounds. According to research by (Putra, 2019), the uniqueness of local culture can be used as a differentiation tool to attract consumers in a competitive global market. This approach has proven effective in capturing international market attention, where consumers seek values that align with their identity.

However, despite the significant benefits of integrating local culture into product marketing, several challenges need to be addressed. The insensitive or inappropriate use of local culture can lead to miscommunication and negative consumer responses. Therefore, a deep understanding of local culture and how to convey it in product marketing is essential. Research by (Wibowo & Rahman, 2020) suggests that culture-based marketing should be carried out carefully to avoid cultural distortions that could harm the brand image.

In addition to these challenges, companies must also consider cultural adaptation in a broader context. Local products with cultural elements must be tailored to international market preferences without losing their authenticity. According to (Yuliana & Firdaus, 2021a), cultural adaptation in marketing does not mean altering the essence of the product but rather presenting it in a way that is more acceptable to the global market.

A study by (Prasetyo, 2021) reveals that combining local culture with modern marketing elements can be an effective strategy. In this case, using local cultural symbols in a modern context can attract the attention of young consumers in international markets, who appreciate products with aesthetic value and deep storytelling. Thus, a culture-based approach can establish a stronger connection between products and consumers.

Culture-based marketing is not limited to physical products but can also be applied to services and experiences. In this regard, local products that embody stories or traditions can create meaningful consumer experiences. Research by (Nugroho & Saputro, 2021) has demonstrated this, showing that incorporating local cultural elements in service marketing, such as cultural tourism, can increase consumer interest in destinations.

However, to successfully implement local culture in global product marketing, companies must have a solid understanding of their target markets' social, economic, and cultural contexts. Research by (Sari, 2020) emphasizes the importance of in-depth market research to understand consumer preferences in each country or region targeted. This enables companies to design appropriate and effective marketing strategies.

The use of folklore and local culture in product marketing can be a highly effective strategy in enhancing the competitiveness of local products in the global market. However, implementing this strategy requires a deep understanding of local culture and proper adaptation to ensure acceptance in international markets. This research aims to provide insights into how local culture and folklore can be utilized in local product marketing and how this can offer a competitive advantage in the global market.

The study aims to analyze how folklore and local culture can be incorporated into local product marketing strategies to compete in the global market. Through this research, a deeper understanding is expected regarding how companies can leverage local cultural elements to create strong product differentiation, thereby attracting international consumers. Additionally, this study seeks to identify the challenges and opportunities companies face in integrating local culture into their global marketing strategies. As a result, this research can contribute to the development of culturally relevant marketing theories within a worldwide context.

The urgency of this research lies in the pressing need for local businesses to utilize local culture and folklore to address the challenges of increasingly intense global competition. In the era of globalization, many local products struggle to penetrate international markets due to a lack of appropriate marketing strategies. Local culture can be a highly valuable asset in creating a unique product identity, yet it is often underutilized. Therefore, this study is essential in providing insights and practical recommendations for companies in designing marketing strategies that rely on product quality and harness the strength of local culture to enhance product appeal in the global market.

METHODS

This study employs a literature review approach to analyze the role of folklore and local culture in marketing local products in the global market. In this approach, the author will collect and analyze various relevant literature sources, including journal articles, books, research reports, and other sources discussing related topics. The main focus of this literature review is to understand key concepts in culture-based marketing and explore how companies can utilize local culture and folklore to build effective marketing strategies in international markets. This method allows the author to present a comprehensive understanding based on theories and previous studies conducted by other researchers.

Furthermore, the data obtained from relevant literature will be analyzed to identify common patterns and findings that can provide new insights into the application of local culture in global marketing. This analysis process also includes determining the challenges companies face in using local culture as a marketing tool and how they can overcome these obstacles. Using the literature review method, this study aims to provide a strong theoretical foundation and offer practical recommendations based on findings from existing literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results and Discussion: Integration of Local Culture in Global Product Marketing

Culture-based marketing is crucial in creating a unique identity for local products in the global market. Products incorporating local culture or folklore as part of their branding have significant potential to differentiate themselves from more extensive and established international competitors. Based on existing literature, many companies have successfully

integrated local cultural elements into their marketing strategies, which in turn enhances the appeal of their products in the global market.

One prominent example of using local culture is in the food and beverage industry. For instance, some Indonesian coffee brands, such as Kopi Luwak, leverage folklore about coffee produced through a unique process (*Kopi Luwak*), which is deeply rooted in local traditions. This introduces a distinct product quality and creates a strong and memorable narrative about the product's origin, closely tied to Indonesia's rich cultural heritage (Setiawan & Wijayanti, 2020). The story of how coffee is naturally processed becomes a compelling attraction for global consumers who appreciate products with meaningful cultural backgrounds.

Additionally, in the fashion industry, many local brands incorporate traditional motifs or weaving techniques into their designs to highlight their cultural identity. For example, several Indonesian fashion brands have embraced batik as a key element in their collections for the international market. Batik, a cultural heritage of Indonesia, functions as an aesthetic symbol and conveys valuable traditional values and stories. This provides global consumers with a more profound purchasing experience—not just acquiring a product but also a piece of a rich culture (Kusuma, 2021).

However, despite many success stories, applying local culture in global product marketing also presents challenges that cannot be overlooked. One major issue is the potential mismatch between local cultural values and international consumer preferences. While traditional cultural elements may be highly valued in local markets, they may be perceived as unfamiliar or difficult to understand in global markets. Therefore, companies must carefully interpret their local culture globally (Prabowo & Nurhidayah, 2020).

For example, while using songket fabric in fashion design may be well-received in certain countries, in the global market, it might seem less relevant or may not meet the needs of international consumers who prioritize more universal or modern designs. Hence, it is essential for companies to conduct in-depth market research to determine whether the cultural elements they highlight can be accepted by international audiences (Dewi & Nugraha, 2021a).

The importance of strong narratives in local culture is also evident in beauty product marketing. Some cosmetic brands that feature traditional local ingredients, such as argan oil from Morocco or Manuka honey from New Zealand, have successfully leveraged cultural storytelling to attract international consumers. These ingredients' traditions and natural use have fostered a positive perception and increased brand appeal in the global market (Sukma & Fitria, 2022).

Moreover, local cultural symbols can help create stronger emotional connections between consumers and products. Companies that incorporate cultural elements such as traditional music, art, or local festivals into their marketing strategies can strengthen their brand image. For example, marketing campaigns that feature traditional music or iconic cultural visuals can capture the attention of consumers who feel connected to that culture, even if they come from different backgrounds (Tjahjadi & Tan, 2020).

Despite these advantages, companies must be cautious to avoid cultural exploitation. It is crucial to ensure that local communities are not offended by improper or insensitive interpretations of their culture. The inappropriate or disrespectful use of cultural symbols can lead to adverse reactions from local communities and international consumers who perceive such usage as commercial exploitation (Sari & Wulandari, 2021).

Leveraging local culture effectively in marketing can also foster long-term relationships between brands and consumers. When consumers feel that they are not just purchasing a product but also becoming part of a larger cultural tradition or story, they are more likely to remain loyal to the brand. This loyalty emerges because consumers connect with the values they believe in and appreciate, which are reflected in the products they buy (Hidayat & Fajrina, 2022).

Companies need to integrate local cultural values with a more strategic and data-driven approach in this context. This will allow them to tailor their products to the global market without losing the essence of their culture. By gaining deeper insights into the market and audience, companies can find ways to adapt local culture to be more globally accepted without diminishing its cultural richness (Putra & Setiawan, 2022).

Integrating local culture into global product marketing can provide significant added value for companies. Although there are challenges in adapting local culture to international markets, proper implementation can enhance product competitiveness, create emotional connections with consumers, and establish a strong brand identity. Therefore, companies must continue innovating and developing marketing strategies that emphasize local culture as they expand their global markets.

Challenges and Opportunities in Culture-Based Marketing

Culture-based marketing offers various opportunities for companies to create strong product differentiation. However, integrating local culture into global product marketing strategies presents significant challenges. One of the primary challenges is the potential misinterpretation or misrepresentation of local culture, which could lead to misunderstandings among international consumers. Cultural elements that are positively viewed in one country may be considered negative or irrelevant in another. Thus, companies must conduct in-depth market research to tailor their strategies to local sensitivities (Aulia & Handayani, 2020).

A key challenge can be observed in the food and beverage industry, where the use of ingredients or traditional preparation methods may not be easily accepted in global markets. For example, companies trying to market traditional foods using unfamiliar ingredients often struggle to explain and educate consumers about the cultural value behind their products (Prabowo & Sari, 2021). This demonstrates that businesses must carefully select which cultural elements to integrate to ensure they remain relevant and widely accepted.

Another significant challenge is cultural sensitivity. Marketing incorporating folklore or local symbols must be conducted carefully to avoid offending specific communities. Insensitive use of cultural elements can lead to negative reactions, such as protests or backlash from groups who feel their culture is being exploited. For example, marketing campaigns that use traditional symbols or clothing styles must be carried out with deep understanding and respect to avoid misrepresentation (Dewi & Nugraha, 2021c).

On the other hand, many opportunities exist for companies that successfully integrate local culture into their global marketing strategies. One of the most significant opportunities is increased brand loyalty. Consumers who feel connected to the culture represented in a product tend to develop stronger emotional bonds with the brand. This is evident in brands that use local cultural elements to create a closer image with consumers, enhancing customer retention (Yuliana & Firdaus, 2021b).

The use of folklore and local culture in marketing also provides an opportunity to strengthen emotional engagement with international consumers. Highlighting folklore or cultural symbols with emotional value can create a meaningful and memorable consumer experience. This is evident in marketing campaigns that incorporate local themes, such as festivals or legendary stories related to the product's origin, which capture attention and add value to the consumer experience (Prasetyo & Hidayat, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Culture-based marketing presents significant opportunities for companies to differentiate and build deeper emotional connections with global consumers. By leveraging local cultural elements and folklore, companies can introduce their products as part of a broader tradition and narrative, enhancing appeal and consumer loyalty. However, the challenges of incorporating local culture must be addressed carefully, particularly regarding cultural sensitivity and understanding the diverse preferences of international markets. Therefore, businesses must conduct in-depth market research and collaborate with local communities to ensure that the culture being represented is well-received and not controversial.

Companies that integrate local culture appropriately and sensitively will gain a strong competitive advantage. Authentic, sustainable, and globally relevant cultural elements can enhance brand image and expand market reach. As such, culture-based marketing is a tool to attract consumers and a long-term investment in strengthening brand positioning in the international market. Implementing this strategy can create deeper consumer experiences, reinforce loyalty, and differentiate products from global competitors.

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