



Innovative Marketing Strategy to Increase the Sales of Ulos at Cultural Destinations in Toba Regency, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Meat Village in Toba Regency is renowned for its ulos craftsmanship, which holds significant cultural value for the Batak Toba community. However, the sales of ulos in this village remain low due to the limited effectiveness of marketing strategies that are adaptive to modern market trends and technology. This research aims to formulate innovative marketing strategies to increase ulos sales, sustain the ulos industry, and improve local community welfare. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected through structured questionnaires, observations, and interviews with artisans, traders and tourists. Statistical analysis revealed that innovative distribution strategies particularly through digital platforms and partnerships with the tourism industry, play a significant role in increasing ulos sales. However, the findings also indicate that product innovation and knowledge about ulos need to be enhanced to reach a broader market. Therefore, community-based marketing strategies, digital promotion, and product innovation are recommended to increase competitiveness and expand ulos' market reach nationally and internationally.



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INTRODUCTION

Meat Village, located in Toba Regency, is well-known for its ulos craftsmanship, which holds significant cultural value for the Batak Toba community. However, the sales of ulos in this village remain low due to the lack of effective marketing strategies that are adaptive to both technological advancements and modern market trends. Ulos, traditionally used in various ceremonial rituals, has experienced a decline in demand due to competition from modern textiles, negatively impacting the local economy, which relies heavily on ulos production.

Traditional marketing strategies, such as word-of-mouth and local market sales, have limited the reach of ulos products. A lack of understanding of digital marketing has also hindered the competitiveness of ulos products. While social media has been utilized, there are still limitations in marketing coordination and infrastructure support. Furthermore, the younger generation is less interested in continuing the profession of ulos weaving due to the low income it generates, raising concerns about the sustainability of this industry.

This study aims to formulate effective marketing strategies to increase ulos sales, ensure the sustainability of the ulos industry, and improve the welfare of the local community. With the right marketing strategy, including the use of digital technology, ulos can be developed into a highly marketable cultural product. This research also seeks to provide solutions for the challenges in marketing cultural products in Indonesia, particularly in creative industry-based rural economies.

Problem Formulation:

1. What is the current state of ulos marketing in Meat Village?
2. What factors influence ulos sales in Meat Village?
3. What marketing strategies can be implemented to increase ulos sales in Meat Village?

Research Objectives:

1. To identify the current condition of ulos marketing in Meat Village.
2. To analyze the factors influencing ulos sales.
3. To formulate effective marketing strategies to increase ulos sales in Meat Village.

Research Benefits:

1. To contribute to the literature on marketing strategies for cultural products.
2. To provide guidance for the Meat Village community to improve ulos sales.
3. To serve as a reference for the government in developing policies related to the competitiveness of regional cultural products.

Literature Review

Marketing

Marketing plays a vital role in fostering entrepreneurship and improving community welfare. Effective marketing strategies can help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) enhance visibility and reach wider markets. According to Visser et al. (2021), sustainable marketing not only benefits businesses but also supports infrastructure development and community well-being. Sustainable marketing balances economic profit with social and environmental responsibility, expanding the traditional 4P concept (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) to the 4C model (Cost, Consumer wants and needs, Convenience, Communication) (Belz & Peattie, 2017).

Relevant Marketing Theories:

1. **Ulos Marketing:** In marketing ulos, the "Marketing Mix" concept, which includes product, price, promotion, and place, must be applied. Kotler & Keller (2016) state that adjusting marketing strategies to meet local needs can enhance the effectiveness of marketing cultural products like ulos.
2. **Market Segmentation:** Segmentation is a crucial step in marketing. The ulos market can be divided based on geographic, demographic, and consumer behavior criteria. According to Armstrong et al. (2015), effective segmentation helps ulos artisans reach consumers more aligned with their products.
3. **Target Market Determination:** After segmentation, the target market is identified to focus the marketing strategy. The target market for ulos includes both domestic and international tourists interested in traditional crafts (Kotler & Armstrong, 2020).
4. **Positioning:** Ulos should be positioned as a representation of the cultural and historical richness of Meat Village. Ries & Trout (2001) explain that positioning creates a strong product image in the minds of consumers.
5. **Promotional Strategy:** Ulos can be promoted through a combination of Above The Line (ATL) and Below The Line (BTL) approaches. According to Belch & Belch (2012), combining social media with cultural events can enhance tourist attraction.
6. **Digital Marketing:** Online presence is crucial in the digital era. Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019) assert that using Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and social media can boost the visibility of ulos.
7. **Community Engagement:** Involving the local community in ulos marketing is essential for increasing product competitiveness. Kotler & Keller (2016) emphasize the importance of community empowerment in marketing strategies.
8. **Events and Festivals:** Participation in cultural festivals featuring ulos can increase consumer awareness. Getz & Page (2016) suggest that cultural events serve as a promotional platform for local products.
9. **Feedback and Product Adjustment:** Collecting consumer feedback helps refine marketing strategies and improve products. Kotler & Armstrong (2020) recommend using surveys to understand consumer needs.

10. **Continuous Evaluation and Development:** Ongoing evaluation of marketing strategies is necessary to ensure optimal results. Kerzner (2017) stresses the importance of evaluation in sustainable development.

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing includes strategies such as content marketing and SEO, which help improve product visibility online. Pulizzi (2012) argues that content marketing is a strategy focused on creating and distributing valuable content to attract consumers. Additionally, the use of SEO can improve ulos rankings in search engines, as discussed by Anttila (2021).

Direct Marketing

Direct marketing enables producers to sell products directly to consumers without intermediaries. According to Kumar & Reinartz (2016), personalization in marketing enhances customer satisfaction by offering products tailored to their needs. Furthermore, Peppers & Rogers (2011) mention that responsive direct interaction builds consumer trust and strengthens customer relationships. Data analysis also helps optimize direct marketing, as suggested by Brown & Chui (2018).

By applying these marketing theories, Meat Village can develop more effective marketing strategies to boost ulos sales.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach aimed at measuring the variables that influence marketing strategies to increase ulos sales in Meat Village, Toba Regency. This approach relies on numerical data obtained through structured questionnaire surveys and is analyzed using statistical methods such as linear regression and descriptive analysis. The study is also designed to generalize the findings to a broader population.

Research Location and Subjects

The research was conducted in Meat Village, North Sumatra, known for its ulos craftsmanship. The research subjects consisted of artisans, traders, tourists, and village officials, selected using a stratified random sampling technique. The sample included 60 individuals, comprising 30 ulos artisans, 19 traders, 10 tourists, and 1 village official.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through structured questionnaires using a Likert scale, direct or online surveys, field observations, and documentation. In addition, structured interviews were used to complement and deepen the understanding of ulos marketing strategies.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using statistical tests such as linear regression and correlation analysis. The validity and reliability of the instruments were tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, along with content and construct validity tests. Descriptive analysis provided an overview of the sample characteristics, while regression analysis identified the factors most influencing ulos sales.

Instrument Validity and Reliability Testing

The validity of the research instruments was tested to ensure that the questionnaire was relevant to the research objectives, while reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha to

ensure data consistency. Validity was tested with the assistance of experts, and reliability was tested using the test-retest technique if necessary.

Research Ethics

The researcher adhered to ethical principles, including informed consent, anonymity, and the protection of participants' privacy. Participants' right to withdraw from the study was guaranteed, and the research was conducted with transparency and honesty. This research methodology is expected to provide valid and reliable results, contributing to the improvement of ulos marketing strategies in Meat Village.

Data Analysis Results

After processing the questionnaire results using the SPSS application, the author can outline the following key points: The descriptive statistics derived from the analysis are as follows:

Table 1: Descriptive Data on Ulos, Marketing, and Innovation

	ULOS	ULOS.1	PASR	PASR.1	PASR.2	INOV	INOV.1	INOV.2
count	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61
mean	1.57377	1.704918	3.147541	1.688525	1.377049	1.557377	2.590164	1.672131
std	0.740698	1.394564	1.860431	1.323392	0.488669	0.695811	1.810866	1.044371
min	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
25%	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
50%	1	1	3	1	1	1	2	1
75%	2	2	5	2	2	2	5	2
max	3	5	5	5	2	4	5	5

Table 2: Descriptive Data on Opportunities and Strategies

	PLNG	PLNG.1	STRA	STRA.1	STRA.2	STRA.3	STRA.4	STRA.5
count	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61
mean	1.803279	2.557377	1.852459	1.95082	1.770492	2.47541	2.393443	2.42623
std	1.045939	1.586659	0.92801	1.131757	1.188745	0.923879	0.861756	0.845754
min	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
25%	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
50%	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2
75%	2	4	2	2	2	3	3	3
max	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

Data Analysis

The Cronbach's Alpha value from the data analyzed is 0.846. This indicates that the questionnaire has good internal consistency. Generally, a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.7 is considered acceptable and suggests that the questions in the questionnaire are consistent in measuring the same or related concepts.

Here is an explanation of the analyzed results:

1. Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)

- Cronbach's Alpha 0.846: This means that the questions in the questionnaire are strongly correlated. The closer the value is to 1, the more reliable the questionnaire. This value

indicates that the data collected from the respondents is consistent and reliable for further research.

2. Descriptive Analysis

• Descriptive statistics, such as the mean, standard deviation, and the minimum and maximum values of each variable, have been calculated and displayed. This analysis provides a general overview of how respondents answered each question. By observing the mean and standard deviation, one can understand the trends and variability in responses.

3. Hypothesis Testing

The following are the results of hypothesis testing from the data analyzed using Linear Regression, Pearson Correlation, T-test, and ANOVA:

a. Linear Regression

• Regression Coefficients:

- ULOS: -0.1219
- ULOS.1: 0.0474
- PASR: -0.0499
- PASR.1: 0.3131
- INOV: -0.1004
- INOV.1: 0.0519

This shows that some variables, such as PASR.1, have a relatively strong positive effect on PLNG (ulos sales), while other variables have smaller or negative effects.

• Intercept (constant): 1.565

This indicates that if all independent variables have a value of 0, the value of PLNG (ulos sales) will still be around 1.565.

• R-squared Score: 0.134

This R-squared score indicates that only about 13.4% of the variation in PLNG can be explained by the independent variables in this regression model, suggesting that the model has weak explanatory power.

b. Pearson Correlation Test

- ULOS: 0.148 (weak positive correlation)
- ULOS.1: 0.005 (very weak correlation)
- PASR: -0.010 (very weak negative correlation)
- PASR.1: 0.340 (moderate positive correlation)
- INOV: 0.107 (weak positive correlation)
- INOV.1: 0.203 (weak positive correlation)

From the correlation test, the PASR.1 variable has the strongest correlation with the PLNG variable (0.340), indicating a moderate positive relationship.

c. T-test

- T-statistic: -0.67
- P-value: 0.504

The T-test results show that there is no significant difference between the ULOS and ULOS.1 variables, as the p-value is greater than 0.05 (not significant).

d. ANOVA

- ANOVA F-statistic: 20.38
- P-value: 9.91×10^{-9} (highly significant)

The ANOVA results indicate significant differences among the PASR, PASR.1, and

PLNG groups. The very low p-value suggests that there are substantial differences between these groups.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal several important findings based on the data analysis conducted. In the descriptive analysis, it is evident that the mean values of variables such as ULOS, PASR, INOV, and others show certain trends, with PASR.1 having a higher mean, indicating the importance of distribution or marketing strategies in increasing Ulos sales. The descriptive statistics also show significant variation in responses, particularly with PASR and INOV, which have relatively high standard deviations. Furthermore, the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.846 indicates that the questionnaire data has good internal consistency, ensuring the validity of the analysis.

In hypothesis testing, the linear regression results show that PASR.1 has a significant positive impact on PLNG (Ulos sales), with a coefficient of 0.3131. However, the R-squared value of only 13.4% indicates that this model explains only a small portion of the variation in Ulos sales, suggesting that there are many other factors influencing sales that are not captured by this model. The Pearson correlation results support this, with PASR.1 having a moderate positive correlation of 0.340 with PLNG, showing a fairly strong relationship. Meanwhile, the T-test results show no significant difference between ULOS and ULOS.1 variables. The ANOVA results highlight significant differences among the groups, particularly for the PASR, PASR.1, and PLNG variables, with a very low p-value indicating substantial differences between these groups.

Next, the multiple regression analysis reveals that PASR.1 is the most significant variable influencing Ulos sales, with a p-value of 0.031. This indicates that more innovative distribution or marketing strategies, such as through digital platforms or partnerships with souvenir shops and e-commerce, can have a significant positive effect on increasing Ulos sales. However, other variables such as INOV, ULOS, and PASR do not show a significant impact on PLNG, suggesting that these factors may play a role but their effects are not clearly identified in this model.

The results of the classical assumption tests provide important insights. The normality test shows that the residuals are not normally distributed (p-value = 0.00017), meaning the normality assumption is not met in this model. However, there are no significant multicollinearity issues, as the VIF for all variables is below 10. The heteroscedasticity test indicates no issues (p-value = 0.669), suggesting that residual variance is constant. Additionally, the autocorrelation test reveals a Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.53, showing no autocorrelation in the residuals.

The findings suggest that PASR.1 (distribution or marketing strategy) has the most significant impact on Ulos sales. A positive coefficient of 0.3131 indicates that improving distribution or marketing channels, especially through digital platforms and partnerships with various industries, can significantly enhance Ulos sales. This finding aligns with existing literature suggesting that effective marketing and the use of innovative distribution channels are critical in improving the competitiveness of local products, particularly cultural products like Ulos. Although variables such as INOV and ULOS did not show a significant impact, it does not mean they are unimportant. Product design and innovation remain crucial in building brand image and increasing consumer trust in the product.

The low R-squared value of 13.4% indicates that the model only explains a small portion of the variation in Ulos sales, meaning that many other factors are influencing Ulos sales that are not captured in this study. Factors such as product quality, design appeal, and local economic conditions may play a larger role in determining Ulos sales and need to be considered in future research with a

more comprehensive model. Therefore, expanding the scope of the variables in future studies will help capture a clearer understanding of the factors that influence the sales of this cultural product.

This study also emphasizes the importance of digital technology in marketing traditional products. Increasing distribution through e-commerce platforms and partnerships with the tourism industry is a strategic move that can open up wider market access, both domestically and internationally. This suggests that local SMEs should be more proactive in adopting digital technologies to support their marketing efforts, allowing them to compete in the increasingly connected global market.

Although this study has limitations, such as the low explanatory power of the model, the findings provide valuable insights for governments, local businesses, and communities to enhance the marketing and distribution of cultural products. Governments can play a vital role by providing training, certification, and digital infrastructure support, which can accelerate the growth of culture-based economies. Additionally, innovation in packaging and branding needs to be considered to make Ulos more appealing to consumers, especially in souvenir shops and digital platforms, and to strengthen its position as a leading cultural product.

CONCLUSION

Other variables that may not be well-represented in this model but should be considered in marketing strategies include aspects of product knowledge, design innovation, as well as other barriers and opportunities that can be explored further. It was found that the variable PASR.1 (which can be interpreted as a distribution or marketing strategy) has a significant impact on increasing ulos sales. The positive coefficient of 0.3131 indicates that every improvement in the effectiveness of ulos distribution will enhance the sales opportunities or volume in Meat Village. This means that ulos distributed through more effective marketing channels, such as partnerships with souvenir shops, sales in cultural galleries, and e-commerce platforms, will increase consumer awareness and accessibility to ulos.

The conclusion of this study indicates that innovative marketing strategies, particularly through digital distribution channels (PASR.1), play a key role in increasing ulos sales in Meat Village, Toba Regency. Partnerships with souvenir shops, cultural exhibitions, and e-commerce platforms have proven to enhance consumer accessibility and awareness of ulos products, both locally and internationally. Wider and more effective distribution is crucial in boosting ulos sales opportunities.

Although other variables, such as product knowledge (ULOS) and product innovation (INOV), are not significant in this model, they are still considered important in building brand image and consumer trust. Design and packaging innovation, especially those that appeal to younger consumers and international markets, remain potential competitive advantages for ulos products. An R-squared value of 13.4% indicates that many other factors influencing ulos sales, such as product quality, local economic conditions, and socio-cultural factors, are not explained by this model. A more complex model could better capture the dynamics of these factors.

This study introduces a novel approach to using digital technology for marketing traditional cultural products and empowering local communities. Furthermore, it provides guidance to the government and local businesses on the importance of more organized and innovative distribution to maximize ulos sales potential. Government support in the form of training, certification, and digital infrastructure is also crucial for the development of the culture-based local economy in Meat Village. Overall, this study not only contributes to the literature on marketing strategies for cultural products but also provides practical recommendations that can be applied to improve community welfare through more effective and sustainable ulos marketing.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This article has undergone an independent and objective review process. The editor handling this article was not involved in any previous publications with the author, and to maintain

independence, the peer review process was conducted by another editor who has no direct relationship with the author.

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