



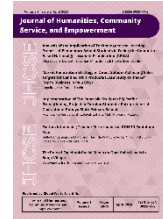
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### Strategy to Increase Brand Awareness of Kacandipa Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Through Marketing Events in Sunju Village, Marawola District

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E-mail: Carolllorent19@gmail.com<sup>1)</sup>, ira\_nuria@yahoo.com<sup>2)</sup>, ppaidjan@gmail.com<sup>3)</sup>, zelo.auriza65@gmail.com<sup>4)</sup>

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Historis:</i> Submit 1 December 2024 Review 22 January 2025 Revision 21 February 2025 Accepted 17 March 2025 Publish 29 April 2025</p> <hr/> <p><i>Keywords:</i> Brand Awareness, MSMEs Kacandipa, Event Marketing, Social Media, Digital Marketing</p> <hr/> <p><i>Corresponding Author:</i> Charol Lorent Sandana email: <a href="mailto:Carolllorent19@gmail.com">Carolllorent19@gmail.com</a></p>	<p>This study aims to explore the effectiveness of event marketing in increasing brand awareness of Kacandipa MSME products in Sunju Village, Marawola District. The results of the study indicate that marketing events, especially culinary folk festivals, have a significant impact on introducing products to consumers both locally and outside the village. Before the event, Kacandipa products were less well-known, but after the event, there was a significant increase in demand, especially from outside the village. The use of promotional media, both offline through banners and flyers, and online through social media, has proven effective in expanding the market and introducing products more widely. This is in line with marketing theory which states that the combination of conventional and digital marketing will increase brand awareness more effectively.</p> <p>In addition to increasing brand awareness, marketing events also have a positive impact on consumer loyalty. Many consumers feel connected to the product after hearing the story of Kacandipa's origins, which strengthens their emotional connection to the product. The use of social media in this event also opens up greater market opportunities for Kacandipa MSMEs. Although there are challenges related to limited funds and understanding of digital marketing among MSMEs, this study shows that with greater support from the village government and local communities, this event-based marketing strategy can provide significant long-term benefits for MSMEs and the village economy.</p>

### INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in the Indonesian economy, contributing significantly to job creation and improving people's welfare (Ananda, 2022). The number of MSMEs in Indonesia reaches 99.9 percent of all businesses, absorbing 97 percent of the

workforce and contributing 60.34 percent of GDP. The Indonesian government continues to strive to strengthen the capacity of MSMEs through various training and mentoring programs so that Indonesian entrepreneurs have high competitiveness (Munir et al., 2023). This is also confirmed by Yuliana et al. (2024), who stated that a strong brand reputation can increase brand awareness and image, where MSMEs that have a good branding strategy can attract more attention and trust from consumers. An important strategy in developing MSMEs is increasing brand awareness, which plays a vital role in expanding the market and building customer loyalty (Paunović et al., 2022).

Brand awareness is one of the key elements in the marketing strategy of MSME products and can be increased through various marketing approaches, including the use of social media, discount promotions, and event marketing (Cid et al., 2022). According to Faisal & Ekawanto (2022), marketing through social media can increase brand awareness, which is very important for MSMEs who want to grow. Event-based marketing has proven effective in building brand awareness (Nwali & Ntegeeh, 2022). Products that are familiar to consumers and have an easy-to-remember identity, such as logos and slogans, will be superior in a competitive market (Yin, 2023). Therefore, MSMEs need to adopt relevant and efficient marketing strategies to maintain their competitiveness (Ge & Ge, 2023; Wu et al., 2019).

In Sunju Village, Marawola District, local MSME products such as kacandipa face challenges in expanding their market. Kacandipa, which is made from black and white glutinous rice, peanuts, lime, and sugar, has a distinctive sweet and savory taste. However, in recent years, declining production and the lack of effective marketing strategies have caused this product to be less widely known (Shahrin et al., 2022). Therefore, strategic efforts are needed to introduce this product to more consumers and expand the kacandipa market at the local and national levels (Chung et al., 2019).

One strategy that can be applied is event marketing, which is marketing through events or festivals that directly involve consumers. Event marketing, such as culinary festivals, provides an opportunity for MSMEs to promote their products directly to consumers and introduce brand image (Zhao et al., 2020). In the context of Sunju Village, marketing events such as culinary folk festivals will be an effective platform to build brand awareness and attract more customers (Elezaj et al., 2023).

Event marketing provides an opportunity for MSMEs to interact directly with consumers. MSME entrepreneurs can offer product samples, demonstrate how to make them, and build networks with other business actors. Direct experience with a product can strengthen perceptions of quality and customer satisfaction, which in turn can increase consumer loyalty (Aslam et al., 2021). Marketing events also allow entrepreneurs to obtain direct feedback from consumers, which is invaluable in product improvement and development efforts (Lawal & Adejuwon, 2023).

In addition to the benefits in terms of brand awareness, event marketing can have a positive economic impact on the local community. Marketing events not only benefit MSMEs in terms of increasing product sales, but also provide opportunities for other sectors, such as decoration service providers, local musicians, and raw material suppliers (Caraballo-Payares et al., 2024). Thus, this kind of event creates a broader positive impact, improving the welfare of the local community as a whole (B. Li & Li, 2018). Local economic development and collaboration between sectors further strengthen the sustainability of the marketing events carried out (Dhewi et al., 2021).

To ensure the success of event marketing in increasing brand awareness, support is needed from various parties, including the village government, local communities, and MSME support institutions. Effective collaboration between these parties will strengthen the implementation of marketing events and make it a sustainable annual agenda. With this sustainability, it is hoped that significant long-term benefits will be created for MSMEs in Sunju Village and its surroundings, as well as improving the welfare of the community as a whole (Li, 2023; Tajpour et al., 2023).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach to analyze how marketing strategies through marketing events can increase brand awareness of Kacandipa MSMEs in Sunju Village, Marawola District. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore phenomena in an in-depth context and provide a richer picture of the experiences and interactions that occur in the field. Qualitative research aims to understand the social meanings constructed by individuals in certain situations, so this study will explore how the implementation of marketing events can influence consumer perceptions of Kacandipa products. Case study is the method chosen because it allows this study to explore the implementation of event marketing-based marketing strategies in Sunju Village, which specifically aims to increase brand awareness of Kacandipa products, in accordance with the importance of understanding the local context in marketing products (Azizan et al., 2023; Fitri & Herdiansyah, 2021).

As suggested by Yin (2014), case studies can provide in-depth insights into phenomena in their original context. In this study, the case study will focus on a culinary folk festival held in Sunju Village and how the event can influence public perceptions of Kacandipa products. Data collection was carried out through various techniques, including participant observation and in-depth interviews. Participatory observation was carried out by being directly involved in marketing events to understand the interactions between consumers, MSME actors, and other stakeholders (Yang & Ha, 2014). With this technique, researchers can gain a better understanding of consumer responses to Kacandipa products, the effectiveness of promotions, and elements that attract the attention of the audience during the event. In addition, in-depth interviews with MSME business owners and consumers who participated in the event will provide further perspectives on their experiences with the product and the impact of the marketing event on brand awareness, as supported by research that found that direct interaction at marketing events is very effective in increasing brand awareness (Azizan et al., 2023).

The data analysis method used is thematic analysis, which aims to identify key patterns in the data collected, both from interviews and observations. Thematic analysis will help researchers to group themes that emerge in the experiences of MSME owners and consumers related to marketing events and their influence on increasing brand awareness. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study also uses triangulation techniques, which compare data from various sources such as observations, interviews, and documentation (Kao, 2022). Triangulation helps provide a more holistic and in-depth picture of the phenomenon being studied.

Through this approach, this study aims to provide deeper insight into how event-based marketing strategies, especially event marketing, can be effective in increasing brand awareness of MSME products in rural areas. The results of this study are expected to provide practical contributions for MSME actors, especially in Sunju Village, in designing more effective and sustainable marketing strategies, which can contribute to their business growth. This study supports the literature stating that the quality of marketing events contributes significantly to the creation and enhancement of brand awareness (Williams et al., 2014).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

This study aims to explore how marketing events, especially culinary folk festivals, can increase brand awareness of Kacandipa UMKM products in Sunju Village, Marawola District. Based on the results of interviews and observations conducted during the event, it was found that the marketing event had a very positive impact on increasing product recognition among the community, both local and outside the village. Before this marketing event, Kacandipa products were less well-known

outside Sunju Village. However, after the event, many consumers were interested in buying this product, which was indicated by an increase in demand from outside the village. The promotional media used in the event, such as banners, flyers, and social media, proved effective in introducing Kacandipa products to a wider audience.

The owner of Kacandipa UMKM explained that after the event, they saw a significant increase in Kacandipa product sales. He said, "Sales increased, especially from customers who came after the event. They felt more familiar with the product, and some customers said they would buy again in the future." He also added that the marketing event gave more attention to social media, which helped expand their market digitally. This confirms that the combination of offline and online marketing has a more effective impact in increasing brand awareness.

In addition, interviews with consumers who attended also confirmed that the marketing event had a significant impact on their perception of Kacandipa products. Many consumers who were trying the product for the first time were impressed by the sweet and savory taste offered. One consumer said, "I tried Kacandipa for the first time at this event, and I was very impressed by the sweet and savory taste. After trying it, I am interested in buying it again." This shows that event marketing not only plays a role in increasing brand awareness, but also creates customer loyalty through direct experience with the product, which can increase the likelihood of them making repeat purchases.

In terms of marketing strategy, direct observation during the event showed that the storytelling element had a very positive impact in attracting consumer attention. Visitors seemed more interested in trying the product after hearing the story about the origin and uniqueness of Kacandipa. The emotional element in marketing can strengthen consumers' memory of the brand and create a deeper relationship. People feel more connected to the product, which strengthens their recognition of the brand and increases positive perceptions of Kacandipa products.

The Sunju Village Government also acknowledged that this event had a positive impact not only on Kacandipa MSMEs, but also to introduce other local products. They saw an increase in interest from outsiders to buy local products, and this event helped improve the village economy as a whole. The village government emphasized the importance of collaboration between various parties to ensure that this marketing event can be carried out sustainably, by using technology to support promotions so that the impact of this event can last in the long term. This shows that strong collaboration between the village government, MSMEs, and other sectors such as MSME support institutions is very important for the sustainability of this marketing event.

However, although this marketing event successfully increased brand awareness, this study also noted several challenges, especially related to limited funds that hampered the scale of the event and the promotional media used. Another challenge is the need to improve MSMEs' understanding of digital marketing. Many MSMEs have not fully utilized the potential of digital marketing, and further education is needed to ensure the sustainability of the positive impact of this marketing event.

Overall, this study reveals that event marketing is an effective strategy to increase brand awareness of Kacandipa MSME products in Sunju Village. The use of appropriate promotional media, storytelling elements, and support from various parties involved in this event have succeeded in increasing product recognition and expanding market share. Collaboration between the village government, MSMEs, and local communities is very important to support the sustainability of this program. In addition, with more optimal use of technology and more intensive digital marketing education, MSMEs in Sunju Village can be more competitive and successful in introducing their products to a wider market. The implementation of this event-based marketing strategy, with the right adjustments, can create positive long-term effects for MSMEs and the village economy as a whole.

## **Discussion**

This study shows that marketing events such as culinary folk festivals held in Sunju Village have a significant impact on increasing brand awareness of Kacandipa MSME products. Before the event, Kacandipa products were less well-known outside Sunju Village; however, after the event, many consumers were interested in trying the product and increased demand for products from outside the village. This proves that marketing events that involve direct interaction with consumers are very effective in introducing products to a wider audience, as supported by research showing that direct experience in marketing events can strengthen brand awareness and increase consumer desire to buy (Atika, 2023; Sari & Putri, 2024).

In line with the results of research by Kotler and Keller (2016), marketing events can create an immersive experience for consumers and strengthen their memory of the brand, which is clearly seen in the increase in awareness and interest in Kacandipa products. In addition to increasing product recognition, the results of interviews with Kacandipa MSME owners indicate that the use of various promotional channels such as banners, flyers, and social media plays a very important role in attracting consumer attention (Atika, 2023; Ratnasari et al., 2024). Business owners revealed that marketing events not only increase direct sales but also provide long-term effects through the presence of social media which helps expand their market. This shows the importance of a combination of offline and online marketing in strengthening brand awareness, as emphasized by Wijayanti and Rahman (2020), who stated that the two marketing approaches complement each other to create stronger brand recognition (Atika, 2023).

From the consumer side, the marketing event also succeeded in building a strong emotional connection between consumers and the product. Many consumers who tasted Kacandipa for the first time at the event were impressed with the taste and intended to buy again. In addition, the story shared about the origin of the Kacandipa product added value to the product, making consumers feel more connected. Emotional elements in marketing can strengthen consumers' memory of the brand and create deeper attachments (Arie & Fikry, 2021).

The Sunju Village Government also saw the positive impact of this marketing event, not only for Kacandipa MSMEs, but also for other local products. The increased interest from people outside the village showed that this marketing event was successful in introducing local products and increasing public awareness of the potential of products in their village (Budiarto et al., 2023). The village government emphasized the importance of collaboration between various parties, including the government, MSME actors, and supporting institutions, to ensure that marketing events like this can be implemented sustainably and provide greater economic benefits (Ratnasari et al., 2024). This underscores the important role of collaboration in the success of marketing events and their sustainability.

However, this study also noted several challenges that need to be overcome, especially limited funds that hinder the implementation of events on a larger scale. Limited promotional media and the costs required to organize larger events are obstacles that MSMEs must consider (Hayati et al., 2024; Hidayat, 2025). Another challenge is the need to improve MSMEs' understanding of digital marketing. Many MSMEs have not fully utilized the potential of digital marketing to expand their market (Desrizal et al., 2023). Therefore, it is important for MSMEs to get further education about digital marketing so that they can continue to compete in an increasingly competitive market.

Overall, this study shows that marketing events are a very effective strategy to increase brand awareness of Kacandipa MSME products. The application of storytelling elements and the use of social media have had a positive impact on brand recognition and expanding market share. Collaboration between MSME actors, village governments, and local communities is a key factor in the success of this marketing event (Fazry, 2023). Greater support is needed to ensure that marketing events can be carried out sustainably and provide long-term benefits for MSMEs in Sunju Village. In order for the impact of this marketing event to last longer, more optimal use of

technology is needed. For example, MSMEs in Sunju Village can strengthen the use of technology to support their promotions and expand market reach (Astuti & Rosita, 2024; Yunardhani et al., 2024). Training on digital marketing and the use of social media must be the main agenda for MSMEs so that they can be more competitive and survive in a market that is increasingly connected to digital technology.

## CONCLUSION

This study revealed that event marketing, especially through events such as culinary folk festivals, has proven effective in increasing brand awareness of Kacandipa UMKM products in Sunju Village. This event successfully introduced Kacandipa products to a wider audience, both inside and outside the village. Promotional media, such as banners, flyers, and social media, play a key role in expanding market reach, which ultimately increases sales and attracts more consumers. The direct experience provided through this event not only introduces the product but also creates a strong emotional connection between consumers and the product, leading to customer loyalty and continued purchases.

Although the marketing event had a positive impact, several challenges must be overcome to ensure its sustainability. Limited funds that hinder the scale of the event and limited promotional media are the main obstacles that need to be overcome. In addition, education on digital marketing is also needed for MSMEs so that they can better utilize technology to expand their market. Support from various parties, including the village government and MSME support institutions, is very important to ensure that the marketing event can be carried out sustainably and provide long-term benefits. With the improvement and utilization of technology, MSMEs in Sunju Village can continue to grow, introduce their products more widely, and contribute to the village economy.

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