

Integration of Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship in Building Competitive Local Brands

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Article Info

Article history:

Received May, 2025

Revised May, 2025

Accepted May, 2025

Keywords:

Digital Marketing,
Entrepreneurship,
Brand Competitiveness,
Creative Economy,
Small and Medium Enterprises
(SMEs)

ABSTRACT

This study explores the integration of Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship in building competitive local brands within Indonesia's creative economy. Using a quantitative approach, data was collected from 110 respondents using a Likert scale survey, and analyzed through SPSS version 25. The research aimed to investigate how digital marketing strategies and entrepreneurial behavior contribute to brand competitiveness in the context of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The results showed that both Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship have a significant positive effect on Brand Competitiveness, with Digital Marketing having a slightly stronger impact. The model accounted for 65.9% of the variance in brand competitiveness, emphasizing the importance of leveraging digital tools alongside entrepreneurial strategies. The study highlights that integrating digital marketing with entrepreneurial innovation is key to strengthening local brands and enhancing their competitive advantage in Indonesia's rapidly growing creative economy.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The creative economy has become a cornerstone of economic growth and cultural identity in Indonesia, significantly contributing to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), creating jobs, and fostering innovation. However, local brands within this sector face intense competition from both domestic and international markets, necessitating strategic approaches to remain competitive. To address this, two critical strategies—digital marketing and

entrepreneurship—are essential, as they align with global trends while preserving a strong local identity. Digitalization is crucial for expanding market reach and improving operational efficiency, with entrepreneurs increasingly utilizing e-commerce, social media, and digital applications to promote products and engage consumers effectively [1]. Nonetheless, challenges such as limited internet infrastructure and low digital literacy among small and medium enterprises persist, underscoring the need for policy support and digital literacy programs [1]. In parallel,

entrepreneurship in the creative sector thrives on Indonesia's cultural diversity and rich creative resources, which provide a competitive edge in the global market [2]. Government policies and support play a vital role in fostering innovation and competitiveness by identifying leading subsectors, enhancing infrastructure, and improving access to capital [2]. The sector's potential is further highlighted by its significant GDP contribution, growing from Rp525.96 trillion to Rp852.24 trillion between 2010 and 2015 [3].

Digital marketing has revolutionized traditional marketing strategies by enabling businesses to reach global audiences and enhance brand visibility through platforms like social media, search engine optimization (SEO), and content marketing [4]. This approach allows for targeted advertising and personalized communication, which are essential for engaging niche markets and building customer loyalty [5]. Furthermore, the use of data analytics in digital marketing delivers measurable results and a high return on investment, making it an indispensable tool for modern businesses [4]. For local brands in Indonesia's creative economy, digital marketing provides a valuable opportunity to amplify visibility, connect with specific market segments, and foster customer engagement. Simultaneously, entrepreneurship plays a critical role in promoting innovation, risk-taking, and adaptability, all of which are crucial for navigating rapidly changing market conditions. The integration of digital marketing and entrepreneurship creates synergistic effects that enhance the competitiveness of local brands, particularly in Indonesia's burgeoning creative economy. This integration is increasingly recognized as a powerful strategy, as digital marketing becomes integral to entrepreneurial ventures, facilitating market development and penetration [6], [7]. Entrepreneurs can harness digital tools to remain agile and responsive, although they must also address challenges related to strategic adoption and capability enhancement [7]. In the Indonesian context, social media marketing activities (SMMA)

have proven especially important for local brands and small to medium enterprises (SMEs) seeking to extend their reach and minimize operational costs in competitive environments [8]. The effectiveness of SMMA is influenced by factors such as precision in information delivery and alignment with current trends [8]. Overall, digital marketing strategies significantly contribute to strengthening brand visibility and customer relationships, thereby fostering long-term business growth [5].

Despite the potential benefits, many local entrepreneurs struggle to fully capitalize on digital marketing tools due to limited resources, lack of technical expertise, and inadequate understanding of consumer behavior in the digital age. Additionally, the entrepreneurial capacity of many small business owners is constrained by challenges such as limited access to financing, inconsistent government support, and a rapidly evolving market landscape. These limitations hinder the ability of local brands to achieve sustainable growth and establish themselves as competitive players in the global arena. This study aims to address these challenges by examining the relationship between digital marketing, entrepreneurship, and the competitiveness of local brands in Indonesia's creative economy.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is a pivotal tool for local brands aiming to enhance visibility and customer engagement, utilizing digital channels such as social media, SEO, and email marketing to reach targeted audiences effectively. By emphasizing authenticity and cultural heritage, local businesses can build brand loyalty and compete with larger enterprises, although challenges like limited budgets and technical expertise may hinder their full potential. The impact of digital marketing on local brands is multifaceted: it boosts customer interaction and satisfaction through platforms like social media and email, thereby enhancing engagement and brand loyalty [5], [9]; it also drives increased

sales and revenue through targeted advertising and improved online visibility via [9], [10]; and it strengthens brand identity through consistent and engaging content that highlights cultural uniqueness [5], [9]. Effective digital marketing strategies include Social Media Marketing (SMM) through platforms like Instagram and Facebook for relationship-building and awareness, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) for attracting organic traffic, content marketing for delivering audience value and credibility, and email marketing for personalization and customer retention, even as a traditional method [11]. However, local brands often grapple with limited resources and technical skills [10], and the need to keep up with rapidly evolving digital trends necessitates strategic planning and continuous learning [9]. Solutions such as intensive training, creative content management, and the adoption of advanced technologies are recommended to overcome these barriers and fully harness the potential of digital marketing [10].

2.2 Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in the creative economy by fostering innovation, adaptability, and resilience—qualities essential for local brands to thrive amid competitive market dynamics. Drawing from Schumpeter's theory, entrepreneurs are seen as key drivers of economic development through innovation that disrupts traditional markets and creates new value. Traits such as risk-taking, creativity, and proactiveness enable local entrepreneurs to seize market opportunities and overcome challenges like limited resources and global competition. Innovative entrepreneurship not only stimulates growth through high-value innovations but also contributes to economic activities, job creation, and balanced regional development, thus enhancing living standards [12], [13]. Creativity is deeply interwoven with entrepreneurship, requiring entrepreneurs to recombine existing resources in novel ways to deliver unique products and services [14]. This creative innovation is fundamental for businesses to differentiate themselves and meet evolving market needs,

ultimately leading to sustained competitive advantage [15]. Entrepreneurial orientation—marked by innovativeness, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy—empowers local brands to respond effectively to changing consumer preferences and dynamic social, political, and economic conditions [13], [14], positioning them for long-term success in the creative economy.

2.3 Brand Competitiveness

Brand competitiveness in Indonesia's creative economy involves leveraging cultural elements and heritage to create distinctive value propositions, in line with Aaker's (1996) view that integrating local traditions into branding enhances trust and differentiation. To remain competitive, local brands must also meet global standards in quality, marketing, and customer experience through a balanced mix of traditional and modern branding. Effective marketing strategies help build strong brand images and foster consumer loyalty [16], while also requiring a clear understanding of market demands and brand positioning [17]. According to Nilson (1998), competitive branding includes creating value-added brands through unique values, pricing strategies, and multi-channel communication. Embedding cultural narratives into branding strengthens consumer trust and market differentiation [18], while innovations like social media and personalized marketing help brands stay responsive to shifting consumer needs [17]. Continuous brand management is essential for increasing perceived value, ensuring customer loyalty, and building long-term emotional connections [17], [19]

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, which posits that a firm's resources and capabilities are critical determinants of its competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Digital marketing and entrepreneurial orientation represent key resources and capabilities that can be leveraged to enhance brand competitiveness. Additionally, the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997) provides a complementary perspective by emphasizing the importance of adaptability

and innovation in rapidly changing environments.

By examining the relationship between digital marketing, entrepreneurship, and brand competitiveness, this study contributes to the understanding of how local brands in Indonesia's creative economy can achieve sustainable growth and competitiveness.

3. METHODS

The study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between digital marketing, entrepreneurship, and brand competitiveness. Quantitative methods are ideal for exploring variable relationships through statistical analysis, ensuring objectivity and producing findings that can be generalized. This approach allows for precise measurement of how digital marketing and entrepreneurial activities influence the competitiveness of local brands in Indonesia's creative economy.

The population targeted in this study consists of local entrepreneurs and business owners operating in sectors such as fashion, culinary arts, handicrafts, and performing arts. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 110 respondents who met specific criteria: ownership or management of a local brand within Indonesia's creative economy, active use of digital marketing tools (e.g., social media, email, SEO), and direct involvement in entrepreneurial decision-making. Data were collected through a structured online questionnaire divided into three sections: digital marketing (measuring tool usage and strategy), entrepreneurship (assessing orientation and risk-taking), and brand competitiveness (evaluating market position and customer loyalty). The five-point Likert scale was used to quantify responses, and reminders were sent to improve the response rate.

The study examines two independent variables—Digital Marketing (DM) and Entrepreneurship (ENT)—and one dependent variable—Brand Competitiveness (BC). DM was measured through indicators such as social media usage, content quality, and

campaign effectiveness; ENT through innovation, proactiveness, and risk-taking; and BC through brand awareness, customer retention, and market position. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic data, while Cronbach's alpha tested reliability, and factor analysis confirmed construct validity. Correlation analysis determined the strength and direction of variable relationships, followed by regression analysis to assess the predictive power of digital marketing and entrepreneurship on brand competitiveness.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis presents an overview of the demographic and business characteristics of 110 respondents who are actively managing local brands within Indonesia's creative economy, along with their responses to the study's key variables. In terms of gender, 58% of the respondents were male and 42% female, indicating a slight male predominance. The age distribution reveals that the majority (65%) are between 25–35 years old, highlighting the prominence of younger entrepreneurs in the sector. Regarding educational background, 65% hold a bachelor's degree, followed by 20% with a high school diploma and 15% with a master's degree or higher, suggesting a relatively well-educated group of business owners. Industry-wise, the fashion (40%) and culinary (30%) sectors dominate the sample, with crafts (20%) and performing arts (10%) following. Most businesses are small, with 50% having 1–10 employees and 35% employing 11–50 people, while 15% have over 50 employees. In terms of business age, 50% have been operating for 2–5 years, indicating a large proportion are still in growth stages. Descriptive statistics show a high level of digital marketing engagement (mean = 4.10; SD = 0.62), strong entrepreneurial orientation (mean = 4.05; SD = 0.70), and the highest rating for brand competitiveness (mean = 4.15; SD = 0.65), reflecting the respondents' confidence in their brands' market performance.

4.2 Reliability and Validity

To ensure the robustness of the data, reliability and validity tests were conducted on the measurement scales for Digital Marketing (DM), Entrepreneurship (ENT), and Brand Competitiveness (BC). Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α), a standard measure of internal consistency. The results indicated high reliability across all constructs, with alpha values of 0.89 for DM (6 items), 0.86 for ENT (5 items), and 0.88 for BC (4 items). These values exceed the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7, suggesting that the items within each construct consistently measure the intended concepts.

Validity was evaluated through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to confirm the appropriateness of the constructs. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy yielded a value of 0.84, which is well above the minimum requirement of 0.6, indicating that the data is suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 = 512.43$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix and thus appropriate for EFA. Furthermore, all items exhibited factor loadings above 0.6, satisfying the criteria for convergent validity and confirming that each item aligns well with its respective construct.

4.3 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between the independent variables (Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship) and the dependent

variable (Brand Competitiveness). The analysis was performed using SPSS version 25, and the results are summarized below.

The regression analysis results show that the model has an R value of 0.812, indicating a strong relationship between the independent variables—Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship—and the dependent variable, Brand Competitiveness. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.659, meaning that 65.9% of the variance in Brand Competitiveness can be explained by the two predictors, while the remaining 34.1% is attributed to other factors outside the model. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.651 confirms the model's robustness, accounting for the number of predictors included, and the standard error of the estimate is 0.402, indicating a relatively low level of prediction error.

The ANOVA results show that the regression model is statistically significant, with an F-statistic of 162.003 and a significance level of $p < 0.001$. This indicates that the independent variables—Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship—jointly have a significant effect on Brand Competitiveness. The regression sum of squares is 52.410 with 2 degrees of freedom, while the residual sum of squares is 27.162 with 107 degrees of freedom, leading to a total sum of squares of 79.572. The high F-value and low significance level confirm that the model provides a good fit to the data and that the predictors meaningfully contribute to explaining variations in Brand Competitiveness.

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standardized Coefficient (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.245		4.112	0.000
Digital Marketing (DM)	0.482	0.502	8.235	0.000
Entrepreneurship (ENT)	0.396	0.418	6.712	0.000

The coefficients table reveals that both Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship have significant positive effects on Brand Competitiveness. Digital Marketing has an

unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.482 and a standardized beta (β) of 0.502, with a p-value less than 0.001, indicating a strong and statistically significant influence. This means

that for every one-unit increase in Digital Marketing, Brand Competitiveness increases by approximately 0.502 units. Similarly, Entrepreneurship has a coefficient (B) of 0.396 and a beta (β) of 0.418, also with a p-value below 0.001, confirming that entrepreneurial traits such as innovation, proactiveness, and risk-taking significantly enhance a brand's competitive position.

These findings underscore the critical role of Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship in strengthening the competitiveness of local brands in Indonesia's creative economy. The relatively higher beta value for Digital Marketing (0.502) highlights its dominant influence, reflecting the necessity for local brands to effectively utilize digital tools and platforms. At the same time, the contribution of Entrepreneurship ($\beta = 0.418$) illustrates that adaptive and innovative business behaviors are equally vital. Collectively, these two variables explain 65.9% of the variance in Brand Competitiveness, emphasizing the importance of integrating digital strategies with entrepreneurial approaches to foster sustainable growth and differentiation in an increasingly dynamic and competitive market.

DISCUSSION

The Role of Digital Marketing in Brand Competitiveness

The regression analysis revealed that Digital Marketing has a significant influence on Brand Competitiveness, reinforcing previous research that underscores the importance of digital tools and platforms in modern marketing strategies. Through personalized and data-driven approaches, digital marketing enables local brands to expand their reach, engage customers more effectively, and cultivate brand loyalty. These capabilities are crucial in a competitive marketplace, where building strong consumer relationships can serve as a major differentiator. Studies have shown that digital marketing enhances customer engagement and loyalty—both of which are key dimensions of brand competitiveness. Personalized strategies such as targeted advertising and interactive content foster

trust and perceived value, which mediate the impact of digital marketing on brand performance [20], [21].

Furthermore, digital marketing significantly enhances a brand's visibility and market reach. By utilizing platforms such as social media, video content, and emerging technologies like AI and machine learning, businesses can build closer relationships with consumers and respond swiftly to changing market demands [22]–[24]. Data-driven marketing enables precise targeting and more efficient resource allocation, optimizing campaign outcomes and strengthening competitiveness. For local brands in Indonesia's creative economy, embracing digital platforms—such as SEO, social media, and e-commerce—is essential for survival and growth. Creating interactive and engaging content, combined with leveraging data analytics, allows these brands to build deeper connections with their audience and continuously adapt to evolving consumer behavior.

The Role of Entrepreneurship in Brand Competitiveness

Entrepreneurship was found to have a significant positive impact on Brand Competitiveness, confirming that attributes such as innovation, proactiveness, and risk-taking are vital for building strong and differentiated brands. These traits enable entrepreneurs in the creative economy to develop unique value propositions and innovative business models, which are essential for local brands to thrive in a highly competitive environment. Studies consistently emphasize that entrepreneurial orientation contributes to brand differentiation and improved business performance, particularly in dynamic sectors like fashion, culinary arts, and creative services. By leveraging creativity and strategic risk-taking, entrepreneurs can effectively position their brands to meet evolving consumer expectations and market trends.

Entrepreneurial orientation—which includes innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking—plays a significant role in driving product, process, market, and brand differentiation [25]. In the creative industry,

entrepreneurial traits such as creativity and innovation are especially important, as they allow for the development and distribution of distinctive goods and services that elevate brand competitiveness [26]. Moreover, entrepreneurship-based branding enhances startup performance through strong brand identity and strategic market positioning [27]. An entrepreneurial mindset equips brands with the agility to anticipate market shifts and adapt quickly, thereby maintaining relevance and leadership [28]. To capitalize on these advantages, organizations should foster a culture of innovation, while entrepreneurs must remain responsive to market demands. Additionally, targeted policies and support programs can further empower local entrepreneurs in building sustainable competitive advantages.

Combined Influence of Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship

The combined explanatory power of the study indicates that integrating Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship accounts for a significant proportion of the variance in Brand Competitiveness, highlighting the synergistic effect of these two factors. This finding emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach, where entrepreneurial innovation is effectively complemented by digital strategies to maximize brand impact. Businesses should align their entrepreneurial strategies with digital marketing efforts to develop cohesive and impactful branding campaigns. Providing targeted training programs can empower entrepreneurs to better utilize digital tools for business growth. Furthermore, policymakers and industry leaders are encouraged to cultivate supportive ecosystems that integrate digital marketing with entrepreneurial innovation to enhance the competitiveness of local brands.

Alignment with the Creative Economy Framework

Indonesia's creative economy thrives on innovation and the strategic use of cultural assets, and the findings of this study reinforce the critical role of digital marketing and entrepreneurship as foundational elements in this ecosystem. Local brands that successfully integrate creative content with innovative

business practices are better positioned to build strong market presence and competitiveness. However, despite the vast opportunities offered by digital marketing—such as increased visibility and customer engagement—many local brands face challenges including limited digital literacy, constrained resources, and fierce competition. To ensure long-term success, entrepreneurs must remain agile, anticipate market trends, and adopt sustainable business practices that align with evolving consumer demands.

Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This study offers important theoretical contributions by bridging the gap between digital marketing, entrepreneurship, and brand competitiveness within the specific context of Indonesia's creative economy. It supports and validates existing theories that emphasize the pivotal role of innovation and technology in enhancing business performance, particularly for local brands striving to differentiate themselves in dynamic and competitive markets.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide actionable insights for both businesses and policymakers. Businesses can leverage these results to craft integrated strategies that align digital tools with entrepreneurial initiatives, fostering stronger brand positioning. Meanwhile, policymakers are encouraged to design targeted support programs that promote the adoption of digital marketing and stimulate entrepreneurial development, ultimately strengthening the competitiveness of local brands within the national and global creative economy landscape.

5. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship play crucial roles in enhancing Brand Competitiveness within Indonesia's creative economy. The findings highlight the significance of integrating digital marketing tools with entrepreneurial practices to create a strong, competitive brand. Digital marketing strategies, such as social media engagement and data-driven marketing, allow businesses

to reach and connect with a wider audience, while entrepreneurial characteristics, such as innovation and proactiveness, contribute to brand differentiation and growth. The combined influence of these two factors accounts for a significant portion of the variance in brand competitiveness, reinforcing the importance of adopting a holistic approach to branding.

For businesses in Indonesia's creative economy, this study provides actionable insights into how they can develop more

effective marketing strategies and foster a culture of innovation. Additionally, the findings suggest that policymakers should encourage the integration of digital marketing and entrepreneurial initiatives through supportive programs and resources to further enhance the competitiveness of local brands. Ultimately, by embracing both digital marketing and entrepreneurial strategies, SMEs can improve their position in an increasingly competitive and digitalized marketplace.

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