
INNOVATION OF VARIANT FLAVOUR AND VISUAL PRODUCT TO INCREASE BREM SALES IN KAMPUNG BREM

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Abstract

Increasing competition in the traditional food industry requires local entrepreneurs to innovate to remain competitive and sustainable. One of Madiun's traditional culinary products facing such challenges is *brem*, particularly that produced in Kampung Brem Kaliabu. Changes in consumer preferences, especially among younger generations, have highlighted the importance of innovation not only in product taste but also in product visuals. This study aims to analyse the implementation of flavour variants and product visual innovations to increase Brem sales, identify the challenges producers face, and examine the impact of these innovations on product attractiveness and sales performance. This research employed a qualitative, descriptive method. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving ten brem producers in Kampung Brem Kaliabu, Mejayan District, Madiun Regency. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that innovations in flavour variants, such as the introduction of fruit and chocolate flavours, and improvements in product visuals through modern, informative packaging significantly increase product value, consumer interest, and sales volume. However, producers continue to face challenges, including limited capital, insufficient knowledge of product innovation, low utilisation of digital marketing, and restricted access to packaging Design resources. In conclusion, flavour variants and visual innovations are proven effective strategies for increasing Brem sales and require continuous support from the government and related institutions to strengthen the competitiveness of local products.

Keywords: Brem; Brem Village; Flavourr Variants; Innovation; Product Visuals.



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INTRODUCTION

The traditional food and beverage industry in Indonesia has a strategic role in supporting the local economy while preserving regional cultural identity. One of the conventional food products with historical and economic value is brem, a typical Madiun dish known for generations. However, market dynamics driven by changing lifestyles and consumer preferences demand that traditional products continue to adapt to remain relevant. Innovation is a key factor in maintaining business sustainability, especially for MSME actors who face competition with modern products that are more varied and attractive. Innovation includes not only the development of new products but also updates to product packaging and visuals that can increase consumer appeal (Hanifawati & Listyaningrum, 2021). In marketing, product visuals play an essential role in shaping consumers' perceptions of quality and purchasing decisions (Sari & Irena, 2022). Therefore, innovation is a necessary strategy for traditional products such as Brem to compete in an increasingly competitive market.

Although brem is known as a typical culinary icon of Madiun, most producers still maintain conventional production and marketing patterns. Brem products are generally marketed with limited flavour variants and simple packaging, making them less attractive to consumers, especially the younger generation, who tend to like innovative products and beautiful visuals. This condition is exacerbated by competition from modern snacks that are better aligned with market trends. Limited producer knowledge regarding product innovation, digital marketing, and packaging Design is the main obstacle in the development of the Brem business (Ari Kadi et al., 2021). In addition, the lack of market research often leads to innovations that do not align with consumer preferences (Purnomo & Purnomo, 2017). This situation has led to sales stagnation and a decline in the competitiveness of brake products in local and national markets. Therefore, strategic efforts are needed that focus on product flavour and visual variant innovation to increase the attractiveness and sales of Brem.

Several previous studies have shown that product innovation significantly increases the competitiveness and sales performance of MSMEs. (Ari Kadi et al., 2021) Found that marketing strategy and product innovation in the Madiun brake industry were able to help business actors survive in the midst of competition and pandemic crisis. Research (Arista et al., 2022) shows that

the development of digital marketing and product innovation has a positive impact on income in the Kaliabu Brem industry centre. In addition, Hanifawati and Listyaningrum (2021) emphasised that product innovation and online marketing can improve MSME performance during the pandemic. (Sari and Irena, 2022) also concluded that attractive product visuals can increase consumer perceived value and purchase intent. Meanwhile, Purnomo and Purnomo (2017) stated that innovation-based product development is key to MSMEs' success in responding to changes in consumer tastes. These findings confirm the importance of innovation as a business development strategy.

Although various studies have discussed product innovation and marketing for MSMEs, most still focus on aspects of digital marketing or general business strategy. Research specifically examining the integration of product flavour and visual variant innovations in traditional Brem remains relatively limited. In addition, studies that position Kampung Brem Kaliabu as the centre of the brem industry, with distinctive social and cultural characteristics, have not been widely conducted. The novelty of this research lies in an in-depth analysis of the simultaneous application of product flavour and visual variant innovations, and their impact on increasing brand sales. This research also identifies real challenges manufacturers face in the innovation process, such as limited capital, knowledge, and access to packaging Design expertise. Thus, this research is expected to make an empirical contribution to the development of traditional food product innovation strategies based on local potential (Arista et al., 2022; Hanifawati & Listyaningrum, 2021).

Based on the problems and gaps in the research, this study aims to analyse the application of product flavour and visual variant innovations to increase Brem sales in Brem Kaliabu Village, Madiun Regency. In particular, this study seeks to identify the forms of innovation undertaken by Bremm manufacturers, analyse the challenges encountered in the innovation process, and evaluate the impact of innovation on product attractiveness and sales volume. This research also aims to provide a strategic overview of the role of innovation in strengthening the competitiveness of local products amid increasingly fierce competition in the food industry. The results of the research are expected to be a reference for MSME actors, local governments, and related institutions in formulating policies and mentoring programs that support the sustainable development of brem products (Ari Kadi et al., 2021; Arista et al., 2022).

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative research Design with a descriptive approach to understand in depth the phenomenon of product flavour and visual variant innovation to increase Brem sales. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to comprehensively explore information reception and strategies applied by BREM business actors. This research was carried out by researchers who went directly into the field to obtain relevant, contextually grounded data that reflected the real conditions at the research site (Abdur Rohman, 2022). The research subjects consisted of 10 brem producers located in Brem Kaliabu Village, Madiun Regency, who were selected purposively because they were considered to have experience and direct involvement in the product innovation process.

The research data consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data were collected directly from informants through field observation and in-depth interviews with brake manufacturers to obtain information on the form of innovation, challenges faced, and market response to innovative products. Meanwhile, secondary data are obtained from documentation, including archives, business records, product photos, and other supporting documents relevant to the research. Data analysis techniques are carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The data obtained can be systematically compiled to produce valid and accountable research findings (Abdur Rohman, 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Variant Flavour and Visual Product Innovation to Increase Brem Sales in Kampung Brem Kaliabu Madiun

The results of the study show that brem manufacturers in Madiun have insights into product flavour and visual variants in response to changes in consumer preferences. Based on observations and interviews, flavour variant innovations include strawberry, chocolate, orange, melon, and durian. This innovation aims to expand options for all consumers. All manufacturers also update product visuals, especially packaging. Previously simple packaging, lacking entity, has now been developed to be more informative by including ingredient composition, flavour variants, trademarks, and halal labels. These visual changes make Brem products look neater and ready for

marketing, not only in the local market but also in souvenir shops and markets outside the region. These findings show that taste and visual innovation have become part of the Brem product development strategy in Madiun. To provide a more systematic overview of the forms of innovation carried out by Brem manufacturers, the following presents the research results in a table.

Table 1. Innovation in Variant Flavour and Visual Product of Brem in Kampung Brem Kaliabu Madiun

Aspects	Conditions Before Innovation	Conditions After Innovation
Flavor variants	Original	Strawberries, chocolate, oranges, melons, durian
Packaging	Plain paper	Modern labeled labelledng
Product information	Not available	Composition, brand, halal label
Visual display	Simple	More attractive and colourful

Description: Data from observations and interviews of brem producers in Madiun

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that Brem manufacturers in Madiun have made significant changes to the taste and visual aspects of their product variants. In terms of flavour variants, Brem, previously available only in original flavours, has now been developed with several options, including strawberry, chocolate, orange, melon, and durian. The addition of this variety of flavours shows that manufacturers are making efforts to expand their product selection to meet diverse consumer tastes. In terms of packaging, the condition before innovation was dominated by plain paper without product identity, whereas after innovation, manufacturers began using modern packaging with labels. Furthermore, regarding the product that previously lacked information, it now has information. Changes are also noticeable in the product's visual appearance, which is increasingly attractive and now more beautiful, with a colourful show. The table shows that innovation is not only focused on taste, but also on improving the visual quality and the formation of Brem product

Impact of Variant Flavour and Visual Product Innovation in Kampung Brem Kaliabu Madiun

The study's results show that brem producers in Kampung Brem Kaliabu still face several challenges in the innovation process. The first challenge concerns the production process. The majority of producers still use traditional methods that take a relatively long time, from the fermentation of raw materials to the cooking and cooling process. Weather conditions, especially the rainy season, also affect the drying process and slow down production. In addition, the unstable availability of glutinous rice raw materials also affects production capacity. The next challenge concerns the marketing aspect. Manufacturers still rely on direct sales and existing customers, while digital marketing is still minimal. Most producers also felt the decline in consumer demand outside the region post-pandemic. Other challenges found are the limited knowledge of manufacturers in developing new flavour variants, as well as limited capital to update packaging Design and production technology, as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Innovation Challenges of Variant Flavour and Visual Product in Brem Kaliabu Village, Madiun

Challenge Aspect	Description of Field Findings
Production process	Production still uses traditional methods, takes a long time, is influenced by the weather, and the availability of raw materials
Production technology	Limitations of the use of modern technology and hesitation in adopting new tools
Marketing	Still relying on conventional sales and old customers
Digital marketing	The use of social media and online platforms is still minimal
Taste development	Manufacturers are hesitant to develop new flavour variants for fear of not being accepted by the market
Visuals and packaging	Limited Design capabilities and access to packaging technology
Capital	Business capital is limited, so innovation is not a top priority

Description: Data from observations and interviews of brem producers in Brem Kaliabu Village, Madiun

Based on Table 2, the study's results show that brem producers in Kampung Brem Kaliabu face various challenges in innovating product flavour and visual variants. The main challenge lies in the production process, where most manufacturers still use traditional methods that are time-consuming and heavily influenced by weather and the availability of raw materials. In addition, limitations in the use of production technology slow the innovation process. In marketing, manufacturers still rely on direct sales and existing customers, while digital marketing has not been

used to its full potential. Another challenge concerns the development of flavour variants, where manufacturers are hesitant to experiment because of concerns about market acceptance. In terms of visuals and packaging, the limitations of Design capabilities and access to modern packaging technology are additional obstacles. The capital factor is also the main obstacle because limited funds make innovation not yet a top priority in managing the BROM business.

The Impact of Variant Flavour and Visual Product Innovation on Brem Sales in Brem Village, Kaliabu Madiun

The study's results show that product flavour and visual variant innovations positively impact brake sales in Madiun. According to the manufacturer, the innovation increases consumer interest and expands market segments. Brem products with new flavour variants and more attractive packaging are considered easier to market and have a higher selling value than conventional products. Some manufacturers stated that after the innovation was implemented, the number of customers increased significantly, both from local and out-of-region consumers. In addition, visual innovation facilitates product promotion through social media and MSME exhibitions. Another impact identified is the increase in consumer confidence in product quality, especially after the availability of product information and halal labels on packaging. In general, innovation in product flavour and visual variants increases sales volume and revenue for beverage manufacturers. To clarify the impact of innovation on sales, the study's results are presented in the following table.

Table 3. The Impact of Variant Flavour and Visual Product Innovation on Brem Sales in Brem Village, Kaliabu Madiun

Indicator	Before Innovation	After Innovation
Number of customers	Limited	Increases 2–3 times
Sales volume	Relatively stable	Significant increase
Market reach	Local	Local and out-of-region
Selling value of products	Standard	Higher

Remarks: Data based on interviews and documentation of Brem manufacturers

Based on Table 3, the study's results show that innovations in product flavour and visual variants have a tangible impact on brem sales in Kampung Brem Kaliabu, Madiun. In the indicator for the number of customers, the condition before the innovation showed that the number remained limited. In contrast, after the innovation, the number of customers increased by two to three times. Furthermore, in the sales volume indicator, before sales innovation was relatively stable, but after the innovation was implemented, there was a significant increase. Changes are also seen in market reach, where previously brake marketing was limited only to the local market, then expanded to reach consumers from outside the region. In addition, in the product selling value indicator, Brem, which was previously sold at a standard price, experienced an increase in selling value after the introduction of flavour variants and packaging visual updates. Overall, the data in the table show that innovations in product flavour and visual variants have a positive impact on sales **and Brem's** competitiveness in Kampung Brem Kaliabu Madiun.

Discussion

Variant Flavour and Visual Product Innovation in Increasing Brem Sales in Kampung Brem Kaliabu Madiun

The study's findings show that product flavour and visual variant innovation are the main strategies employed by brem producers in Kampung Brem Kaliabu to increase product attractiveness. Taste innovation is achieved through the addition of fruit and chocolate variants, while visual innovation is realised through more informative and attractive packaging updates. These findings show that manufacturers are no longer relying solely on the traditional uniqueness of brem, but are starting to adapt products to ever-changing market preferences. From a marketing perspective, product innovation is an effort to create added value and differentiate products from competitors. This aligns with the view that innovation is not always about creating new products, but can also involve modifying or developing existing products to meet consumer needs better (Purnomo & Purnomo, 2017).

From a theoretical perspective, packaging and visual Design play an essential role in shaping consumers' perceptions of product quality. Products with an attractive visual appearance tend to be easier for consumers to recognise and choose. The findings of this study align with the concept that packaging functions as a marketing communication tool that can influence purchasing decisions (Melinda et al., 2020). In the context of Brem, the change from plain paper to labelled

product information and halal logos strengthens consumer confidence in product quality and safety. Thus, visual innovation not only enhances the product's aesthetics but also increases Brem's credibility and consumer value. This study's results also corroborate those of Maulida Sari and Setiyana (2020), who stated that market research plays an essential role in determining the direction of product innovation. Brem manufacturers who observe consumer preferences can develop flavour variants that are better received by the market. In addition, research by Ari Kadi et al. (2021) shows that product innovation and marketing in the Madiun Brem industry centre contribute to increasing business competitiveness, especially during times of crisis. The findings in this study affirm these results, as innovation in product flavour and visual variants has been proven to help manufacturers regain consumer interest and expand market share.

Innovation Challenges of Variant Flavour and Visual Product Brem Products in Brem Kaliabu Village, Madiun

Although innovations have been made, this study found various challenges faced by brem manufacturers in the innovation process. The main challenge lies in the production process, which is still traditional, time-consuming, and heavily influenced by weather and the availability of raw materials. This condition limits production capacity and makes it difficult for manufacturers to meet increasing market demand. These findings align with Agustina et al. (2023), who stated that technological limitations and external factors are often the main obstacles to MSME actors increasing productivity. In the context of BROM, these limitations directly affect manufacturers' ability to develop innovative products sustainably.

Another challenge found is the limitation of marketing, especially in the use of digital technology. The results show that most manufacturers still rely on conventional marketing and long-time customers, while digital media use remains very limited. This corroborates the findings of Hidayah et al. (2021), who stated that low digital literacy is the main obstacle to MSMEs expanding their market reach. In addition, manufacturers face barriers to developing new flavoflavouriants due to limited knowledge and insufficient market research. This finding supports the view of Purnomo and Purnomo (2017), who argue that the lack of innovative capabilities and limited capital often makes business actors hesitate to conduct product experiments.

The Impact Variant Flavour and Visual Product Innovation on Brem Sales in Brem Village, Kaliabu Madiun

The impact of product flavour and visual variant innovations is evident in increased customer numbers, sales volume, and market reach. Products that were previously marketed only locally are now reaching consumers outside the region. These findings suggest that innovation increases product appeal and expands the market. This aligns with Lombok and Samadi (2022), who state that product image and appearance significantly affect consumer purchase decisions. Attractive and informative packaging makes it easier for consumers to recognise the product and increases confidence in its quality.

In addition, innovation increases the selling value of products. Brem, with new flavour variants and modern packaging, can be sold at a higher price than conventional products. These findings corroborate the research of Arista et al. (2022), which found that product innovation and digital marketing contribute to increased income for business actors. The economic impact of innovation is not only felt by producers but also contributes to increased community income and a stronger local economy (Saputro, 2018). Thus, product flavour and visual variant innovation can be understood as an effective strategy for increasing sales while strengthening Brem's regional competitiveness as a superior product.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, this study concluded that innovations in product flavour and visual variants played an essential role in increasing Brem sales in Brem Kaliabu Madiun Village. The implementation of new flavour variants, as well as more attractive and informative packaging visual updates, has been proven to increase consumer appeal, expand market reach, and increase sales volume and product selling value. These innovations also help brand manufacturers retain loyal customers while attracting new ones. The strength of this research lies in its use of field data obtained directly through observation and interviews with brem manufacturers, which enable it to describe the empirical conditions in depth. However, this study has limitations due to the relatively small number of informants and has not quantitatively measured the long-term impact of innovation.

Given these limitations, further research is recommended to involve a larger number of respondents, including consumers, to obtain a more comprehensive picture of market perceptions

of BREM innovations. In addition, future research may use quantitative or mixed-methods approaches to more closely measure the effects of product flavour and visual variant innovations on increased sales and business revenue. Further research is also recommended to examine the roles of digital marketing, branding strategies, and government and related institutional policy support in encouraging the sustainability of Brem product innovation as one of the regional culinary excellences.

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