

Analysis of Culture-Based Marketing Mix Strategies for Msmes in Pantai Panjang, Bengkulu City

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: 13 May 2025
Received in revised:
13 June 2025
Accepted: 16 June 2025
Published: 20 June 2025

Open Access

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the culturally-based marketing mix strategies implemented by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the Pantai Panjang area of Bengkulu City. The research explores how the combination of marketing mix elements (product, price, promotion, place) integrates with the local culture of Bengkulu City in MSME marketing practices. Employing a qualitative method through case studies of MSMEs, this study involves in-depth interviews and observations focusing on the integration of the marketing mix and local culture, particularly within the culinary, souvenir, and handicraft sectors. The findings indicate that incorporating local traditions, culinary arts, and cultural narratives into the culturally-based marketing mix positively impacts the competitiveness and sustainability of MSMEs, as viewed through the four elements of the marketing mix. This article provides recommendations for optimizing culture-based marketing to support the sustainable development of MSMEs.

Keywords: Marketing Mix, Cultural-Based, Cultural MSMEs

1. Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are economic activities carried out by individuals or groups on a smaller scale compared to large companies, but they play a strategic role in economic growth and job creation (Nor, 2024; Santoso et al., 2025). MSMEs often become the backbone of a country's economy because they are able to absorb a large workforce and contribute significantly to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Tambunan, 2022; Ghatge et al., 2024). MSMEs in the Pantai Panjang area of Bengkulu have great potential to support the local economy, especially in the culinary, souvenir, and handicraft sectors (Irwanto et al., 2024). The presence of these MSMEs not only meets the needs of tourists but also plays an important role in introducing local culture and products to visitors (Ratnaningtyas et al., 2025).

Pantai Panjang is located in the city of Bengkulu, Bengkulu Province, Indonesia. This beach stretches approximately 7 km along the western coast of Sumatra Island, about 5 km from the city center of Bengkulu. With its strategic location, Pantai Panjang has become one of the main tourist destinations in Bengkulu, renowned for its stunning natural scenery, white sand, and relatively calm waves. The presence of this beach also plays an important role in supporting the tourism sector and the local economy (Nafturahma et al., 2023). MSMEs in Pantai Panjang, Bengkulu, represent a growing business sector within the main tourist area of Bengkulu city (Julika et al., 2024). These MSMEs operate in various sectors, especially culinary, handicrafts, and local souvenirs, and according to data from the Bengkulu Provincial Tourism Office, there are approximately 115 vendors operating in the Pantai Panjang area (Dinas Pariwisata Provinsi Bengkulu, 2024). MSMEs in the Pantai Panjang area, Bengkulu, make a significant contribution to local economic growth through several aspects such as job creation, increasing community income through MSMEs, and the development of local infrastructure (Redaksi RRI, 2023). Besides offering captivating natural beauty, this area is also home to various MSMEs that utilize local cultural potential as the main attraction in marketing their products and services. MSMEs in this region not only act as drivers of the local economy but also as guardians of cultural traditions that form the identity of the area (Trisoko et al., 2024).

The rapid growth of MSMEs in Pantai Panjang, Bengkulu City, faces competitive challenges that require differentiated marketing strategies. The main challenge faced by MSMEs in Pantai Panjang, Bengkulu, in integrating local culture into their marketing strategies is the limited knowledge of how to properly adapt cultural elements into their products and promotions, as well as the limited resources available for developing culture-based products (Julika et al., 2024). Many MSME actors have not fully understood how to effectively communicate cultural values to consumers, especially in an increasingly competitive market (Sun, 2024). Based on statistics from BPS Bengkulu City (2023), the Pantai Panjang area hosts over 850 active MSMEs. Despite this substantial number, only 27% have adopted promotional or branding strategies that are culturally specific, and fewer than 15% incorporate elements of local heritage, such as traditional design,

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language, or symbolism into their product packaging or service delivery.(BPS, 2023). Furthermore, a study conducted by the Bengkulu Tourism Office reveals that 68% of tourists express a stronger inclination to purchase products that embody cultural authenticity and reflect the uniqueness of the local identity. Regarding pricing, 58% of business actors do not apply value-based pricing that considers cultural value. Product distribution remains limited to physical markets without utilizing digital platforms based on cultural promotion (Wijaya & Santoso, 2022). This phenomenon contrasts with Bengkulu's rich local cultural potential, including besurek fabric motifs, lepat bekulo cuisine, and the Tabot tradition, which have not been optimally utilized as added product value (Rahman et al., 2022).

Additionally, the limited role of digital technology among MSME actors also poses a challenge, considering that many cultural products have the potential to be marketed more widely but are underutilized in leveraging digital media to introduce these products to tourists and consumers from outside the region (Fauzan & Rina, 2023; Pratama et al., 2024). In the era of modern tourism, travelers tend to seek authentic and meaningful experiences, including direct interactions with local culture and traditions (Surata et al., 2024). Therefore, culture-based marketing strategies become essential for MSMEs to enhance their attractiveness and strengthen their position in the market (Rifqiansyah, 2025). MSMEs that incorporate cultural elements into their products and marketing strategies are not only able to attract local consumers but also tourists looking for unique and authentic experiences (Trisoko et al., 2024). This approach also opens opportunities for broader market expansion, especially in the digital era, where products with high cultural value have a distinct appeal. Moreover, integrating culture into MSMEs can create sustainable competitive advantages and improve the welfare of local communities through the creative economy (Nugroho & Dewi, 2023; Martial et al., 2024).

Recent studies on marketing mix strategies for MSMEs has evolved beyond the traditional 4Ps by incorporating digital innovations and creative economy principles. These developments suggest that marketing approaches rooted in storytelling and cultural relevance can substantially improve the competitiveness of small enterprises, as evidenced by women-owned micro-businesses in Bali (Suci et al., 2025). In parallel, studies on MSME recovery post-COVID-19 emphasize the strategic use of localized product variations and digital distribution channels to support resilience and growth (Ahmad et al., 2024). Another study also shows that the marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion) is proven to improve market reach and business sustainability, most studies still focus on general applications or digital aspects, with limited comprehensive analysis of how cultural values are systematically embedded in all elements of the marketing mix (Noor, 2025). Nonetheless, a significant research gap persists. While there is increasing recognition of the importance of cultural influences on consumer behavior (Singh et al., 2022), there is a scarcity of empirical studies that systematically incorporate cultural dimensions, such as local traditions, narratives, languages, and rituals into the marketing mix framework for MSMEs. Current models often fail to address the nuanced ways in which cultural context affects product development, promotional strategies, pricing perceptions, and distribution practices.

To address this limitation, this study proposes a culturally driven marketing mix framework specifically tailored for MSMEs operating in diverse cultural settings, emphasizing the strategic incorporation of local identity and traditions into each component of the marketing mix to enhance emotional connection and foster greater brand loyalty. This study focuses on analyzing how MSMEs in Pantai Panjang integrate cultural elements into their marketing strategies. The application of culture-based marketing strategies not only helps MSMEs improve competitiveness but also contributes to the preservation of local culture through products, pricing, distribution, and promotion aligned with local wisdom (Mulyanti et al., 2020). This research can provide insights on how MSMEs can more effectively reach both local and global markets by leveraging cultural elements as competitive advantages. Furthermore, by understanding the influence of culture in marketing strategies, MSMEs can develop more sustainable business models capable of attracting tourists and consumers seeking products with high cultural value. Using a phenomenological approach, this study aims to identify best practices, challenges faced, and opportunities that can be utilized to support the sustainability of culture-based MSMEs in the region.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Cultural-Based Marketing Mix (4P) Strategy for MSMEs Marketing

Marketing mix is a strategic framework consisting of the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) aimed at achieving marketing objectives effectively. Products must be designed with attention to quality, features, and differentiation to meet consumer needs. Pricing should be set based on competitive analysis and customer value perception. Distribution (place) needs to be optimized through efficient channels to ensure easy access to the product. Meanwhile, promotion should utilize a combination of advertising, direct sales, and digital marketing to increase brand awareness (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

The application of a culture-based marketing mix becomes an effective strategy for MSMEs to build differentiation and unique value in a competitive market. By integrating cultural elements into product, price, place, and promotion, MSMEs can create added value that distinguishes their products in the competitive market (Mulyanti et al., 2020). In terms of product, the incorporation of local culture can be realized through design, raw materials, and production processes that reflect local traditions and values such as friendliness and comfort of tourists (Ajidin et al., 2024). This not only enhances product quality but also strengthens an authentic brand image rooted in local culture, providing a significant competitive advantage in the market (Putra et al., 2025; Hendriyani, C., et al., 2023).

The pricing aspect in the marketing mix can also be influenced by local culture. Understanding the community's cultural values helps MSMEs set prices that are not only competitive but also align with local cultural expectations, thereby strengthening the product's position in the regional market. Knowledge of local customs and price perceptions assists MSMEs in determining culturally appropriate pricing. Regarding distribution, choosing channels that align with local culture can enhance marketing effectiveness. Utilizing traditional markets or local communities as distribution channels can strengthen consumer relationships and increase both loyalty and marketing effectiveness of the products (Santoso et al., 2023).

1. Product: Product Adaptation Based on Local Wisdom

Local economy, especially through MSMEs which act as the frontline drivers of regional economic growth. The products developed by MSMEs are usually tailored to the needs and characteristics of the local market, such as using local raw materials and developing products that reflect local culture. This not only increases the product's appeal to consumers but also helps preserve unique cultural values and local wisdom. With the right products, MSMEs can strengthen their position in the local market while also opening opportunities to expand into wider markets (Prasetyo & Wulandari, 2022). Product adaptation based on local wisdom becomes an important strategy in MSME development because it can enhance competitiveness while preserving local culture. According to Rahman et al. (2022), integrating cultural values into products can strengthen product identity and attract global market interest. Additionally, product quality and innovation are key factors in increasing MSME competitiveness at both local and national levels (Rahmah et al., 2024). Innovative and high-quality products can meet consumer expectations and create customer loyalty, which ultimately drives sustainable regional economic growth (Chen and Lee, 2021). MSMEs that focus on developing products according to local market needs and consumer trends have greater chances to survive and grow. Therefore, developing products that are adaptive and responsive to the dynamics of the local market is crucial in the marketing mix strategy to strengthen the local economy (Rahmawati et al., 2023).

2. Price: Culture-Based Pricing Strategy

Pricing in the marketing mix plays a crucial role in the local economy because competitive prices that align with the community's purchasing power can boost consumption of local products. MSMEs must be able to set prices that are not only profitable from a business standpoint but also affordable for consumers in their region. Appropriate pricing strategies, such as discounts, promotional prices, or bundled packages, can increase buying interest while strengthening customer loyalty in the local market (Putra et al., 2023). Understanding the habits and perceptions of the community regarding prices helps MSMEs establish prices that are not only competitive but also aligned with local cultural expectations, thereby strengthening the product's position in the regional market (Santoso et al., 2023).

Pricing in culture-based marketing considers the exclusivity and quality values of products produced through traditional methods (Wilcox et al., 2023). Products with strong cultural elements are marketed at premium prices due to the complexity of their production processes. Meanwhile, flexible pricing strategies are applied to mass-market products targeting local consumers while still maintaining cultural value (Sabur, 2025). In the cultural industry, the price element in the marketing mix must be adapted to consumer preferences and perceptions influenced by local culture. A deep understanding of cultural consumers can help design effective pricing strategies suitable for the target market (Shahhosseini and Ardahaey, 2011). Therefore, differentiated pricing strategies are used to create a balance between cultural value and consumer purchasing power. This approach not only enhances customer loyalty but also strengthens the image of culture-based products in the global market (Schneider, 2022).

3. Promotion: Local Culture-Based Promotion Techniques

Promotion techniques in the marketing mix drive local economic growth, especially for MSMEs aiming to expand their market reach and increase product sales. Effective promotion must be tailored to the characteristics of local consumers and utilize the most accessible media for the community, such as social media, community events, and word-of-mouth. Using digital promotion strategies integrated with a local cultural approach can boost brand awareness and customer loyalty in the regional market (Prasetyo et al., 2023). Additionally, promotion techniques involving collaboration with other business actors and local communities have proven effective in strengthening marketing networks and creating added value for local products. Community-based promotions and cultural storytelling can enhance product appeal and reinforce local identity (Wijaya and Santoso, 2022).

The implementation of local culture-based promotion techniques can be carried out through various channels, including social media, cultural exhibitions, and collaboration with the tourism sector. Using social media as a promotional platform allows MSMEs to reach a broader market efficiently, highlighting the importance of social media in building brand identity and increasing MSME product visibility (Sinaga et al., 2023). Furthermore, collaboration among MSMEs, government, and the tourism sector can strengthen local culture-based promotion techniques. The synergy between MSMEs and tourism can enhance the attractiveness of tourist destinations and create an inclusive and sustainable economic ecosystem (Wikansari et al., 2024).

4. Distribution (Place): Distribution of MSME Products in the Cultural Context

Distribution techniques (Place) in the marketing mix determine how products can be easily and timely accessed by consumers. Effective distribution must consider the geographical conditions and infrastructure of the region, as well as the habits and preferences of local consumers. MSMEs that are able to utilize both traditional distribution channels and community-based digital platforms can expand their market reach while increasing sales of local products (Hidayat & Sari, 2023). Appropriate distribution channels enable products to reach consumers efficiently, increase sales volume, and broaden market coverage. Selecting distribution channels that align with the characteristics of the local market can enhance the effectiveness of marketing and the competitiveness of MSMEs. They emphasize the importance of adapting distribution channels to local conditions to achieve optimal results (Lestari & Dwiridotjahjono, 2023).

The integration of digital technology is also a key factor in the distribution of MSME products based on local culture. The adoption of e-commerce platforms and social media allows MSMEs to market their products more efficiently and reach wider markets. The implementation of online marketing systems has successfully increased MSME revenues and expanded market reach (Syarif et al., 2023). Additionally, collaboration between MSMEs, government, and the tourism sector can strengthen the distribution channels of local cultural products. Through this synergy, MSME products are not only marketed locally but can also become part of the cultural tourism experience, increasing the selling value and appeal of these products (Fauziah and Amrie, 2023).

2.2 Cultural Factors in Marketing Strategies

1. Local Culture and Consumer Preferences

Culture is the broadest and most abstract external factor influencing consumer behavior. Culture shapes a person's desires and behaviors through values, perceptions, wants, and behaviors learned from family and social environment (Kotler, 2002). Cultural factors have a significant impact on consumer behavior. Cultural values, transmitted and spread through language and symbols, form consumers' beliefs, prejudices, and biases toward certain products. The higher the level of consumer trust in products that align with their cultural values, the more likely they are to make a purchase decision (Anggraini, 2224).

Local culture strongly influences consumer preferences because it shapes the values, norms, and habits that form the basis for purchasing decisions. Consumers tend to choose products that correspond with their traditions and cultural identity, making products that accommodate local cultural elements more easily accepted and favored (Rahman et al., 2023). Moreover, the influence of local culture is also evident in how consumers assess product quality and price. Consumers with certain cultural ties tend to value products that are perceived to preserve culture and provide social value, not just economic value. This encourages businesses to develop marketing strategies sensitive to local culture to increase consumer loyalty and strengthen product positioning in the local market (Wijaya, 2023).

2. Local Wisdom as an Added Value for MSME Products

Local wisdom plays an important role in adding value to MSME products, especially in creating competitiveness in both local and global markets. By utilizing local wisdom, MSME products can not only meet market needs but also reflect a strong regional cultural identity. Products based on local wisdom often attract consumers who appreciate the authenticity and uniqueness of that culture, thus distinguishing these products from mass-produced goods that lack cultural characteristics (Wulandari & Parameswara, 2020). Local wisdom provides uniqueness and differentiation to MSME products, which can enhance their competitiveness in the market. By integrating local cultural values and traditions, MSME products not only fulfill consumer needs but also reflect a strong cultural identity. The application of local wisdom in MSME products also contributes to cultural preservation and local economic empowerment, creating sustainable positive impacts for the community (Subqi et al., 2024).

The implementation of local wisdom in MSME products also supports sustainable development by considering social, cultural, and economic aspects. By developing products that reflect local potential, MSMEs not only provide economic benefits but also support the preservation of local culture and traditions. The development of products based on local wisdom can create jobs, improve community welfare, and maintain social sustainability in the area (Achmadi & Veronika, 2019). Additionally, integrating local wisdom into MSME products can increase customer satisfaction. Products that contain local cultural values often offer a more personal and authentic experience for consumers, thereby creating an emotional connection between consumers and the product. Products reflecting local culture not only strengthen product identity but also serve as a differentiation tool in a competitive market, increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty (Fitri et al., 2023).

2.3 Challenges in Integrating Culture into Marketing Mix Strategies

The incorporation of cultural elements into the marketing mix strategies of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) remains a complex endeavor, despite growing recognition of its potential benefits. A primary obstacle lies in the limited awareness and understanding among MSME owners regarding culture-based branding. Many entrepreneurs prioritize cost-efficiency and rely on conventional digital marketing

approaches, often overlooking the strategic value of integrating local cultural attributes—such as traditional motifs, native languages, and folklore-based storytelling—into their branding efforts (Putranto, 2025). As a result, the rich cultural capital available in tourism-centric or heritage-rich areas is frequently underutilized, weakening the differentiation and emotional resonance of MSME products in the market.

These challenges are further intensified by financial and structural limitations. Successfully embedding cultural aspects into the marketing mix across product design, pricing strategies, promotional techniques, and distribution channels demands not only artistic and technical expertise but also supportive operational infrastructures (Wikansari et al., 2024). However, due to constrained budgets, limited human resources, and a lack of standardized models or institutional support, most MSMEs struggle to implement cohesive culture-based marketing initiatives. This often leads to inconsistent and unsustainable efforts, with firms relying heavily on trial-and-error methods rather than evidence-based strategies.

Moreover, external institutional and regulatory environments introduce additional complexity, particularly concerning the legal and ethical use of cultural heritage. Intellectual property laws in many countries do not sufficiently protect traditional knowledge or cultural expressions, leaving MSMEs vulnerable to accusations of misappropriation or infringement when incorporating indigenous elements such as symbols or stories (WIPO, 2024; Le, 2025). While international frameworks have started to address these legal gaps, their implementation at the national or local level remains limited. As a consequence, many MSMEs are hesitant to fully engage with culture-driven branding, despite its potential to foster deeper community ties, brand authenticity, and competitive distinction.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach using the case study method to analyze the culture-based marketing mix strategies implemented by MSMEs in Pantai Panjang, Bengkulu City. The qualitative approach is used because the aim is to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena occurring within the MSMEs of Pantai Panjang, Bengkulu City, specifically regarding the application of culture-based marketing mix strategies. This qualitative approach allows the researcher to explore and comprehend the perceptions, experiences, and perspectives of MSME actors that cannot be explained solely through quantitative data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It is also highly relevant for uncovering local cultural elements that influence the marketing decisions made by MSME practitioners (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through this qualitative approach, the study can understand the social context that affects business practices within a specific cultural environment. This case study research method focuses on the analysis of the integration of marketing mix and local culture with MSME respondents from three types of sectors, namely the culinary sector, souvenir sector, and handicrafts.

The case study method was chosen because it provides an opportunity to analyze phenomena occurring in a very specific context, namely MSMEs in Pantai Panjang. Case studies enable researchers to gain a detailed understanding of the marketing mix practices implemented by MSME actors, as well as how local culture influences the decisions made (Stake, 2013). This approach offers advantages in uncovering variables that are not revealed in quantitative research, such as cultural values, local customs, and social interaction patterns that play roles in product marketing (Yin, 2018).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, allowing the researcher to follow a guided set of open ended questions while also adapting to emergent themes during the conversation (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The interview instrument included key questions around product design, pricing models, promotion methods, and distribution channels, with specific attention to cultural integration. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select three MSME informants, each representing a different sector; culinary, souvenirs, and traditional handicrafts. These sectors were chosen because they are the largest number of MSMEs in the research location and have potential in terms of cultural expression and relevance to the cultural economy. Each informant was actively operating in the Pantai Panjang area and had some level of experience in applying local cultural elements in their business practices. The interpretation of the findings focused on how each element of the marketing mix such as; product, price, place, and promotion was influenced by underlying cultural narratives and local traditions. Cultural values were found to inform strategic decisions within these elements, shaping the ways MSMEs communicated meaning, value, and identity to their target audiences.

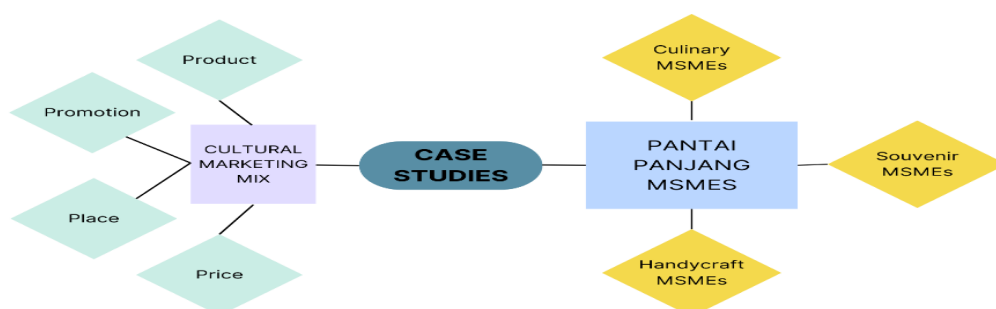


Figure 1. Research Scheme

4. Results

4.1 Product Strategy and Local Culture

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Pantai Panjang, Bengkulu City, across the culinary, souvenir, and handicraft sectors consistently leverage local cultural wealth as a value-added factor that differentiates their products. In the culinary sector, MSMEs integrate local raw materials derived from marine and agricultural resources and employ traditional cooking methods to create distinctive regional flavors, complemented by packaging and design that reflect local cultural nuances, thereby providing an authentic consumer experience (Culinary MSME, 12 November, 2024). In the souvenir sector, products such as Bengkulu coffee, Bay Tat cake, and Besurek batik prioritize the use of local raw materials that embody the natural and cultural richness of Bengkulu. Although not all raw materials are locally sourced, the use of natural dyes and traditional techniques enhances the authenticity of these products (Souvenir MSME, 12 November, 2024).

Meanwhile, in the handicraft sector, MSMEs have innovated by utilizing alternative materials such as local woods following the prohibition on the use of turtle shells and by crafting pandan leaf woven products sourced from local plants. These efforts add cultural value and reinforce the regional identity. Innovation and preservation of tradition are key factors in enhancing the competitiveness of local handicraft products in both national and international markets (Handcraft MSME, 12 November, 2024). Overall, the integration of local culture into the product strategies of MSMEs in these three sectors not only increases the market value and competitiveness of their products but also plays a crucial role in preserving and strengthening the cultural identity of the Bengkulu region.

Table 1. Integration of product and culture

Sectors	Strategies
Culinary	MSMEs use local ingredients and traditional cooking methods, along with culturally inspired packaging, to offer unique and authentic regional flavors.
Souvenir	Products like Bengkulu coffee, Bay Tat cake, and Besurek batik use mostly local materials and traditional methods to reflect Bengkulu's natural and cultural richness.
Handycraft	MSMEs innovate by using local woods and pandan leaves instead of turtle shells, adding cultural value and strengthening regional identity to compete better nationally and internationally.

Source: Data analysis results 2025

4.2 Promotion Strategies and Local Culture

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the Pantai Panjang area of Bengkulu City consistently integrate local cultural values into their promotional strategies across various sectors, including culinary, souvenirs, and handicrafts. In the culinary sector, the utilization of local raw materials, the incorporation of regional language in product naming, active participation in cultural festivals, and social media promotions featuring local wisdom content are key factors that create an authentic experience while enhancing the appeal of products to consumers and tourists. This approach not only highlights the distinctive flavors and uniqueness of Bengkulu cuisine but also strengthens the cultural identity embedded in the products. In the souvenir sector, MSMEs emphasize culture-based branding through distinctive motifs such as Besurek Batik and raw materials reflecting Bengkulu's natural wealth, alongside participation in cultural festivals that offer hands-on experiences through product-making demonstrations (Culinary MSME, 12 November, 2024). The use of social media and educational tourism concepts effectively expands market reach and deepens consumer understanding of the cultural significance behind the souvenir products. These innovations transform souvenirs into not merely commercial goods but also mediums for cultural preservation and broader cultural introduction of Bengkulu (Souvenir MSME, 12 November, 2024).

The handicraft sector demonstrates a synergy between tradition preservation and innovation by incorporating local cultural symbols in product design and packaging, as well as developing alternative materials following the prohibition of turtle shell usage. Integrated promotion through social media, e-commerce platforms, and partnerships with tourism destinations and accommodations adds exclusivity and accessibility for tourists (Handcraft MSME, 12 November, 2024). Overall, MSMEs' promotional strategies in Pantai Panjang reflect a structured effort to combine cultural values with modern marketing approaches, enhancing the competitiveness of local products while contributing to the preservation and reinforcement of Bengkulu's cultural identity in both regional and global markets.

Table 2. Integration of promotion and culture

Sectors	Strategies
Culinary	MSMEs integrate local and regional product names, cultural festivals, and social media to promote authentic and culturally rich culinary products.
Souvenir	MSMEs emphasize cultural branding, participation in festivals, social media promotion, and educational tourism to present Bengkulu's unique products in an engaging and informative manner.
Handycraft	MSMEs leverage cultural identity, social media, tourism partnerships, and material innovation to market unique products with strong cultural value.

Source: Data analysis results 2025

4.3 Place Strategy and Local Culture

In the culinary sector at Pantai Panjang, Bengkulu, MSMEs strategically select locations that reflect local wisdom and cultural identity, leveraging both the physical environment and technology to enhance customer reach. Many culinary businesses position themselves near prominent tourist attractions such as Tugu Thomas Parr, Pantai Pasir Putih, and the culturally significant Festival Tabut area. The design of eateries incorporates traditional Bengkulu cultural elements, such as Simpang Lima architecture, Batik Besurek motifs, and other regional ornaments creating an immersive cultural dining experience. Additionally, the use of location-based digital platforms like Google Maps and food delivery applications (GoFood, GrabFood) further enables these MSMEs to attract both local and visiting consumers by making their culinary offerings more accessible (Culinary MSME, 12 November, 2024).

Within the souvenir sector, the integration of local culture into place strategy aims to create a distinctive shopping experience that reinforces the cultural identity of Bengkulu's products. Strategic site selection focuses on proximity to key tourist and recreational areas along Pantai Panjang, including clusters of culinary venues and entertainment zones, facilitating convenient access for tourists to purchase local souvenirs. Moreover, closeness to cultural landmarks such as Benteng Marlborough an iconic heritage site helps embed the products within the broader cultural tourism framework, enhancing the appeal and authenticity of the souvenirs for visitors (Souvenir MSME, 12 November, 2024). For the handicraft sector, MSMEs also employ culturally informed spatial strategies by choosing locations that maximize tourist interaction and cultural exposure. Craftsmen operate both at fixed points and mobile spots along Pantai Panjang, often near culturally significant sites such as Benteng Marlborough, Rumah Pengasingan Bung Karno, and the Festival Tabut celebration areas. Participation in cultural events, bazaars, and traditional markets further supports the visibility and sales of local handicrafts, thereby intertwining place strategy with cultural promotion to strengthen product identity and market competitiveness in the cultural tourism context (Handcraft MSME, 12 November, 2024).

Table 3. Integration of Distribution (Place) and culture

Sectors	Strategies
Culinary	MSMEs choose culturally significant locations and incorporate local architectural and design elements while utilizing digital platforms to attract customers.
Souvenir	MSMEs select sites near tourist attractions and cultural landmarks to enhance the shopping experience and reinforce Bengkulu's cultural identity.
Handycraft	MSMEs position their businesses near key cultural sites and participate in local festivals to increase product visibility and connect with cultural tourism.

Source: Data analysis results 2025

4.4 Price Strategy and Local Culture

In the culinary sector, pricing strategies are grounded in the cultural value embedded in the production process and use of local raw materials. The prices of traditional Bengkulu foods such as pendap or lehang are influenced not only by the costs of fresh local ingredients and traditional spices but also by time-intensive, inherited cooking techniques and the cultural significance of these foods, which are often served during customary ceremonies or festivals. This results in pricing that reflects the authenticity and exclusivity of local culinary products (Culinary MSME, 12 November, 2024).

In the souvenir sector, pricing integrates cultural aspects and the rarity of local raw materials, such as the Batik Besurek, which requires specialized skills and natural dyeing processes, as well as unique products like Bengkulu coffee and forest honey. Additionally, special pricing and promotions during cultural events, such as the Tabut Festival, serve to attract tourists while reinforcing the cultural value of souvenir products as distinctive local identities with high worth (Souvenir MSME, 12 November, 2024). In the handicraft sector, pricing strategies are informed by local wisdom, taking into account the cultural symbols embedded in products like traditional Bengkulu carvings and jewelry, which confer higher market value as representations of cultural identity. Price differentiation is also applied according to market segmentation, offering more affordable prices to local residents to foster regional pride, alongside price adjustments for e-commerce platforms that respond to market trends and consumer purchasing power from various regions, thereby strengthening the position of handicraft products in both national and international markets (Handcraft MSME, 12 November, 2024).

Table 4. Integration of Price and culture

Sectors	Strategies
Culinary	MSMEs reflects the cultural value of traditional ingredients, cooking methods, and the significance of foods served during local ceremonies and festivals.
Souvenir	MSMEs considers the cultural uniqueness and rarity of local materials, with special promotions during cultural events to attract tourists.
Handycraft	Handicraft prices are influenced by cultural symbolism, market segmentation, and adjustments for online sales to balance local pride and broader market demand.

Source: Data analysis results 2025

4.5 The Impact of Marketing Mix Integration and Local Culture on MSMEs

The integration of the marketing mix with local culture has a significant impact on the sales performance of MSME products in Pantai Panjang, Bengkulu City. By incorporating cultural elements into their marketing strategies, MSMEs are able to create unique products that appeal more strongly to both tourists and local communities. Products such as Bengkulu's traditional cuisine, handcrafted items based on Besurek Batik, and pandan woven accessories gain added value through their strong cultural identity. This not only enhances the attractiveness of the products but also strengthens the competitive positioning of MSMEs in an increasingly competitive market. Culturally based pricing strategies also contribute to increased MSME revenues. Products imbued with cultural significance often command higher selling prices and can be marketed at a premium, particularly to tourists seeking authentic regional souvenirs. Furthermore, flexible pricing strategies, such as differentiating prices between tourists and local residents, enable MSMEs to reach broader market segments without compromising competitiveness. Consequently, business actors can boost turnover while maintaining customer loyalty across diverse consumer groups.

Cultural product distribution benefits from collaboration with the tourism sector. The presence of souvenir centers around Pantai Panjang provides MSMEs with wider access to market their products. Additionally, digitization and social media marketing accelerate product distribution to broader markets, even beyond regional boundaries. Partnerships with hotels, restaurants, and travel agencies constitute effective strategies for increasing the exposure of culturally based MSME products, thereby fostering local economic growth. Promotions that highlight cultural aspects also enhance brand awareness and consumer purchase intention. Storytelling that conveys the historical and cultural philosophy behind a product creates a deeper impression on consumers, encouraging preference for local products over similar goods from outside regions. Moreover, governmental support through MSME exhibitions and cultural festivals further strengthens the marketing of these products. Through a comprehensive marketing mix strategy integrated with local culture, MSMEs in Pantai Panjang not only increase sales volume but also build strong and sustainable brands.

4.6 The Challenges Faced by MSMEs in Integrating the Marketing Mix and Local Culture

Integration of the marketing mix with local culture in the sales of MSME products in Pantai Panjang, Bengkulu City, faces various challenges that affect the effectiveness of marketing strategies. One of the primary obstacles is the lack of understanding and awareness among MSME actors regarding the importance of adopting local cultural elements in their marketing strategies. Many entrepreneurs still focus on conventional aspects of selling products without highlighting cultural components, making it difficult to differentiate their products from competitors. Additionally, the insufficient training and guidance on culturally-based marketing strategies hinder MSMEs from developing concepts that appeal to both tourists and local consumers. Another challenge lies in limited resources in terms of capital and technology. To integrate local culture into the marketing mix, MSMEs need to innovate in product design, packaging, and promotion. However, higher production costs often become barriers, especially for those still in developmental stages. Moreover, the utilization of digital technology for marketing remains suboptimal due to limited access to e-commerce training and culturally-based digital marketing. Consequently, MSMEs struggle to reach wider markets and maximize their sales potential. Further obstacles include inadequate support in distribution channels and access to broader markets. Many MSMEs still rely on traditional marketing systems that depend on tourists visiting their business locations directly. The lack of collaboration with the tourism sector, shopping centers, and e-commerce platforms restricts the distribution of culturally-based products. Additionally, competition with better-known products from other regions that have broader distribution networks poses a significant challenge for local MSMEs. Lastly, regulatory and policy factors also influence the integration of the marketing mix with local culture. Some supportive policies for MSMEs have yet to be fully implemented, especially regarding the protection of culturally-based products and national-level promotion. The scarcity of events or festivals focused on promoting culturally-based MSME products further limits product exposure to wider audiences. Therefore, collaboration among government, entrepreneurs, and local communities is essential to overcome these challenges and foster the growth of culture-based MSMEs in Pantai Panjang, Bengkulu City.

6. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the integration of the marketing mix (4Ps) with local culture plays a crucial role in enhancing the competitiveness and sales of MSME products in Pantai Panjang, Bengkulu City. Marketing strategies that incorporate elements of local culture, such as the use of distinctive regional motifs, traditional flavors, and promotion methods grounded in cultural values successfully attract consumers, particularly tourists seeking authentic experiences. By appropriately implementing strategies across product, price, place, and promotion, MSMEs can build a strong identity and differentiate themselves from competitors at both local and national levels. However, the effectiveness of these strategies largely depends on MSME actors' understanding of local culture and their ability to adapt marketing approaches aligned with market trends. The results of this study are in accordance with several research results such as Koc and Ayyildiz (2021) that present a comprehensive review across the tourism and hospitality sectors demonstrating that products, pricing, placement, and promotion when strategically infused with cultural features like regional motifs and traditions substantively enhance both consumer engagement and brand distinctiveness. Additionally, Nazara (2024) also highlights that innovation in marketing strategies tailored to local contexts elevates market competitiveness; this includes leveraging

cultural assets to create differentiated offerings that appeal to both domestic and international customers seeking authenticity.

Although the integration of the marketing mix with local culture yields positive impacts, this study also identifies several challenges faced by MSME actors, including limited capital, restricted access to digital marketing technology, and inadequate support within distribution channels. The challenges in implementing this culture-based strategy are in accordance with previous studies which stated that cultural differentiation in products and promotional strategies contributes to brand uniqueness and customer engagement, particularly among tourists seeking authentic experiences (Arsa et al., 2025), this study also confirms several structural and operational challenges that hinder MSME actors in implementing culturally-based strategies. These include limited capital resources, lack of digital infrastructure, and insufficient distribution support systems. Therefore, collaboration among government bodies, MSME practitioners, and other stakeholders is necessary to provide training, mentoring, and facilitation to strengthen culturally-based marketing strategies. With appropriate support, MSMEs in Pantai Panjang, Bengkulu City, can optimally leverage local cultural potential to increase sales and ensure business sustainability.

For future research, it is recommended to focus on analyzing the impact of digitalization on the promotion of culture-based products by MSMEs in Pantai Panjang, Bengkulu City. Digital marketing has become an increasingly vital tool for enhancing MSME product visibility. Subsequent studies could explore the effectiveness of using digital platforms such as social media, e-commerce, or locally-based applications to introduce culture-based products to broader domestic and international markets. This research may provide insights into more innovative and efficient promotional strategies that support the sustainability of culture-based MSMEs.

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