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Visual Brand Identity Without Conversion: A Single-Case Study of Design Consistency, Social Media Content, and Referral-Driven Sales in a Stik Nanasku Food MSME

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Abstract

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) increasingly invest in visual branding and social media, but their contribution to sales conversion remains unclear, particularly in student-run food ventures. This study examines the relationship between visual brand identity, social media engagement, and sales conversion in Stik Nanasku, a pineapple snack MSME developed by Digital Business students at Politeknik Jambi, Indonesia. An exploratory descriptive single-case study was conducted using project documents, transaction records, social media analytics, and visual content. Quantitative indicators were recalculated from 32 transactions and 24 Instagram posts, while qualitative data were analysed through deductive document and visual content analysis.
The findings show that Stik Nanasku developed a consistent visual brand identity and generated substantial online visibility, reaching 7,660 accounts and producing 8,241 engagement events. However, the venture sold only 70 units with Rp490,000 in revenue, and 68.8% of purchases came through personal referrals rather than traceable digital channels. The document audit also identified inconsistencies in brand-system implementation, including colour specifications, engagement metrics, and campaign planning. This study concludes that visual branding and social media engagement increase visibility but do not necessarily produce measurable sales conversion. Referral-based purchasing emerged as the primary conversion pathway, highlighting the importance of brand-system governance and conversion infrastructure in early-stage MSMEs.

Keywords: Visual Brand Identity, MSMEs, Social Media Marketing, Sales Conversion, Case Study

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Introduction

The digitalisation of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) has transformed visual design from a cosmetic element into a strategic business capability. Beyond infrastructure and digital literacy, successful digital transformation also requires MSMEs to build a recognisable market identity. Visual brand identity, including logos, colours, typography, brand names, and packaging, shapes how consumers perceive a brand and influences perceived quality, brand personality, satisfaction, and purchase intention. In food products, packaging visuals, particularly colour, serve as key cues that influence purchasing decisions (Anatan & Nur, 2023); (Yu et al., 2024); (El Oraiby & Kiygi-Calli, 2024; Su & Wang, 2024).

Social media has become the primary communication channel for MSMEs, but its adoption does not consistently translate into better business performance. Short-form video content and collaborations with micro and nano influencers have expanded audience reach while strengthening engagement and electronic word of mouth (Pellegrino & Abe, 2023); (Tatik & Setiawan, 2025); (Li et al., 2024; Rungruangjit & Charoenpornpanichkul, 2022).

Despite this shift, two design-related gaps remain. First, existing MSME studies generally treat branding and social media as marketing activities without examining whether visual design contributes to actual sales transactions. Second, few studies assess the consistency between brand guidelines and their implementation across social media, packaging, and commercial materials. This gap is particularly relevant for resource-constrained MSMEs, where visual identity is often developed informally and implemented inconsistently (Yu et al., 2024).

This study addresses these gaps through an exploratory single-case study of Stik Nanasku, a pineapple stick snack MSME developed by Digital Business students at Politeknik Jambi, Indonesia. The case integrates brand guidelines, packaging and competitor audits, transaction records, social media analytics, and influencer campaign documentation, enabling a systematic assessment of design consistency and sales conversion. Accordingly, this study addresses three research questions: (1) what visual brand identity, packaging, and social media content system was developed by Stik Nanasku and how it was implemented across branding and promotional media; (2) how the implemented visual brand identity and social media content relate to documented engagement and sales conversion during the observed period; and (3) which design and managerial factors explain the gap between consistent brand-building activities and realised sales conversion in the Stik Nanasku MSME. (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018).

This study makes three contributions. Empirically, it links visual brand identity to engagement and transaction outcomes in an early-stage food MSME. Conceptually, it proposes a design-to-conversion framework that distinguishes reach from sales conversion through referral pathways. Practically, it identifies brand governance issues, including visual inconsistency, metric misalignment, and campaign budget inefficiency, that can inform MSME branding practice and design education.

Literature Review

2.1 Visual Brand Identity and Packaging Design

Visual brand identity consists of the core visual elements that make a brand recognisable, including the logo, colour palette, typography, brand name, graphic devices, and packaging. These elements shape consumer perception and purchase intention, while their effectiveness depends on consistent implementation across brand touchpoints. For food MSMEs, packaging functions as the primary point-of-decision cue by integrating protection, information, and persuasion through visual elements, particularly colour, which supports product recognition and purchasing decisions. Therefore, brand identity analysis should evaluate the alignment between intended design specifications and their implementation across branding and packaging materials (Yu et al., 2024); (El Oraiby & Kiygi-Calli, 2024; Su & Wang, 2024); (Wang et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2024).

2.2 Social Media Content, Short-Form Video and Influencer Collaboration

Social media content design has become a strategic capability for MSMEs, but platform adoption alone does not guarantee business performance. Its effectiveness depends on content strategy, organisational capability, and integration with the broader marketing system. For influencer collaboration, micro and nano influencers are often more effective than larger creators because their recommendations are perceived as more credible and generate stronger engagement, brand loyalty, and electronic word of mouth. Therefore, both content design and collaborator selection are critical factors in translating social media presence into marketing outcomes (Pellegrino & Abe, 2023; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010); (Tatik & Setiawan, 2025); (Chiu & Ho, 2023; Li et al., 2024; Rungruangjit & Charoenpornpanichkul, 2022).

2.3 Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) and Referral Purchasing

Interpersonal recommendation has long been recognised as a major driver of consumer adoption and purchase behaviour. In digital environments, this mechanism operates through electronic word of mouth (eWOM), where purchase intention depends on the credibility of recommendations shared on social media and digital platforms. Referral-based recommendations can generate stronger and more sustainable customer acquisition than paid marketing, particularly when trust in brand-owned communication is limited. This perspective highlights the importance of examining referral-driven purchasing alongside visual branding and social media content in MSMEs (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Arndt, 1967); (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Nguyen, 2024); (Trusov et al., 2009); (Pangarkar et al., 2023).

2.4 Theoretical Lens: Signalling, Trust Transfer, and the Customer Journey

This study is guided by three complementary theoretical lenses: signalling theory, trust transfer, and the customer journey. Signalling theory explains how visual identity and packaging communicate product quality under information asymmetry. Trust transfer explains how consumers rely on trusted people or platforms when evaluating unfamiliar brands. Customer journey theory distinguishes awareness, consideration, and purchase stages, highlighting the role of touchpoints in converting attention into transactions. Together, these lenses explain why strong visual branding may generate awareness but fail to produce sales when purchase touchpoints and trust signals are weak (Spence, 1973; Connelly et al., 2011); (Stewart, 2003); (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

2.5 Research Gap and Analytical Framework

Existing studies examine visual brand identity, packaging, social media strategy, and eWOM separately, mostly through consumer surveys or experiments. Evidence linking a single MSME's design artefacts to transaction records and implementation consistency remains limited. Figure 1 presents the analytical framework derived from the literature to guide data collection and analysis, rather than a tested explanatory model. Solid paths represent documented relationships examined in this study, while the dashed path denotes brand-system consistency as a proposed condition for future research (Yu et al., 2024).

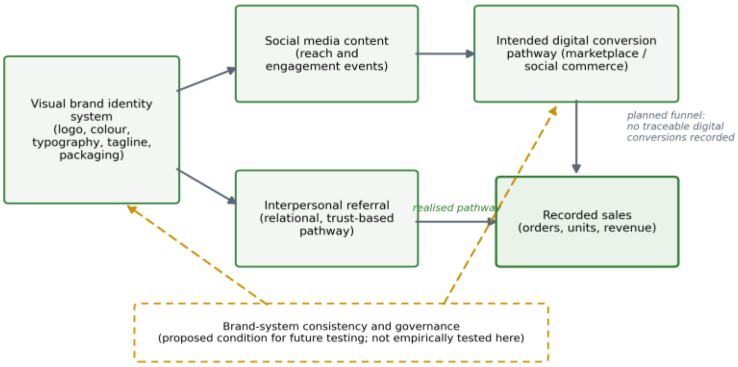

Figure 1. Analytical framework of the study.

Note. Solid arrows denote documented pathways examined in the case; the dashed element is a proposed condition for future testing and was not empirically tested. Source: authors, derived from the literature reviewed in Sections 2.1 to 2.4.

Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Case Selection

This study employs an exploratory, descriptive single-case design with embedded units of analysis. The design is appropriate because it examines how a visual brand identity system was developed and how it relates to documented engagement and sales within a single venture. The case is Stik Nanasku, a pineapple stick snack MSME developed by Digital Business students at Politeknik Jambi during the 2025/2026 academic year. The case was selected through purposeful sampling as an information-rich case with integrated documentary evidence, including brand guidelines, packaging and competitor audits, transaction records, social media analytics, and campaign documents. Therefore, the findings are analytically transferable to comparable early-stage, resource-constrained MSMEs rather than statistically representative of Indonesian food MSMEs. (Yin, 2018).

3.2 Unit of Analysis

The principal unit of analysis is Stik Nanasku's visual brand identity system, defined as the integration of brand identity, packaging design, social media content, and documented sales outcomes between December 2025 and June 2026. The study analyses three embedded design units: (a) brand design artefacts, including brand guidelines, packaging, worksheets, and campaign plans; (b) social media content design, comprising 24 post-level observations; and (c) sales transaction records, comprising 32 paid orders. Each unit is analysed independently before being integrated to evaluate the consistency of the design system and its relationship with engagement and sales conversion.

3.3 Data Sources, Provenance, and Authentication

The dataset consists of five documentary sources produced by the Stik Nanasku venture team. These documents include design artefacts, operational records, transaction data, and platform-generated social media analytics collected for different purposes during the project. Rather than serving as independent sources, they are used for within-case triangulation to cross-verify design implementation, engagement, and sales outcomes. Documents were collected from the programme project archive with the consent of the venture team. Eligible documents were those produced by the team or exported from its official platform accounts, covered the December 2025 to June 2026 project period, and contained branding, operational, or sales data. All eligible documents were included. Document authenticity was verified through archive provenance, cross-document identifier checks, and confirmation from the venture team. Any inconsistencies were recorded in a discrepancy register, while incorrect summary calculations were recalculated from row-level data and reported transparently in the findings. (Yin, 2018; Bowen, 2009).

Table 1. Documentary Data Sources: Producer, Purpose, Period, and Status in the Analysis

Source document	Producer and purpose	Period covered	Principal data extracted	Status in analysis
Brand guidelines	Venture team; design reference for the brand	Project (undated)	Logo concept, colour palette with hex codes, typography, tagline, brand rationale	Authoritative for design intent
Practicum worksheet (sessions 1 and 2)	Venture team; course audit and analysis exercise	May 2026	Product audit (weight, dimensions, drop test), competitor benchmarking, USP, SWOT, business model blocks	Authoritative for planning content; audit values cross-checked
Order management and product audit file	Venture team; operational transaction ledger	1 Jan to 1 Feb 2026	32 paid orders: flavour, quantity, value, channel, city, status	Authoritative for sales, revenue, and price
Data analysis and digital business insight file	Venture team, from Instagram analytics exports; performance reporting	Dec 2025 to Jun 2026 (labels partly inconsistent)	24 post-level observations: accounts reached, engagement events, content type, partial age distribution	Authoritative for reach; engagement treated as event counts (Section 3.4)
Traffic generation file	Venture team; influencer campaign plan	Jun 2026	22 influencer prospects with tier and status; 5 scheduled collaborations with budgets	Planning document only; no realised-expenditure records

Note. All five sources originate from the same student project and are not independent; see Section 3.3 for the triangulation rationale. Numerical indicators reported in this study were recalculated from row-level records because the summary tabs of the ledger and analytics files contained arithmetic errors; discrepancies are reported in Sections 4.6 and 4.9.

3.4 Operational Definitions of Indicators

Table 2 defines all quantitative indicators used in this study, including their sources and measurement limitations. The Instagram analytics report a metric labelled “accounts engaged,” which totals 8,241 across 24 posts and exceeds the total reach of 7,660 accounts. Therefore, this study treats the metric as post-level engagement events rather than unique engaged accounts. Because the original analytics do not allow interaction-level breakdowns or account deduplication across posts, this limitation is explicitly acknowledged in the analysis.

Table 2. Operational Definitions of Quantitative Indicators

Indicator	Definition in this study	Source
Reach	Unique accounts reached per post as reported by Instagram Insights; totals are sums across posts and may count the same account under multiple posts	Analytics file
Engagement events	Aggregated post-level interaction events (likes, comments, shares, saves) as reported by the platform; not unique accounts	Analytics file
Paid order	A ledger row with payment recorded as complete	Transaction ledger
Units sold	Sum of item quantities across paid orders	Transaction ledger
Revenue	Sum of paid order values (units × unit price)	Transaction ledger
Average order value	Revenue divided by number of paid orders	Recalculated
Sales channel	Acquisition route recorded per order: administrator's WhatsApp, or referral (order initiated through a personal recommendation)	Transaction ledger
Digital conversion	A transaction directly traceable to a digital touchpoint (marketplace checkout, tracked link, or promotional code)	Ledger + analytics
Cost of goods (planned)	Per-unit cost recorded in the Business Model Canvas: raw material Rp5,500 plus packaging Rp1,500 = Rp7,000	Canvas (planning value)
Campaign expenditure (planned)	Budget stated in the influencer campaign plan for scheduled collaborations	Campaign plan
Campaign expenditure (realised)	Payments actually made for campaign activity; no such records exist in the dataset	Not available

3.5 Analysis Procedures

Data analysis combined quantitative aggregation with document and visual content analysis. Transaction records, social media posts, and influencer data were aggregated to produce descriptive indicators of sales, reach, engagement, and collaboration status, with all values recalculated from row-level records because summary files contained arithmetic errors. Document analysis followed a deductive coding framework derived from the literature and applied through four stages: familiarisation with all documents, coding of textual and visual evidence, cross-document comparison, and recording inconsistencies in a discrepancy register. Every coded finding was linked to its source through an audit trail, while disagreements in interpretation were resolved through author discussion to ensure analytical consistency (Bowen, 2009; Krippendorff, 2019).

Table 3. Deductive coding framework for the document and visual content analysis

Category	Definition	Example of coded evidence
Identity elements	Presence and specification of logo, colour, typography, tagline	Palette specified as green #008000, yellow #FFE12D, gold #F7CA37 (brand guidelines)
Intended meaning	Rationale the designers assign to each element	"The woven ring represents togetherness and locality" (brand guidelines)
Packaging function	Protective, informational, and persuasive functions of the pack	Zipper-lock stand-up pouch; 50 cm drop test passed (worksheet)
Channel and conversion pathway	Declared and observed routes from exposure to purchase	Canvas lists Instagram as the only digital channel; ledger records WhatsApp and referral orders
Metric definition	How performance indicators are labelled and computed	"Accounts engaged" exceeds "accounts reached" across 24 posts (analytics file)
Cross-document consistency	Agreement of specifications and figures across documents	Unit price Rp10,000 (canvas) vs Rp7,500 (audit) vs Rp7,000 (ledger)

The consistency audit cross-checked colour, price, weight, dimensions, cost, and sales data across the five documents, and all discrepancies were recorded in a discrepancy register (Table 10).

3.6 Trustworthiness

The study's quality was established using case-study criteria. Credibility was supported through triangulation across design, operational, transactional, and platform-generated documents, transparent reporting of contradictory evidence, and verification of quantitative results from row-level records. Dependability and confirmability were ensured through an audit trail and discrepancy register, while rival explanations were addressed in the discussion. The authors were affiliated with the host institution but were not members of the venture team, and the analysis was conducted after the project ended (Yin, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.7 Ethics

This study uses secondary documentary and platform data from a student venture project. Customer identifiers were removed, no individuals are identified, and no human participants or experimental procedures were involved.

4. Results

The results follow the analytical framework in Figure 1 by comparing the designed brand system with its realised outcomes. Sections 4.1 to 4.5 present the visual identity, packaging, product strategy, competitive analysis, SWOT, and business model, while Sections 4.6 to 4.9 report sales, acquisition channels, social media performance, and the brand consistency audit. This comparison forms the core analysis of the study and is discussed in Section 5.

4.1 The Visual Brand Identity and Packaging System

The venture developed a complete visual brand identity system comprising a logo, colour palette, typography, tagline, and packaging. The logo combines a pineapple mascot, woven basket ring, pineapple sticks, and green leaves, with each element representing product identity, locality, freshness, and brand character. The brand guidelines specify a three-colour palette, Nunito and Sriracha typefaces, and the tagline Segar Manisnya, Renyah Stiknya, targeting young consumers and Generation Z through green and yellow as symbols of naturalness, trust, energy, and appetite appeal. Figure 2 presents the packaging system, including front and back packaging, the stand-up pouch, and product photography. The visual identity system was internally consistent at the design level, with defined logo elements, colour palette, typography, and packaging information aligned with the brand guidelines. The consistency of these specifications across other project documents is examined in Section 4.9 (Yu et al., 2024; El Oraiby & Kiygi-Calli, 2024; Su & Wang, 2024; Chen et al., 2024).

Figure 2. Stik Nanasku Packaging System

Note. Panel (a) shows the front packaging design, panel (b) the back packaging design, panel (c) the printed stand-up pouch, and panel (d) the product photographs. Packaging durability is reported in Table 4. Source: Venture brand guidelines and product documentation.

4.2 Product Audit and Logistics Readiness

Table 4 summarises the product feasibility and logistics audit. Stik Nanasku weighs 23 g net (24 g with packaging), uses an 18 × 12 × 18 cm stand-up pouch, and passed a 50 cm drop test, with bubble wrap recommended for shipping protection. Two inconsistencies were identified during verification: the reported volumetric weight (0.684 kg) does not match the recorded package dimensions, and the reported shipping-to-price ratio (15%) cannot be reproduced from the documented shipping cost and product price. Both discrepancies are reported as document inconsistencies rather than corrected values (Hübner et al., 2016).

Table 4. Product Feasibility and Logistics Audit, as recorded in The Worksheet

Parameter	Recorded value	Note
Net weight	23 g (24 g with pack)	Actual weight
Package dimensions	18 × 12 × 18 cm	Length × width × height
Volumetric weight (stated)	0.684 kg	Formula on recorded dimensions gives 0.648 kg
Estimated cost of goods	Rp5,500 per unit	Audit figure; excludes packaging
Estimated selling price	Rp7,500 per unit	Audit figure; differs from ledger price (Table 10)
Estimated shipping cost	Rp10,500	To buyer
Stated shipping-to-price ratio	15%	Not reconcilable with recorded values
Drop test (50 cm)	Passed	Top, side, and contents intact

Protective material	Bubble wrap, Rp1,000 per unit	Recommended

Note. Values are reproduced as recorded; the two flagged rows contain internal inconsistencies identified during the consistency audit (Section 4.9).

4.3 Competitive positioning and Unique Selling Proposition

Table 5 compares Stik Nanasku with three competing snack brands. Stik Nanasku offers the lowest unit price and three flavour variants but relies solely on Instagram, without a checkout-enabled sales channel, ratings, or customer reviews. The competitor audit positioned Stik Nanasku as an affordable pineapple-based snack made from real fruit, supported by distinctive packaging and flavour variety, while addressing competitors' weaknesses in packaging quality, portion value, pricing, and branding. The competitor analysis shows strong internal positioning: competitors' weaknesses align with Stik Nanasku's proposed advantages. However, it also reveals a trust gap. Competitors sell through marketplaces with ratings, reviews, and transaction histories, while Stik Nanasku relies only on Instagram without comparable trust signals. This difference is expected to limit conversion despite consistent branding and is examined further in Section 5.2 (Yu et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2023).

Table 5. Competitor Benchmarking as recorded in The Worksheet

Aspect	**Competitor 1 (Fruity Haven)**	**Competitor 2 (Duo Bocil / Yusra)**	**Competitor 3 (Luckymore)**	**Stik Nanasku**
Platform	Shopee	Tokopedia	TikTok Shop	Instagram
Listed price	Rp88,000 (500g to 1 kg)	Rp19,000	Rp49,000 (42 g), discounted from Rp130,000	Rp7,000 per piece
Store rating	4.7	3.2	4.9	None yet (new)
Units or reviews	16 sold	84 and 25 sold	1,600+ reviews	77 pcs (worksheet snapshot)
Packaging	Standing pouch photos	Clear plastic pouch	Designed standing pouch	Glossy standing pouch
Main advantage	Grade A, crunchy and sweet	Low price, free shipping, cash on delivery	Freeze-dried, Halal certified, authentic	Real pineapple, three flavour variants
Buyer complaints	Sour taste, hard chips, transit damage	Few reviews	Small portion (42 g) for the price	Anticipated: price and small portion

Note. Reproduced from the competitor worksheet. The 77-piece snapshot recorded here differs from the 70 units in the transaction ledger; the discrepancy is logged in Table 10, and the ledger figure is treated as authoritative for sales.

4.4 Strategic Positioning: SWOT Analysis and Derived Strategies

The venture conducted a SWOT analysis and developed TOWS strategies (Tables 6 and 7). Key weaknesses included low brand awareness, the absence of halal certification and distribution permits, and product fragility during delivery. The strategies prioritised packaging improvement, certification, and social media marketing to strengthen trust and brand awareness (Barney, 1991; Teece, 2010; Kotler & Keller, 2016). The project documents record the planned strategies but not their implementation during the observed sales period (January to February 2026). No evidence was found of certification applications, packaging improvements, or awareness campaigns being executed during this period. This implementation gap is a documented finding of the case, although its contribution to the limited sales is discussed alongside alternative explanations in Section 5.4.

Table 6. SWOT Analysis as recorded in the Worksheet

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Real pineapple as the main ingredient. 2. Distinctive sweet-sour taste. 3. Innovative local-fruit snack concept. 4. Multiple flavour variants.	1. Product easily damaged if packaging is inadequate. 2. Pineapple raw material relatively costly unless bought directly from farmers. 3. New brand with low awareness. 4. No halal certification or distribution permit yet.
Opportunities	**Threats**
1. Rising trend of local and unique snack consumption. 2. MSME support plus marketplace and social media marketing. 3. Wider market reach through e-commerce. 4. Growing interest in local fruit products.	1. Many similar snack competitors. 2. Rising raw-material and production costs. 3. Intense price competition in marketplaces. 4. New product innovations from competitors.

Table 7. Derived TOWS Strategies as recorded in the Worksheet

Strategy	Recorded strategic actions
SO (strengths–opportunities)	Use real pineapple as the main selling point in digital promotion; highlight the signature sweet-sour taste; develop branding as a unique local-fruit snack; use marketplaces and social media to widen reach.
WO (weaknesses–opportunities)	Improve packaging quality for safe online shipping; obtain halal certification and a business permit to build trust; use social media to raise brand awareness; design more attractive packaging.
ST (strengths–threats)	Maintain quality with good pineapple; preserve the signature taste to stay distinct; develop new flavour variants; keep quality consistent for loyalty.
WT (weaknesses–threats)	Use stronger packaging to reduce damage; control production costs to remain price-competitive; partner with suppliers to stabilise input prices; increase promotion and customer service.

4.5 Digital Business Model Canvas and The Planned Revenue Model

The venture developed a nine-block Digital Business Model Canvas (Table 8). Instagram was the only digital channel and was used for branding and product discovery, not for checkout or transactions. The business model assumed a selling price of Rp10,000 per unit with a Rp3,000 (30%) gross margin, while labour, logistics, overhead, and advertising costs were not fully calculated (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010; Teece, 2010).

Table 8. Digital Business Model Canvas as recorded in the worksheet

Block	Recorded content
Key partners	Local Jambi pineapple farmers; printing and packaging suppliers; local influencers and food reviewers; a local raw-material supplier.
Key activities	Production; quality control; packing; digital promotional content creation; social media management; customer service and chat response.
Value propositions	Real-pineapple stick snack with a signature sweet-sour taste; crunchy and distinctive versus ordinary snacks; quality ingredients; practical packaging suitable as a souvenir or daily snack.
Customer relationships	Friendly responses to reviews; replacement for products damaged in transit; fast service through Instagram.
Customer segments	Ages 12 to 45; students, workers, and the general public; active on TikTok and Instagram; shop through marketplaces; pain points include difficulty finding unique pineapple snacks and the need for an affordable, practical snack.
Key resources	Human resources and labour; production equipment; business capital; pineapple raw material.
Channels (digital)	Instagram.

Cost structure	Raw material Rp5,500 per unit; packaging Rp1,500 per unit; labour not yet calculated; marketplace admin 5% to 8%; advertising Rp0; logistics and packing not yet calculated; other overhead not yet calculated; total cost of goods Rp7,000 per unit.
Revenue streams	Unit price Rp10,000; target 300 units per month; target turnover Rp3,000,000 per month; pricing model normal and bundle; gross margin Rp3,000 per unit (30%); additional revenue from direct sales and resellers; target break-even about 200 units per month.

Comparing the business model with the transaction ledger reveals a clear gap between planning and realised performance. The planned selling price was Rp10,000 per unit with a Rp3,000 (30%) gross margin, but the realised price was Rp7,000, eliminating the planned gross margin. Realised sales reached only 70 of the 300 targeted units (23.3%) and generated Rp490,000, or 16.3% of the Rp3,000,000 revenue target. The project recap also reported a net profit of Rp282,520 using a per-unit cost that conflicts with both the cost audit and the Business Model Canvas, and no supporting cost records were available. Based on verified records, the venture operated at or near zero gross margin, while the inconsistency between the Rp0 advertising budget in the Business Model Canvas and the Rp5,750,000 influencer budget in the campaign plan is treated as a planning inconsistency rather than evidence of actual spending.

4.6 Realized Sales Performance

Between 1 January and 1 February 2026, the transaction ledger recorded 32 paid orders, totalling 70 units sold and Rp490,000 in revenue at a uniform selling price of Rp7,000 per unit. The average order value was Rp15,312.50, with a mean basket size of 2.19 units and most purchases consisting of one to three units. Balado was the best-selling variant (38.6%), followed by Original (32.9%) and Jagung Bakar (28.6%), while sales were concentrated in Kota Jambi, which accounted for 27 of the 32 orders (Table 9; Figure 3).

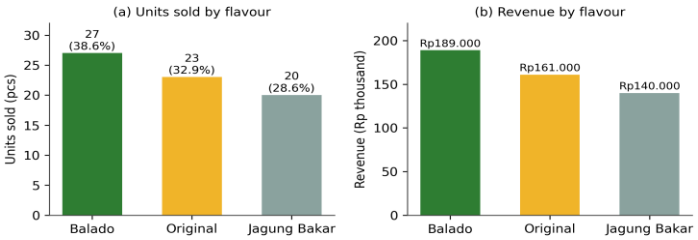

Figure 3. Sales composition by flavour variant, 1 January to 1 February 2026.
Note. Panel (a): units sold; panel (b): revenue. Percentages are shares of 70 units. Source: recalculated from the 32 rows of the transaction ledger.

Table 9. Sales key performance indicators, 1 January to 1 February 2026

Indicator	Value	Unit
Paid orders	32	orders
Units sold	70	pcs
Total revenue	490,000	Rp
Unit price	7,000	Rp per pc
Average order value	15,312.50	Rp per order
Mean basket size	2.19	pcs per order

Payment completion	100.0	% of orders paid

Note. All figures were recalculated from the 32 transaction rows. Row-level records (70 units; Rp490,000) were used throughout, while summary-tab discrepancies were retained in the discrepancy register.

4.7 Acquisition channel and the Temporal Shift to Referral

Sales were generated through two channels: WhatsApp and personal referrals. Referrals dominated, accounting for 22 of 32 orders (68.8%), 52 of 70 units sold, and Rp364,000 (74.3%) of total revenue, while WhatsApp contributed the remaining 10 orders (31.2%), 18 units, and Rp126,000 (25.7%). Referral orders also produced higher revenue per transaction and became the main acquisition channel after the first week of January (see Figures 4 and 5) (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Arndt, 1967; Trusov et al., 2009)

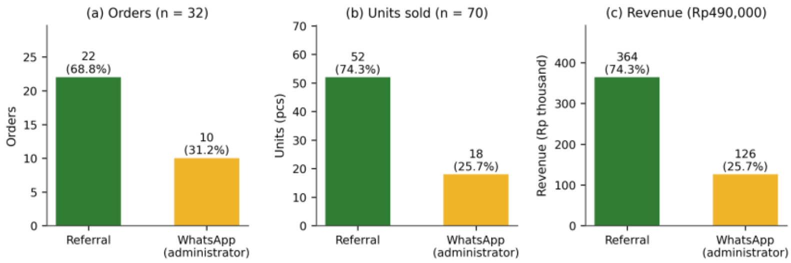

Figure 4. Customer acquisition channel composition.

Note. Panels show orders, units, and revenue by channel; percentages are shares of the panel total. Source: recalculated from the transaction ledger.

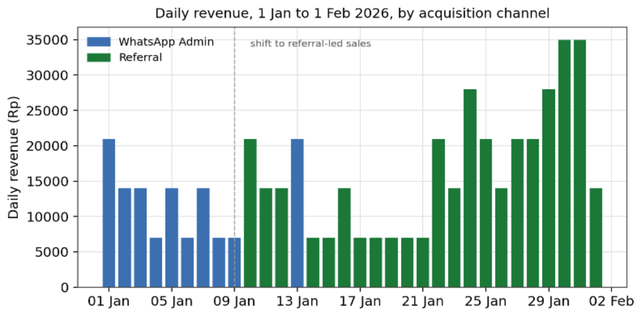

Figure 5. Daily revenue by acquisition channel, 1 January to 1 February 2026.

Note. Early sales came mainly through the administrator's WhatsApp; referrals became the dominant source from mid-January. Source: transaction ledger.

4.8 Social Media Reach, Engagement, and The Conversion Gap

The social media analytics covered 24 posts, consisting of 21 Instagram Reels and 3 videos. These posts reached 7,660 accounts and generated 8,241 engagement events across all posts, with viewers primarily aged 18 to 24, followed by 25 to 34, consistent with the venture's target audience. Higher-reach posts generally also generated higher engagement, particularly Reels and early campaign content (see Figure 6).

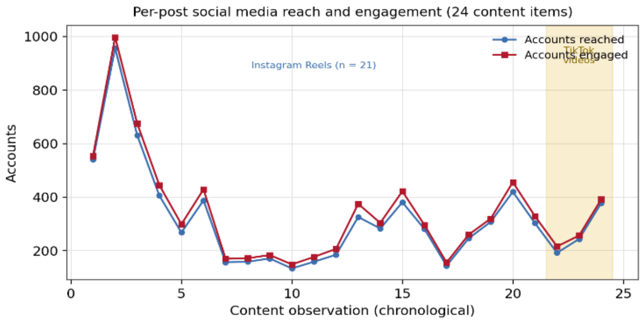

Figure 6. Per-post reach and engagement events across the 24 recorded posts.
Note. Each point is one post. Engagement events are aggregated interactions, not unique accounts (Section 3.4). Source: venture analytics file.

Across 24 Instagram posts, the venture generated 7,660 accounts reached and 8,241 engagement events but recorded no directly traceable digital conversions. The available records contained no checkout-enabled platform, tracked links, or promotional codes, making platform-attributed conversion impossible to calculate. The findings therefore indicate an attribution gap: social media generated reach and engagement, but no documented pathway linked these activities to recorded sales (Pellegrino & Abe, 2023; Tatik & Setiawan, 2025; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

4.9 Brand-System Consistency and Data-Governance Findings

The brand system consistency audit identified discrepancies across the five project documents, particularly in visual design implementation and planning records (see Table 10). Although the brand guidelines defined fixed colour specifications, several branding and presentation materials applied different colour codes, indicating inconsistency between the intended visual identity and its execution across brand touchpoints. Additional discrepancies were found in price, cost, product weight, and unit counts, with authoritative values determined using the evidence hierarchy described in Section 3.3. The audit also revealed a governance gap between design planning and marketing execution: the campaign plan proposed 22 influencer prospects with a planned budget of Rp5,750,000, but only four influencers confirmed and no expenditure records were available. Therefore, the influencer budget is reported only as a planned value, while the mismatch between the campaign budget and the Business Model Canvas advertising budget (Rp0) indicates inconsistency in brand system governance rather than evidence of campaign effectiveness (Yu et al., 2024); (Li et al., 2024; Rungruangjit & Charoenpornpanichkul, 2022).

Table 10. Cross-document discrepancy register

Attribute	Brand guidelines / audit value	Report, pitch, or planning value	Authoritative value used
Primary colours	Green #008000; yellow #FFE12D; gold #F7CA37	Green #2E7D32; yellow #FDD835	Guidelines (design intent)
Unit price	Rp7,500 (audit)	Rp10,000 (canvas plan)	Rp7,000 (ledger, realised)
Cost of goods per unit	Rp5,500 materials (audit); Rp7,000 incl. packaging (canvas)	Rp2,974 (financial recap)	Canvas Rp7,000 (recap unsupported)
Product net weight and size	23 g net, 24 g with pack; 18 × 12 × 18 cm	100 g; 15 × 10 × 5 cm	Audit (measured values)

Units sold (snapshot)	77 pcs (competitor worksheet)	—	70 pcs (ledger)
Designed digital channels	Instagram only (canvas)	Instagram, TikTok, TikTok Shop, Shopee (report and pitch)	Canvas describes practice; others aspirational
Advertising budget	Rp0 (canvas cost structure)	Rp5,750,000 planned (campaign plan)	Neither verified as spent

Note. Values are reproduced as recorded; differences reflect documents produced at different times for different purposes. The final column indicates the authoritative value used under the hierarchy in Section 3.3.

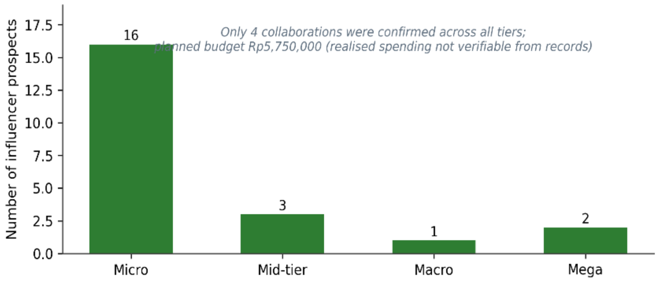

Figure 7. Influencer outreach by tier, as recorded in the campaign plan.

Discussion

5.1 Reach Without Traceable Conversion: A Journey-Stage Reading

The central finding is a gap between the awareness stage and the purchase stage. Customer journey theory distinguishes pre-purchase and purchase touchpoints; in this case, awareness was actively managed through 24 Instagram posts that reached 7,660 accounts, while no owned digital purchase touchpoint, such as a marketplace checkout, tracked link, or promotional code, was implemented. As a result, no traceable digital conversions were recorded. This finding indicates a missing conversion pathway rather than evidence that social media content failed to influence buyers, and is consistent with previous studies showing that social media adoption alone does not guarantee MSME performance (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016); (Pellegrino & Abe, 2023; Tatik & Setiawan, 2025).

5.2 Referral Dominance: A Theoretically Informed Interpretation

Referrals generated 68.8% of orders and 74.3% of revenue, making them the venture's primary sales channel. This pattern is consistent with signalling, trust transfer, and eWOM theory, which suggest that consumers rely on trusted recommendations when a new brand lacks ratings, reviews, or certification. The competitor audit also showed that rival brands offered these trust signals through marketplace platforms, while Stik Nanasku did not. However, trust was not measured directly in this study, so referral dominance is interpreted as a theory-informed explanation rather than a demonstrated causal relationship (Spence, 1973; Connelly et al., 2011); (Stewart, 2003); (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Nguyen, 2024).

5.3 Brand-System Governance

The discrepancy audit (Table 10) identified inconsistencies between the intended brand system and its implementation, including differences in colour specifications, pricing, and cost records across project documents. These findings indicate weaknesses in brand system governance, where brand guidelines were not applied consistently throughout branding and planning materials. This study does not test the effect of these inconsistencies on brand recognition or sales, but documents them as a governance issue that is relevant for student and early-stage MSMEs (Yu et al., 2024).

5.4 Rival Explanations

Following case-study practice, several explanations for the low sales remain plausible. Sales may reflect limited product-market fit, low perceived value for a 23 g snack, the short one-month observation period, and a relatively small audience reach. The absence of a marketplace checkout also restricted purchases outside the founders' social network, while product quality and repeat purchases could not be evaluated because no customer review data were available. Therefore, referral dominance is interpreted as one plausible explanation, not the only cause of the sales pattern (Yin, 2018).

5.5 Contributions

This study contributes contextually, methodologically, conceptually, and practically by linking visual brand identity to MSME sales outcomes, applying a documentary audit approach, proposing brand-system governance as an analytical condition, and identifying priorities for stronger branding and conversion practices in early-stage MSMEs.

Conclusion

This study found that a coherent visual brand identity and active social media presence generated substantial reach and engagement but did not produce traceable digital sales conversion. Most purchases occurred through personal referrals, while the document audit revealed inconsistencies in colour implementation, pricing, cost records, and campaign budgeting, indicating weaknesses in brand-system governance. Four interrelated factors explain this conversion gap: inconsistent brand implementation across touchpoints, the absence of conversion infrastructure, including marketplace checkout and tracked links, the dominance of referral-based trust transfer, and weaknesses in brand-system governance. These findings suggest that visual branding increases visibility, but measurable sales conversion depends on trust pathways, conversion infrastructure, and consistent brand-system governance. Future research should validate these findings through multi-case and longitudinal studies.

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