


Promotion Mix Implementation in a Culinary MSME: A Case Study of Sarang Kepiting

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v11i1.2025>

*Dina Akmalia, Prima Mulyasari Agustini^{ab} 

¹²Universitas Bakrie, Jakarta, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: dinaakmalia21@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a strategic role as a main pillar of Indonesia's economy; however, their sustainability increasingly depends on the ability of business actors to implement effective and adaptive marketing communication strategies amid intense competition. This study aims to analyze the application of the promotion mix in the marketing communication strategy of Sarang Kepiting, a seafood culinary MSME that has been operating since 1983 in North Jakarta. This research contributes novelty by examining the promotion mix in a long-established culinary MSME with a multi-generational customer base, emphasizing promotional practices that are contextual, relationship-oriented, and embedded within service interactions. This research employs a qualitative approach using a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the owner, employees, and customers, as well as observation and documentation. The findings indicate that Sarang Kepiting has implemented all elements of the promotion mix, advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing, although the implementation remains simple, situational, and not yet systematically structured. Personal selling emerges as the most dominant element in building customer loyalty. This study concludes that the application of the promotion mix contributes positively to brand awareness and business sustainability, and has the potential to enhance the competitiveness of culinary MSMEs if managed more consistently and integratively across all elements.

Keywords: *Promotion Mix, Marketing Communication Strategy, Msmes, Culinary Industry*

Article History:

Received 13th January 2026

Accepted 02nd February 2026

Published 04th February 2026



INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) constitute a sector that makes a significant contribution and serves as a central pillar of Indonesia's economy. According to data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and MSMEs (2024), the MSME sector contributes more than 60% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorbs approximately 117 million workers, accounting for around 97% of the total national workforce. The strategic role of MSMEs extends beyond driving local economic activity; they also function as a foundation of national economic resilience, having demonstrated the ability to withstand various economic crises. Sintarakarani et al. (2023) explain that MSMEs play an important role in reducing unemployment and poverty while promoting more equitable economic development across regions.

However, amid increasingly competitive market dynamics and rapidly changing consumer behavior, the sustainability of MSMEs is now highly dependent on the ability of business actors to implement effective, adaptive, and customer-oriented communication and promotional strategies. Competition arises not only from fellow MSMEs but also from large corporations and digital platforms that possess greater resources and more advanced promotional strategies. According to a press release from the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2025), the number of MSMEs in Indonesia has exceeded 64 million business units, reflected intense market competition and highlighting the importance of differentiation through well-targeted promotional strategies.

Under these conditions, the primary challenge for MSME actors lies not only in creating quality products but also in effectively communicating the value of those products to consumers. Even products with clear benefits may fail in the market if consumers are unaware of or do not understand their utility. Therefore, companies must influence consumers to generate demand, maintain brand awareness, and increase sales through promotional activities that are planned and integrated with overall marketing strategies (Assauri, 2017). In line with this view, Priansa (2017) states that promotion essentially represents a company's effort to convey information, create appeal, and persuade consumers to try and purchase products through various forms of marketing communication.

One approach that can be used to understand and strategically manage promotional activities is the concept of the promotion mix. Promotion is understood as persuasive communication by companies toward potential buyers through the utilization of various elements within the marketing mix. This combination of promotional tools is known as the promotion mix, which includes advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and publicity (Assauri, 2017). Through the effective management of the promotion mix, companies can attract consumer attention, encourage purchase decisions, and build long-term relationships with customers.

Kotler and Keller (as cited in Kusuma, 2024) explain that the promotion mix is a key element in marketing management, playing a crucial role in communicating product value, building brand image, and influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Similarly, Kotler and Armstrong (2008) define the promotion mix as a specific combination of promotional tools used by companies to persuasively communicate value and establish long-term customer relationships (Jasmani & Sunarsi, 2020). Anyadighibe et al. (2021) further emphasize that the promotion mix represents a coordinated set of promotional tools designed to maximize the effectiveness of marketing campaigns.

Conceptually, the promotion mix is understood as a strategic combination of various variables such as advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, public relations, and personal selling, aimed not only at driving sales but also at building effective communication with consumers (Uluwiyah, 2022). In this context, promotion is oriented not merely toward increasing transactions but also toward shaping perceptions, attitudes, and long-term relationships with customers.

Advertising is a form of non-personal communication used by companies to convey information about products or services to a broad audience through various paid media (Priansa, 2017). Sales promotion refers to a set of short-term incentives designed to encourage consumers to make purchases more quickly or in larger quantities (Kotler & Keller, 2012, as cited in Priansa, 2017). Sales promotion may take the form of exhibitions, product demonstrations, or other sales incentives aimed at attracting new customers, retaining existing ones, and enhancing brand loyalty (Alma, 2014). Public relations encompass planned and continuous communication activities intended to build and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics (Coulson-Thomas, 2002, as cited in Priansa, 2017). Personal selling is a form of face-to-face communication that provides marketers with direct opportunities to build relationships with consumers. Rather than focusing solely on single transactions, personal selling aims to create long-term relationships with customers, thereby encouraging loyalty and repeat purchases (Clow & Baack, 2012). Meanwhile, direct marketing refers to promotional activities conducted directly with consumers without intermediaries to obtain personal responses. Direct marketing utilizes various communication media and emphasizes the creation of individual responses, such as orders or follow-up interactions, from both new and existing customers (Suryaningsih et al., 2021).

Several previous studies have examined the implementation of promotional strategies and the promotion mix in MSMEs across various sectors. Alamsya and Hasan (2022) analyzed the application of digital marketing strategies and the promotion mix in the MSME Berry Catszone Batam through a community service approach, demonstrating that the use of social media, WhatsApp Business, e-catalogs, and digital promotional materials contributed to increased knowledge among business actors and expanded marketing reach, while also emphasizing the importance of digital literacy for MSMEs. Similarly, Valentina & Suprpto (2026), in their study on optimizing the promotion mix in the MSME Mitra Gordyn Batam,

Promotion Mix Implementation in a Culinary MSME: A Case Study of Sarang Kepiting

found that the integration of digital promotion and offline promotional media, such as banners and brochures, enhanced promotional effectiveness, improved communication efficiency with customers, and strengthened business image and brand awareness. Arumsari and Marka (2018) examined the role of the promotion mix in improving marketing performance among Troso weaving MSMEs in Jepara and found that advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and publicity contributed positively to marketing performance, supported by service quality and the role of local government. Furthermore, Mustika and Gemina (2024) analyzed the implementation of the promotion mix in the culinary MSME Seblak Bondol in Sukabumi Regency and showed that although social media and marketplaces had been utilized, advertising and sales promotion had not yet been optimally implemented to support the achievement of sales targets, indicating the need for more comprehensive and structured promotion mix management.

Based on these studies, research on the promotion mix in MSMEs has generally focused on promotional effectiveness in increasing sales, particularly through digital media. However, studies that examine the contextual and in-depth implementation of the promotion mix in long-established culinary MSMEs with multi-generational customer bases remain relatively limited. Therefore, this offers novelty by examining the promotion mix in a long-established culinary MSME with a multi-generational customer base, emphasizing promotional practices that are contextual, relationship-oriented, and embedded within service interactions.

One MSME that is particularly interesting to examine in this context is Sarang Kepiting, a seafood culinary business established in 1983 and located at Jl. Ampera II No. 4, Gunung Sahari, Pademangan, North Jakarta. Its roadside shophouse location makes Sarang Kepiting easily accessible and highly visible. For more than three decades, Sarang Kepiting has been known as a family culinary destination with consistent taste, friendly service, and a loyal, multi-generational customer base.

In recent years, Sarang Kepiting has begun to adapt to digital developments, particularly in terms of promotion and communication with customers. However, unlike large-scale businesses with formal marketing planning, Sarang Kepiting's promotional strategies have evolved gradually based on the owner's experience, daily operational needs, and close relationships with customers. This condition reflects the typical characteristics of MSMEs and forms the basis for the selection of a case study method in this research.

Through the implementation of promotion mix elements such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing, Sarang Kepiting seeks to build brand awareness, attract new consumers, and maintain customer loyalty. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how the promotion mix is implemented in the marketing communication strategy of the MSME Sarang Kepiting and how these practices contribute to business sustainability amid the increasingly dynamic competition in the culinary industry.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach using a case study method to gain an in-depth understanding of how the promotion mix is implemented by the MSME Sarang Kepiting in its marketing communication strategy. A qualitative approach is chosen because this research focuses on meanings, processes, and the experiences of business actors within a real-life context, in line with Creswell (2014), who states that qualitative research aims to explore meanings that emerge from social interactions. In addition, qualitative research is oriented toward understanding phenomena in depth rather than producing generalizations. Qualitative research involves in-depth analysis of the research object, as each issue is considered to have distinct characteristics and contextual conditions that must be examined specifically according to the case (Siyoto & Sodik, 2015).

The case study method is applied because the research focuses on a single unit of analysis, namely the MSME Sarang Kepiting, where marketing phenomena and the operational context cannot be separated. As explained by Yin (2016), a case study is appropriate when researchers seek to examine a phenomenon within its real-life setting in a

comprehensive and in-depth manner. Research informants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique that involves choosing individuals who are considered to have the most relevant knowledge and direct involvement in promotional activities. These informants include the Owner and Marketing personnel of Sarang Kepiting, as well as customers who are able to provide feedback on the promotional efforts undertaken.

Data in this study were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted to comprehensively explore the perspectives, experiences, and interpretations of informants regarding the phenomenon under study (Yin, 2016). Observation was carried out by directly recording promotional activities and service interactions at the business location. According to Yin (2016), observation provides significant value because the researcher directly witnesses events in the field, resulting in primary and authentic data. In addition, documentation was used to complement the data through the examination of written documents, archives, photographs, and relevant promotional materials or social media content. This technique is relatively efficient, as the researcher utilizes and processes existing data sources (Hardani et al., 2020).

In this study, the researcher conducted participatory observation. In participatory observation, the observer is directly involved in ongoing activities to gain a deeper understanding of the context, for example by being present as a participant in certain activities or events (Hardani et al., 2020). Furthermore, Stainback (1988) as cited in Sugiyono (2017) classifies participatory observation into four categories: (1) passive participation, in which the researcher is present without engaging in activities; (2) moderate participation, where the researcher is involved in some activities but not fully; (3) active participation, where the researcher participates in most of the activities carried out by informants; and (4) complete participation, where the researcher fully integrates as a member of the group (Puspasari, 2020). Based on this classification, the observation employed in this study falls under moderate participation, in which the researcher not only observes but also takes part in several service and promotional activities at the business location. This level of involvement allows the researcher to obtain a deeper contextual understanding without fully merging into the structure and roles of the informants.

Data analysis in this study follows the five-phase qualitative analysis approach proposed by Yin (2016), consisting of compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding. The compiling phase involves organizing all data obtained from interviews, observations, and relevant documents into a systematic research database. In the disassembling phase, the data are broken down and coded to identify emerging themes and categories. The reassembling phase focuses on organizing the coded data to identify patterns and relationships among themes. The interpreting phase involves making sense of the findings by linking them to the theoretical framework and research context. Finally, the concluding phase entails drawing conclusions that comprehensively address the research questions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation, the implementation of the promotion mix at the MSME Sarang Kepiting demonstrates distinctive and contextual characteristics. Sarang Kepiting is a seafood culinary business established in 1983 and located at Jl. Ampera II No. 4, Gunung Sahari, Pademangan, North Jakarta. Its roadside shophouse location makes the business easily accessible and enhances its visibility. For more than three decades, Sarang Kepiting has been known as a family dining destination with consistent taste, friendly service, and a loyal multi-generational customer base. These characteristics form an important foundation for understanding the marketing communication patterns implemented by the business.

In recent years, Sarang Kepiting has begun to adapt to digital developments, particularly in promotional activities and communication with customers. However, unlike large-scale enterprises with formal marketing plans, promotional strategies at Sarang Kepiting

Promotion Mix Implementation in a Culinary MSME: A Case Study of Sarang Kepiting

have evolved gradually and adaptively, influenced by the owner's experience, daily operational needs, and close relationships with customers. All elements of the promotion mix, advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing have been implemented, although they are not yet structured within a systematic and integrated promotional calendar.

The findings indicate that the promotion mix practices at Sarang Kepiting are not solely oriented toward short-term sales increases, but also play a role in building trust, loyalty, and a business reputation that has developed across generations. Each element of the promotion mix complements one another and is integrated into daily operational practices, creating a marketing communication pattern that is personal, situational, and relationship-based. Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing how promotion mix elements are implemented in the marketing communication strategy of the MSME Sarang Kepiting and how these practices contribute to business sustainability.



Image 1. Sarang Kepiting Instagram Account

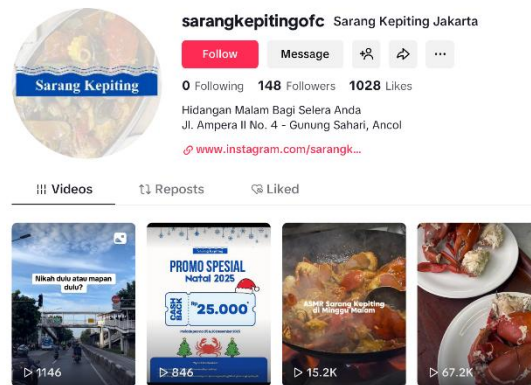


Image 2. Sarang Kepiting TikTok Account

Digital Advertising Based on Authentic Content and Visual Experience

Advertising is a form of non-personal communication carried out by companies to convey information about products or services to a broad audience through various paid media (Priansa, 2017). Suwatno (2017) explains that advertising is the process of delivering public messages through paid channels by a specific sponsor with the aim of influencing consumers' knowledge, attitudes, and actions toward a product or brand.

Based on the research findings, Sarang Kepiting has experienced a shift in its advertising strategy from conventional word-of-mouth promotion to the use of social media, particularly Instagram and TikTok. Interviews with the owner reveal that social media was chosen because it allows the business to reach a wider audience at a relatively low cost, while also aligning with the visual appeal of seafood culinary products. Advertising content generally consists of menu photographs, videos of crab cooking processes, dining ambience, and information on specific promotions.

The findings show that not all types of content have the same level of effectiveness. Content featuring live cooking processes in the kitchen and visuals of the dining atmosphere tends to generate higher engagement than price-promotion content. Such posts trigger audience responses in the form of comments and direct messages asking about crab sizes, sauce spiciness levels, and menu availability on specific days. This indicates that Sarang Kepiting's audience is more interested in visual experiences, authenticity, and process

transparency rather than discount information alone. These findings reinforce the role of digital advertising not only as an informational tool but also as a means of shaping perceptions of quality and consumer trust.

Furthermore, interviews with the owner indicate that post performance serves as a reference for future content planning. Social media insights such as engagement levels, comments, and incoming messages are key considerations in determining subsequent content types. This practice reflects an informal digital learning process, in which advertising strategies evolve gradually based on audience responses rather than rigid promotional planning.

Additional findings reveal that Sarang Kepiting's digital advertising is flexible and situational. Content uploads are often conducted when certain signature menus are available, when large-sized crab stock is in supply, or ahead of weekends. This condition indicates that advertising decisions are influenced more by daily operational factors, particularly fluctuating seafood availability, than by a fixed promotional calendar. Thus, advertising functions as an adaptive communication tool rather than merely a scheduled promotional activity.

In addition to organic advertising, Sarang Kepiting has occasionally utilized Instagram Ads during seasonal promotions. However, interviews reveal that paid advertising is not the primary focus, as most new customers continue to come through recommendations from existing customers who were previously exposed to Sarang Kepiting's social media content. This finding suggests that digital advertising plays a greater role in reinforcing trust, providing visual references, and legitimizing business quality rather than serving as the sole customer acquisition tool.

Overall, Sarang Kepiting's advertising practices reflect the typical characteristics of culinary MSMEs, relying on authentic content, visual dining experiences, and a long-established business reputation. Advertising is not merely intended to drive immediate transactions but also to build consumer expectations, strengthen product quality perceptions, and support other promotional strategies within the promotion mix.

Sales Promotion as a Transactional and Relational Strategy

Sales promotion is a key element of the promotion mix that functions to provide short-term incentives to encourage immediate purchasing decisions. Kotler and Keller (2012) as cited in Priansa (2017) explain that sales promotion is designed to stimulate consumers to make immediate purchases or increase purchase volumes within a certain period. Similarly, Assauri (2017) states that sales promotion consists of non-routine marketing activities outside advertising, personal selling, and publicity, oriented toward short-term sales increases.

The findings show that sales promotion is the promotion mix element with the most tangible impact on increased visits and transactions at Sarang Kepiting. Various promotional forms are implemented, including seasonal discounts such as a 17% Independence Day promotion, discounts for customers who leave Google Reviews or upload social media content, and special promotions during national holidays. These programs have proven effective in attracting new customers while encouraging loyal customers to revisit during promotional periods.

Based on interviews with two Sarang Kepiting employees working as cashier and waitress, sales promotions consistently lead to increased restaurant activity. This is reflected in a higher number of occupied tables, longer waiting lists, and increased transaction volumes recorded on receipts. These findings indicate that sales promotions act as triggers for spontaneous purchasing decisions, particularly among customers who initially visit without specific menu plans.

The uniqueness of Sarang Kepiting's sales promotion lies in its delivery, which does not rely solely on digital media but is also integrated into direct in-store interactions. Observations show that waitresses actively inform customers about ongoing promotions upon arrival and while seated. Consequently, sales promotion functions not only as a price incentive but also merges with personal selling practices, where staff directly recommend promotional menus. This approach creates a more personalized communication experience and increases the likelihood of customers trying promoted items.

This finding is reinforced by interviews with new customers who learned about Sarang Kepiting through Instagram. They stated that promotional information, particularly value packages or discounted menus served as their initial motivation to visit. Upon arrival, they were again informed about promotional menus by the waitress, further strengthening their purchasing decision. Meanwhile, loyal customers reported frequently receiving promotional information via WhatsApp from Sarang Kepiting staff, as well as through in-store communication and family members who follow the restaurant's Instagram and TikTok accounts. This pattern demonstrates that Sarang Kepiting's sales promotions are disseminated through a combination of digital channels, interpersonal communication, and customers' social networks.

In addition to short-term promotions, the owner expressed plans to develop loyalty programs such as loyalty cards or point systems redeemable for weekday discounts (Monday-Friday). This initiative reflects a strategic shift from purely transactional promotions toward strengthening long-term customer relationships. In the context of a culinary business that has operated for decades, loyalty strategies are considered relevant for retaining regular customers and increasing visit frequency during non-peak periods.

Nevertheless, interviews and observations indicate that sales promotions at Sarang Kepiting have not been implemented consistently or systematically. Promotional activities remain situational and are not yet integrated into an annual promotional calendar. This condition suggests that Sarang Kepiting's sales promotions tend to be reactive, although they have proven effective in increasing visits and transactions. This characteristic reflects the adaptive nature of MSME promotional practices, which respond to daily operational dynamics and customer behavior, while still offering room for more strategic development.



Image 3. Sarang Kepiting Independence Day Discount Promotion on Instagram

Community-Based Public Relations and Organic Publicity

Public Relations (PR) refers to planned and sustained communication activities aimed at building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics. PR functions as a strategic process that bridges communication and perception between internal and external stakeholders (Coulson & Thomas, 2002, as cited in Priansa, 2017). In practice, PR extends beyond marketing to encompass broader efforts to build long-term reputation through publicity management, community relations, and stakeholder communication (Clow & Baack, 2012).

Interviews with the business owner reveal that Sarang Kepiting is generally open to various forms of event collaboration. One recent example is its involvement as a sponsor in a padel competition event titled Sarang Kepiting x JAX Padel, which was also publicized through collaboration posts on both Sarang Kepiting's and JAX Padel's official Instagram accounts.



Image 4. Sarang Kepiting x JAX Padel Collaboration Event

The owner also stated that Sarang Kepiting has participated in collaborations with local communities, such as small-scale culinary events and neighborhood environmental activities. In addition, the business occasionally distributes food in front of the restaurant, particularly to passersby, drivers, pedicab riders, and nearby street vendors. These activities are conducted as expressions of social responsibility and efforts to maintain good relationships with the surrounding community, thereby strengthening the business's image as part of the local social environment. However, based on the researcher's findings, publicity related to these social activities has not been maximized through social media.

The study also finds that Sarang Kepiting's reputation is largely built through earned media, particularly organic customer-generated content on social media. Several food bloggers have voluntarily featured Sarang Kepiting without paid collaborations. Such organic exposure holds strategic value as it enhances brand visibility and strengthens positive consumer perceptions through third-party endorsements.

Beyond digital media, Sarang Kepiting has also received coverage from conventional media outlets such as Trans TV and Trans7. This coverage represents valuable earned publicity obtained without direct promotional costs and provides additional legitimacy to the restaurant's reputation. Television coverage, which generally holds high credibility among the public, can significantly enhance awareness and trust among potential new customers. Through conventional media exposure, Sarang Kepiting expands its reach beyond digital audiences to the broader public.

Overall, the findings indicate that Sarang Kepiting possesses strong PR potential through community collaborations, social activities, and organic publicity. Although these PR efforts contribute positively to brand image without direct promotional costs, their publication has not yet been fully optimized on social media, leaving room for further strategic development.

Personal Selling as the Foundation of Customer Loyalty

Personal selling is one of the most dominant elements of the promotion mix in Sarang Kepiting's daily operations. This activity is primarily carried out by employees serving as waitresses and cashiers, who interact directly with customers from arrival through ordering and payment. In addition to staff, the owner actively participates in customer service by greeting guests at the entrance and assisting with operations when needed, especially when customers require recommendations or guidance in selecting seafood such as crabs, shrimp, or shellfish based on quality and preferred size. The owner also handles customer feedback and complaints directly by listening attentively, providing explanations, and ensuring prompt resolution.

These intensive face-to-face interactions among customers, staff, and the owner not only deliver more personalized service but also serve as a key mechanism for building strong customer relationships. This approach positively contributes to the dining experience and strengthens emotional bonds between Sarang Kepiting and its customers. According to the owner, waitresses are instructed not only to take orders but also to proactively provide recommendations and relevant information. This is consistent with explanations from

waitress informants, who stated that their role includes explaining menu options, sauce types, spiciness levels, and appropriate portions, especially for first-time visitors.

Customers perceive the friendliness and responsiveness of waitresses, cashiers, and the owner as factors that enhance comfort and encourage repeat visits. These findings align with Clow and Baack's (2012) concept of personal selling as a long-term relational communication process rather than merely short-term transactions. Merdiani (2023) further emphasizes that personal selling involves sales personnel representing organizations to educate, persuade, and provide solutions through personal and persuasive interactions. Sarang Kepiting's practices clearly reflect this concept.

Interviews with customers further support these findings. A returning customer stated that staff service was particularly helpful during their first visit, as the waitress proactively explained featured menus and promotions, making decision-making easier. The customer tried a promoted menu, found it satisfying in taste and portion size, and continued to revisit even after the promotion ended. Similarly, a loyal customer noted that consistent friendliness from staff and the owner over the years made them feel valued and recognized, reinforcing long-term loyalty.

The owner emphasized that service quality is a core value proposition of Sarang Kepiting. Having operated since 1983, the business maintains loyal customers who are familiar with its warm service culture across generations. This condition further underscores that personal selling at Sarang Kepiting functions as a long-term relationship-building process rather than a temporary promotional tactic.

Observations also show that staff play a significant role in promoting new or seasonal menu items. With informative, responsive, and persuasive service patterns, personal selling emerges as one of Sarang Kepiting's main strengths, enhancing sales, customer experience, and long-term loyalty.

Direct Marketing Practices and Customer Response Dynamics

The implementation of direct marketing at Sarang Kepiting has been active, though it remains simple, personal, and reactive in nature. Direct marketing activities are conducted through WhatsApp by two waitresses acting as persons in charge (PICs) who communicate with customers having repeat visit or order histories. These activities are not based on fixed systems or schedules but are triggered by operational conditions deemed relevant to customer needs and preferences.

The findings indicate that direct marketing communication typically occurs during ongoing promotions, the availability of signature menu items, or limited stock of jumbo-sized crabs. In such situations, waitresses proactively contact customers known to be interested in specific products to provide information and offer reservations or advance orders. Sending menu photos and restaurant ambience images usually occurs in response to customer inquiries. This pattern shows that direct marketing at Sarang Kepiting is contextual and need-based rather than mass communication.

These findings are reinforced by interviews with loyal customers who reported receiving WhatsApp messages when jumbo egg crabs, an infrequently available favorite menu were in stock. Messages included availability information and early-order offers. Customers also received promotional details directly via WhatsApp, accompanied by brief explanations and ordering invitations. This demonstrates that Sarang Kepiting's direct marketing communication is personalized, relevant, and preference-driven.

Although not yet systematically managed and still reliant on staff initiative, direct marketing at Sarang Kepiting has proven effective in triggering quick customer responses, including orders, reservations, and promotional uptake. Strong relational ties between staff and loyal customers enhance the effectiveness of direct marketing, as messages are perceived as personalized attention rather than mere promotions. This aligns with Suryaningsih et al.'s (2021) concept of direct marketing as individualized communication designed to elicit specific consumer responses.

Overall, Sarang Kepiting's direct marketing practices reflect typical MSME characteristics, emphasizing long-term relationships, personal memory of customer

preferences, and intensive interpersonal interaction rather than automated digital systems. These characteristics highlight that direct marketing effectiveness depends not only on technology but also on the quality of social relationships built over time. Consequently, Sarang Kepiting's direct marketing practices cannot be separated from its historical context and close customer relationships, reinforcing the relevance of the case study approach in this research.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the implementation of the promotion mix at Sarang Kepiting MSME is contextual and has developed throughout the business's long-term operation. In practice, promotional activities are closely integrated with service processes, allowing marketing communication to occur naturally within daily business activities.

All elements of the promotion mix are present in Sarang Kepiting's marketing practices, although they are applied with varying levels of intensity and approaches. Advertising through social media is conducted in a simple and situational manner, with a strong emphasis on content authenticity and customer experience. This approach has been effective in maintaining business visibility and building customer trust; however, it still offers opportunities for improvement through more consistent content planning to ensure broader and more sustainable audience reach.

Sales promotion is implemented flexibly and on a non-routine basis, adjusted to specific conditions such as operational needs or particular moments of customer visits. This strategy proves to be more effective when combined with persuasive face-to-face communication by employees. Going forward, sales promotion could be enhanced through more structured planning without diminishing the personal character that distinguishes the business. Public relations activities emerge organically through positive relationships with customers, social engagement, and consistent dining experiences. The positive image of the business is primarily shaped by customer recommendations and direct interactions rather than formally designed public relations programs. Nevertheless, more deliberate management of public relations efforts, such as community collaborations or exposure through local media, presents an opportunity to further strengthen brand image and expand market reach.

Personal selling represents the most dominant element of the promotion mix at Sarang Kepiting. Direct interactions among the owner, employees, and customers foster emotional closeness that contributes to cross-generational customer loyalty. However, the dominance of this approach also indicates a high dependency on specific individuals. Therefore, strengthening service standards and promotional communication guidelines may be essential to maintaining consistency in customer experience over the long term. Direct marketing is conducted in a personal manner through direct communication channels, such as WhatsApp, targeting selected customers. This approach has proven effective in maintaining relationships and delivering information promptly. In the future, more systematic management of customer communication may help the business preserve personal connections while simultaneously improving promotional efficiency and reach.

The findings of this study also demonstrate both similarities and differences compared to previous MSME research on promotion mix implementation. In line with Alamsya and Hasan (2022) on Berry Catszone Batam, this study confirms the importance of digital media and direct communication channels, such as social media and WhatsApp, in enhancing business visibility and strengthening customer relationships. Both studies show that digital marketing functions effectively as a supporting promotional tool, especially when combined with direct consumer interaction. However, unlike Alamsya and Hasan (2022), which focused on mentoring MSMEs with limited online presence, Sarang Kepiting uses digital media as a complement to personal customer relationships, though more consistent strategy planning and evaluation are needed.

This study also aligns with Arumsari and Marka (2018) regarding the central role of personal selling and service quality in building consumer trust and loyalty. Both studies emphasize that sincere service and direct communication are key strengths in the promotion mix. Differences are apparent in sales promotion and publicity, where Sarang Kepiting

Promotion Mix Implementation in a Culinary MSME: A Case Study of Sarang Kepiting

actively employs sales promotions and benefits from organic publicity generated by customers, food bloggers, and mass media.

Similarly, the findings resonate with Valentina and Suprpto (2026), who stressed the importance of optimizing the promotion mix and integrating digital promotion with direct communication channels to enhance MSME image and marketing efficiency. Both studies highlight WhatsApp as an effective direct marketing channel. However, while Valentina and Suprpto (2026) focused on more structured, tool-supported, and offline-integrated promotion management, Sarang Kepiting's promotional practices remain simple, contextual, and highly dependent on interpersonal relationships among the owner, employees, and customers.

Overall, this study enriches previous research by showing that the effectiveness of the promotion mix in MSMEs is not solely determined by digital optimization or formalized structures, but also by the historical context of the business, customer characteristics, and long-term social relationships. This confirms that a relational and integrated promotion mix approach, embedded in daily service activities, can serve as a relevant strategy for supporting MSME sustainability, particularly for long-established culinary businesses.

CONCLUSIONS

The promotion mix at Sarang Kepiting MSME consists of advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing, which are implemented informally and integrated into daily operations. Digital advertising via Instagram and TikTok effectively builds consumer awareness and trust through authentic content, while sales promotions successfully increase short-term visits and transactions. Public relations are reflected in community involvement and organic publicity from customers, bloggers, and media, contributing to a positive brand image at minimal cost. Personal selling is the most dominant element, as direct interaction by the owner and employees enhances personalized service and customer loyalty. Direct marketing through WhatsApp is also highly effective due to its personal and responsive communication style. To improve promotional effectiveness, Sarang Kepiting is advised to maintain authentic digital content with better posting consistency and simple performance monitoring. Sales promotions can be strengthened through a more structured promotional calendar and the gradual introduction of a loyalty program. Public relations activities should be documented and shared more consistently on social media. Basic service and communication guidelines for employees are recommended to ensure consistency in personal selling. Finally, direct marketing can be enhanced by simple customer data management and the use of a WhatsApp Business account. Overall, these improvements can be implemented gradually without complex systems, supporting long-term business sustainability.

REFERENCES

- Alamsyah, A. R., & Hasan, G. (2022). Penerapan Strategi Digital Marketing dan Promotion Mix pada UMKM Berry Catszone Batam. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Akademisi*, 1(4), 39-46.
- Anyadighibe, J. A., Etuk, A., James, E. E., & Rose, S. (2021). Effect of promotional mix on the marketing of insurance services. *Journal of Business and Management Studies*, 3(2), 125.
- Arumsari, N. R., & Marka, M. M. (2018). Bauran promosi sebagai alat untuk meningkatkan kinerja pemasaran pada UMKM Tenun Troso Jepara.
- Assauri, S. (2017). *Manajemen pemasaran: Dasar, konsep, dan strategi* (Cet. 15). PT Rajagrafindo Persada.
- Clow, K. E., & Baack, D. (2012). *Integrated advertising, promotion, and marketing communications* (5th ed.). Pearson Education Limited.
- Fill, C., & Turnbull, S. (2023). *Marketing communications: Fame, influencers and agility* (9th ed.). Pearson.
- Hardani, S., & dkk. (2020). *Metode penelitian kualitatif & kuantitatif*. Pustaka Ilmu.

Promotion Mix Implementation in a Culinary MSME: A Case Study of Sarang Kepiting

- Hastuti, P., Nurofik, A., Purnomo, A., Hasibuan, A., Aribowo, H., Faried, A. I., ... & Simarmata, J. (2020). *Kewirausahaan dan UMKM*. Yayasan Kita Menulis.
- Jasmani, J., & Sunarsi, D. (2020). The influence of product mix, promotion mix and brand image on consumer purchasing decisions of sari roti products in South Tangerang. *PINISI Discretion Review*, 3(2), 165-174.
- Keller, K. L. (2008). *Strategic brand management: Building, measuring, and managing brand equity* (3rd ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Perekonomian Republik Indonesia. (2025, Januari 30). Pemerintah dorong UMKM naik kelas, tingkatkan kontribusi terhadap ekspor Indonesia. <https://www.ekon.go.id/publikasi/detail/6152/pemerintah-dorong-umkm-naik-kelas-tingkatkan-kontribusi-terhadap-ekspor-indonesia>
- Kementerian Keuangan Republik Indonesia. (2023, Juni 27). Kontribusi UMKM dalam perekonomian Indonesia. Direktorat Jenderal Perbendaharaan. <https://djp.kemenkeu.go.id/kppn/lubuksikaping/id/data-publikasi/artikel/3134-kontribusi-umkm-dalam-perekonomian-indonesia.html>
- Kementerian Keuangan Republik Indonesia. (2024, Maret 25). Pengembangan UMKM, demi perekonomian nasional yang kuat. Direktorat Jenderal Kekayaan Negara. <https://www.djkn.kemenkeu.go.id/kanwil-jatim/baca-artikel/16933/Pengembangan-UMKM-demi-Perekonomian-Nasional-yang-Kuat.html>
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management* (15th ed.). Pearson.
- Kusuma, I. (2024). Pengaruh bauran promosi dan harga terhadap keputusan pembelian produk *Trichoderma spp.* Trichoplus PT. Bisi Internasional Tbk. *Jiic: Jurnal Intelek Insan Cendikia*, 1(6), 1-10. <https://jicnusantara.com/index.php/jiic>
- Merdiani, W. (2023). *Pemasaran: Konsep dan strategi implementasi* (Edisi pertama, Cetakan pertama). Expert.
- Mustika, S. J. N., & Gemina, D. (2025). Penerapan Bauran Promosi pada UMKM Seblak Bondol Kabupaten Sukabumi. *Karimah Tauhid*, 4(1), 854-862.
- Panuju, R. (2019). *Komunikasi pemasaran: Pemasaran sebagai gejala komunikasi, komunikasi sebagai strategi pemasaran*. Prenada Media.
- Priansa, D. J. (2017). *Komunikasi pemasaran terpadu pada era media sosial*. CV Pustaka Setia.
- Puspasari, R. D. (2022). Analisis Strategi Promotion Mix (advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relation) pada Usaha Kecil Menengah (UKM) "Batagor Sarasa Bandung". *SINTESA*, 13(1), 49-58.
- Sintakarini, K. Y., Kurniawati, P., Rohman, N. A., Jorger, D. C. V., Bachtiar, N. A. P., Aini, A. N., Putri, A. R., Anantha, E. S., Trisnalia, V. N. S., Budianto, A. Z., Syah'alam, A. Q. W., & Arum, D. P. (2023). Strategi marketing UMKM "ETES" melalui digital marketing terhadap penerapan integrated marketing communication (IMC). *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Waradin*, 3(2), 1-8.
- Siyoto, S., & Sodik, M. A. (2015). *Dasar metodologi penelitian*. Literasi Media Publishing.
- Suryaningsih, I. B., Wulandari, G. A., Maridelana, V. P., & Pratama, M. D. (2021). *Manajemen pemasaran: Perspektif agribisnis*. Penerbit Samudra Biru.
- Suwatno. (2017). *Komunikasi pemasaran kontekstual* (Cetakan pertama). Simbiosis Rekatama Media.
- Triyunanto, C. (2024, Agustus 24). Apa itu UMKM? Definisi, kriteria dan jenisnya. Detik.com. <https://www.detik.com/edu/detikpedia/d-7505493/apa-itu-umkm-definisi-kriteria-dan-jenisnya>
- Uluwiyah, A. N. (2022). Strategi bauran promosi (promotional mix) dalam meningkatkan kepercayaan masyarakat.
- Valentina, S., & Suprpto, Y. (2026). Optimalisasi Promotion Mix sebagai Strategi Pemasaran UMKM Mitra Gordyn Batam. *Tashdiq: Jurnal Kajian Agama dan Dakwah*, 18(1), 281-290.

Promotion Mix Implementation in a Culinary MSME: A Case Study of Sarang Kepiting

Wijaya, A., Putra, F. A., Dermawan, I., Slahanti, M., Fitriani, H., Kurniawan, W., Samsudin, H. U., Rahayu, S., Hakim, L., & El Munadiyan, A. (2019). *Manajemen pemasaran (Marketing Mix 7P produk barang dan jasa)*. Penerbit Lakeisha.

Yin, R. K. (2016). *Qualitative research from start to finish (2nd ed.)*. The Guilford Press.