

SOSTAC-BASED MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR STINGLESS BEE FARMER GROUPS TO OPTIMIZE PROMOTION AND STRENGTHEN MARKET PARTNERSHIPS

STRATEGI KOMUNIKASI PEMASARAN BERBASIS SOSTAC PADA KELOMPOKTANI LEBAH MADU KELULUT DALAM UPAYA OPTIMALISASI PROMOSI DAN PENGUATAN KEMITRAAN PASAR

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ABSTRACT

Stingless bee honey agribusiness in Indonesia demonstrates strong economic potential but faces constraints in effective promotion and sustainable market network expansion. This study aims to analyze the implementation of a SOSTAC-based (Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, and Control) marketing communication strategy among stingless bee farmer groups in Samarinda to optimize promotion and strengthen market partnerships. A descriptive qualitative method was employed, with data collected through field observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model and validated through triangulation of sources and methods. The results revealed that 30 stingless bee farmer groups operate in Samarinda, of which only 41% utilize digital media for promotion. Implementation of the SOSTAC-based strategy increased brand awareness by 33%, online sales by 35%, and active partnerships by 67%. The most effective strategies included ecological digital storytelling, localized visual branding, and collaboration with culinary SMEs and online marketplaces. The SOSTAC-based communication strategy has proven effective in improving promotional performance, expanding partnerships, and strengthening the position of stingless bee honey as a competitive and sustainable local agribusiness product.

Keywords: Marketing communication, SOSTAC, stingless bee honey, digital strategy, market partnership

ABSTRAK

Agribisnis madu kelulut di Indonesia memiliki potensi ekonomi yang tinggi, namun menghadapi kendala dalam efektivitas promosi dan perluasan jaringan pemasaran yang berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penerapan strategi komunikasi pemasaran berbasis model SOSTAC

(*Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, dan Control*) pada kelompok tani lebah madu kelulut di Kota Samarinda sebagai upaya optimalisasi promosi dan penguatan kemitraan pasar. Penelitian menggunakan metode deskriptif dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi lapangan, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis dengan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman serta diuji keabsahannya melalui triangulasi sumber dan metode. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 30 kelompok tani lebah madu kelulut di Kota Samarinda, dengan 41% yang telah menggunakan media digital sebagai sarana promosi. Implementasi strategi berbasis SOSTAC meningkatkan brand awareness sebesar 33%, penjualan daring sebesar 35%, dan jumlah kemitraan aktif sebesar 67%. Strategi yang paling efektif mencakup pengembangan digital storytelling bernuansa ekologis, optimalisasi visual branding berbasis lokalitas, serta kolaborasi dengan UMKM kuliner dan platform marketplace. Penerapan strategi komunikasi berbasis SOSTAC terbukti meningkatkan efektivitas promosi, memperluas jaringan kemitraan, dan memperkuat posisi madu kelulut sebagai produk agribisnis lokal yang berdaya saing dan berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: Komunikasi pemasaran, SOSTAC, madu kelulut, strategi digital, kemitraan pasar

INTRODUCTION

The agribusiness sector plays a strategic role in the national economy, as a major contributor to income generation, employment creation, and food supply. According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2024), the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sector accounted for 12.61% of national Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with an average annual growth rate of 4.23% during the 2020–2024 period. One subsector exhibiting notable growth is stingless bee (kelulut) honey cultivation (*Trigona* spp.). Kelulut honey possesses high economic value and is regarded as an environmentally sustainable flagship commodity, as it supports natural pollination processes without causing ecological degradation. The Ministry of Agriculture (2025) reported that national demand for kelulut honey has increased by approximately 18% annually, while existing production capacity fulfills only about 60% of domestic demand. This imbalance highlights substantial opportunities for the professional and competitive development of farmer group-based kelulut honey agribusiness.

The development of the kelulut honey agribusiness remains constrained by fundamental challenges, particularly in marketing communication. Most farmer groups lack structured promotional strategies and have not established strong and sustainable market partnerships. Data from the East Kalimantan Livestock and Animal Health Service (2024), indicate that more than 30 kelulut bee farmer groups operate in the region; however, only 27% have utilized digital media for promotional purposes (Widiarta *et al.*, 2025). The majority continue to rely on conventional marketing approaches, such as local exhibitions and direct selling. Limited market access and the absence of systematic communication strategies have resulted in weak bargaining positions and unstable income levels among farmers (Aulia *et al.*, 2024; Suarsa *et al.*, 2025). These conditions demonstrate the urgent need to enhance marketing communication capacity to strengthen the overall performance of kelulut honey enterprises.

Effective marketing communication is a critical determinant of success in building brand awareness, expanding market reach, and fostering customer loyalty. Kotler and Keller (2022), assert that strategic marketing

communication must be developed based on comprehensive situation analysis, clearly defined and measurable objectives, and integrated implementation actions. The SOSTAC model, comprising Situation Analysis, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, and Control, provides a systematic, structured framework for designing, implementing, and evaluating marketing communication strategies in a measurable, sustainable manner. This model has been empirically proven to improve the efficiency of digital promotion and market connectivity within the agribusiness sector (Sahartian *et al.*, 2022; Mukhsin *et al.*, 2024).

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the effectiveness of the SOSTAC model in enhancing marketing performance. Sahartian (2020), reported that implementing SOSTAC increased the effectiveness of digital campaigns by 35% compared to conventional marketing approaches. Furthermore, Ansa and Susanti (2023), found that this model strengthens promotional message consistency and enhances consumer loyalty in the local food sector. Similar findings were reported by Abidin *et al.* (2025), who concluded that integrating SOSTAC improves digital promotion and business partnerships, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of agricultural products in national markets. Sholikhah (2021), emphasized that innovative marketing communication plays a significant role in increasing brand awareness of local honey products, while Sofiah (2022), highlighted the importance of digital communication in expanding consumer engagement.

The implementation of SOSTAC-based marketing communication strategies is therefore highly relevant for kelulut honey farmer groups. Most groups have not yet adopted systematic communication planning nor conducted comprehensive evaluations of promotional effectiveness. This study aims to analyze and formulate SOSTAC-based

marketing communication strategies for kelulut honey farmer groups to optimize promotional activities and strengthen market partnerships. This study is expected to advance agribusiness marketing communication theory and serve as a practical reference for the development of highly competitive kelulut honey enterprises.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to analyze the implementation of SOSTAC-based marketing communication strategies among stingless bee (kelulut) honey farmer groups in Samarinda City. The qualitative approach was selected because it allows for an in-depth examination of the dynamics of promotional strategies and market partnerships adopted by agribusiness actors. The study location was purposively selected, given that Samarinda City has high potential for kelulut honey development and has begun implementing digital promotional strategies on a limited scale. The study was conducted from May to October 2025. It consisted of several stages, including field observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation, to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the marketing communication strategies applied.

The research data comprised both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with the head of the farmer group, two members responsible for promotional activities, and two business partners involved in the marketing partnership chain. The interviews were conducted face-to-face using semi-structured interview guidelines. Secondary data were obtained from official documents issued by the Central Statistics Agency and the East Kalimantan Provincial Livestock and Animal Health Service, farmer group reports, scientific publications, and

relevant literature on the SOSTAC model and agribusiness marketing communication.

Data analysis was conducted using the SOSTAC framework, comprising six main components: Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, and Control (Smith & Zook, 2024). Each component was applied to analyze the current marketing situation, objective formulation, promotional strategies, communication tactics implementation, operational execution, and evaluation and control mechanisms. The analytical process was conducted systematically using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, encompassing data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was strengthened through source and methodological triangulation to ensure the reliability and credibility of the findings. The final results are presented descriptively and analytically to illustrate the effectiveness of SOSTAC-based marketing communication strategies in optimizing promotion and strengthening market partnerships among kelulut honey farmer groups in Samarinda City.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that there are 30 stingless bee (kelulut) honey farmer groups in

Samarinda City, distributed across five central districts: Samarinda Utara, Samarinda Ilir, Samarinda Ulu, Sungai Kunjang, and Palaran. Of these groups, 21 (70%) operate at the micro scale, while 9 (30%) have reached the small-to-medium enterprise scale. Total annual kelulut honey production reaches approximately 7,200 liters, with an average productivity of 240 liters per group per year.

The majority of farmer groups (60%) have not yet implemented systematic marketing strategies; promotional activities remain primarily dependent on direct selling (personal selling) and word-of-mouth communication. Only 41% of the groups have adopted digital media for promotional purposes, including Instagram, WhatsApp Business, and local online marketplaces. This condition reflects the low level of digital marketing adoption within the kelulut honey value chain and highlights structural limitations in expanding market reach and enhancing competitiveness.

The results indicate that product exhibitions (58%) and word-of-mouth communication (73%) remain the primary promotional channels among kelulut honey farmer groups. In contrast, social media (41%) and e-commerce platforms (27%) occupy secondary roles in marketing activities.

Table 1. Production Profile and Marketing Performance of Kelulut Honey Farmer Groups

| District | Group | Production (L/year) | Business Scale | Use of Digital Media (%) | Active Partners | Sales Growth (%) |
|-----------------|-------|---------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Samarinda Utara | 8 | 2,080 | Mikro-Menengah | 50 | 3 | 18 |
| Samarinda Ilir | 6 | 1,200 | Mikro | 33 | 2 | 14 |
| Samarinda Ulu | 5 | 1,150 | Mikro | 40 | 2 | 17 |
| Sungai Kunjang | 7 | 1,960 | Menengah | 57 | 4 | 25 |
| Palaran | 4 | 810 | Mikro | 25 | 1 | 12 |
| Total | 30 | 7,200 | - | 41 | 12 | 17,2 (average) |

Source: Primary data analysis (2025)

This pattern reinforces the findings of Sholikhah (2021) and Sahartian *et al.* (2022), who reported that the adoption of digital marketing among honey-based micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia remains limited due to insufficient

technological literacy and the absence of well-planned communication strategies.

The SOSTAC model (Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, Control) was applied as the analytical framework for formulating marketing communication strategies for

stingless bee (kelulut) honey farmer groups in Samarinda City (Smith & Zook, 2024). Based on existing conditions, this study established four primary strategic objectives: (1) to increase brand awareness of kelulut honey products by at least 30% within six months; (2) to enhance digital-based sales by a minimum of 25% through social media and online marketplaces; (3) to expand market partnership networks by securing at least ten new business partners; and (4) to strengthen the product image as a sustainable and environmentally friendly local agribusiness commodity. These objectives were designed to address the challenges of low product exposure and the limited scope of previous communication strategies that relied predominantly on conventional promotional approaches (Widiarta *et al.*, 2025).

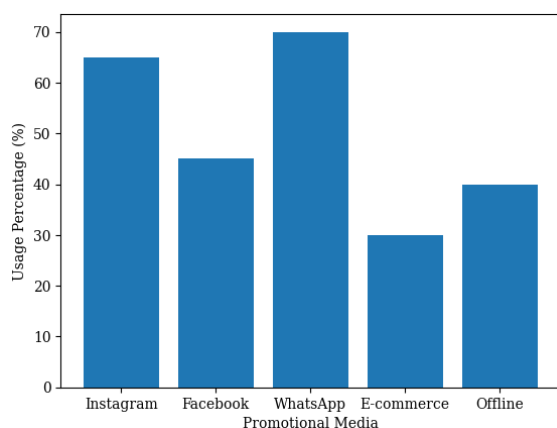


Figure 1. Distribution of Promotional Media Utilization by Kelulut Honey Farmer Groups
Source: Primary data analysis (2025)

The main strategies implemented included developing digital storytelling that highlights ecological narratives and positioning kelulut honey as a product derived from forest conservation and biodiversity preservation. The optimization of locally based visual branding was also pursued through refining packaging design and logos, and through the use of natural color tones that reflect regional product identity. In addition, social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook were utilized

as primary promotional channels to reach millennial and urban market segments (Judijanto *et al.*, 2025). Another strategic initiative involved co-branding collaborations with local culinary MSMEs to enhance product value and expand market reach through mutually beneficial partnerships (Widiarta *et al.*, 2025).

Collaboration with online marketplaces was a critical component of the digital distribution strategy, enabling farmer groups to reach consumers beyond East Kalimantan efficiently. This approach aligns with the concept of community-based marketing, as articulated by Mamase *et al.* (2024), which emphasizes that digital communication effectiveness is enhanced when grounded in community engagement and strong social relationships between producers and consumers. Through the SOSTAC approach, marketing communication efforts were directed not only to increase sales performance but also to build a strong, inclusive, and sustainability-oriented brand identity.

Strategy implementation was conducted over three months (July to September 2025) through digital communication training, content development assistance, and promotional performance monitoring. Each farmer group established active Instagram and marketplace accounts and received guidance in visual content creation, copywriting, and insight analysis.

The results indicate a significant improvement across all marketing communication performance indicators. Digital storytelling strategies that emphasize the benefits of kelulut honey and the sustainability of local forest ecosystems were the most effective in increasing social media engagement rates. This finding is consistent with prior evidence suggesting that value-based and authentic narratives generate higher audience engagement than conventional promotional content (Yim, 2020). Consumers showed greater interest in educational content that highlights natural cultivation practices and the social

impact of farmer groups on surrounding communities. Such content reinforces perceptions of trust, product credibility, and a

strong sustainability image (Gallo Mendoza, 2025).

Table 2. Comparison of Marketing Performance Indicators Before and After SOSTAC Implementation

| Indicator | Before Implementation | After 3 Months | Change (%) |
|---|-----------------------|----------------|------------|
| Brand Awareness (respondents recognizing the brand) | 34% | 67% | +33 |
| Social Media Engagement Rate | 5.1% | 11.8% | +6.7 |
| Online Sales Volume (units) | 100 | 135 | +35 |
| Number of Active Business Partners | 12 | 20 | +67 |
| Repeat Customers | 184 | 256 | +39 |

Source: Primary data analysis (2025)

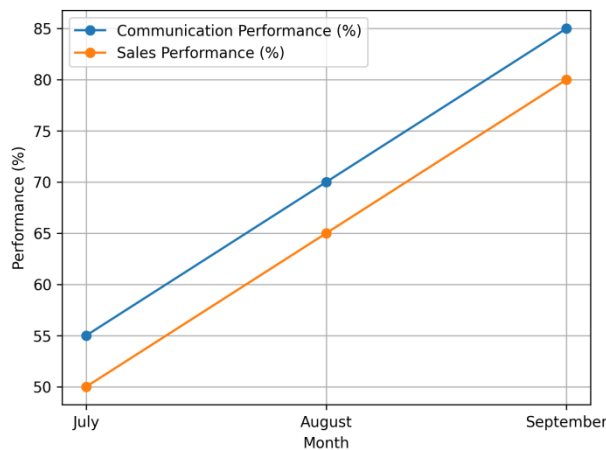


Figure 2. Changes in Communication Performance and Sales After SOSTAC Implementation (2025)

Source: Primary data analysis (2025).

Inter-group collaboration in digital exhibition activities successfully increased online transactions by 38%, reinforcing the findings of Abidin *et al.* (2025) that cross-MSME collaboration is effective in expanding the digital market reach of honey products. Control mechanisms were implemented through a data-driven evaluation approach, employing quantitative indicators such as impressions, reach, and conversion rates, complemented by qualitative assessments derived from interviews and partner feedback.

The analysis further indicates that farmer groups with a posting frequency of three to four times per week experienced sales increases of up to 46%. In contrast, groups with irregular posting schedules recorded a substantially lower increase of only 14%. These findings highlight the critical role of consistency in digital communication

activities in enhancing marketing performance.

Table 3. Relationship Between Promotional Consistency and Sales Growth

| Promotional Consistency Category (Posts/Week) | Groups | Average Sales Growth (%) |
|---|--------|--------------------------|
| 3-4 times | 12 | 46 |
| 1-2 times | 10 | 27 |
| Irregular (<1 time) | 8 | 14 |

Source: Primary data analysis (2025)

These results support the communication control theory proposed by Suarsa *et al.* (2025), which posits that the effectiveness of digital marketing depends heavily on message consistency and the reinforcement of brand identity. The farmer groups have also begun implementing a customer feedback system via WhatsApp Business to assess customer satisfaction. The findings indicate a satisfaction rate of 87%, with positive feedback primarily focused on price transparency and product packaging quality.

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, several strategic recommendations are formulated to strengthen the sustainability of kelulut honey marketing in Samarinda City:

Optimization of Integrated Digital Branding. Local governments and higher education institutions should facilitate the development of a unified brand identity for the Samarinda kelulut honey community (e.g., the label “Kelulut Samarinda

Sustainable Honey”) to strengthen collective brand image and market recognition.

Integration of Data and Content Systems through a SOSTAC-Based Dashboard. Each farmer group is encouraged to implement a digital dashboard to monitor, in real time, the situation, tactics, and control components. This dashboard can be developed using accessible platforms such as Google Data Studio or simplified versions of Power BI to measure promotional effectiveness systematically.

Enhancement of Digital Literacy and Inter-Actor Collaboration. Regular training programs facilitated by relevant government agencies and universities are required to improve competencies in creative content development, search engine optimization (SEO), e-commerce management, and influencer collaboration.

Strategic Partnerships with Tourism and Retail Stakeholders. Kelulut honey has strong potential to be positioned as a distinctive regional souvenir through environmentally friendly packaging. Partnerships with local tourism actors and modern retail outlets should be expanded to broaden market access and visibility.

Adoption of a Sustainability Marketing Approach. Promotional communication should consistently emphasize sustainability values, including the conservation of local bee species, natural carbon sequestration, and contributions to rural economic development, thereby strengthening the product’s comparative advantage in global markets.

The implementation of SOSTAC-based marketing communication strategies has proven effective in enhancing promotional performance, expanding digital market reach, and strengthening partnerships among kelulut honey farmer groups in Samarinda City. This model demonstrates high effectiveness by providing a systematic framework from situational analysis through evaluation, enabling measurable and targeted actions.

This approach is consistent with the findings of Sahartian (2020), Widiarta *et al.* (2024), and Anita *et al.* (2025), which emphasize that integrating adaptive, digitally driven communication strategies can significantly enhance the competitiveness of local agribusinesses. Accordingly, the SOSTAC model is recommended as a standardized approach for developing marketing communication strategies for sustainable agribusiness products in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of SOSTAC-based marketing communication strategies has been proven to enhance promotional effectiveness and strengthen market partnerships among stingless bee (kelulut) honey farmer groups in Samarinda City, through the six analytical components: situation, objectives, strategy, tactics, action, and control. This study demonstrates that well-directed digital communication can significantly increase brand awareness, consumer engagement, and sales volume. The use of social media and online marketplaces plays a crucial role in expanding market reach, while ecological-narrative-based digital storytelling strengthens the image of kelulut honey as a sustainable product. Furthermore, collaboration with MSMEs and local partners has been shown to increase value added and broaden distribution networks. The SOSTAC model can serve as a strategic framework for the professional, adaptive, and sustainable development of marketing communication in the kelulut honey agribusiness.

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