

**IMPLEMENTATION OF JEMPOL MODEL IN BRANDING COCONUT SUGAR
IN NGORAN VILLAGE, BLITAR REGENCY**

**PENERAPAN MODEL JEMPOL DALAM PEMASARAN GULA KELAPA DI
DESA NGORAN, KABUPATEN BLITAR**

Anita Reta Kusumawijayanti^{1*}, Sutowo², Dwi Lailatus Saadah³, Hesty Puspita Sari⁴

Universitas Islam Balitar, Blitar, Indonesia^{1,2,3,4}

anitareta099@gmail.com¹

ABSTRACT

Ngoran Village in Nglegok District, Blitar Regency, has long been recognized as a center of coconut sugar production since the pre-independence era. However, artisans continue to market their products traditionally in bulk without strong brand identity, which reduces competitiveness in the modern market. This highlights the urgency of structured branding strategies. This study aims to design the JEMPOL Model (Jelajah Pasar, Eksplorasi Identitas, Merk, Promosi, Olah Pelanggan, dan Loyalitas) as a branding strategy for coconut sugar products. This research employed a qualitative case study approach involving 20 coconut sugar artisans selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through direct observation and in-depth interviews, then analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key challenges and opportunities in branding development. The findings revealed that artisans face limitations in market access, product identity management, and promotional practices. These results align with previous studies that emphasize the importance of branding and marketing communication in empowering local small-scale industries to compete more effectively, thereby confirming the relevance of brand equity theory in this context. The JEMPOL Model offers a structured branding strategy that can strengthen product image, expand market networks, and improve the competitiveness of coconut sugar artisans in Ngoran Village.

Keyword: JEMPOL; Branding Strategy; Coconut Sugar; Sugar Artisans; and Ngoran Village

ABSTRAK

Desa Ngoran di Kecamatan Nglegok, Kabupaten Blitar, telah lama dikenal sebagai sentra produksi gula kelapa sejak era pra-kemerdekaan. Namun demikian, para perajin masih memasarkan produk mereka secara tradisional dalam bentuk curah tanpa identitas merek yang kuat, sehingga mengurangi daya saing di pasar modern. Hal ini menunjukkan urgensi penerapan strategi branding yang terstruktur. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk merancang Model JEMPOL (Jelajah Pasar, Eksplorasi Identitas, Merek, Promosi, Olah Pelanggan, dan Loyalitas) sebagai strategi branding untuk produk gula kelapa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif dengan melibatkan 20 perajin gula kelapa yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi langsung dan wawancara mendalam, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik untuk mengidentifikasi tantangan dan peluang utama dalam pengembangan branding. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para perajin menghadapi keterbatasan dalam akses pasar, pengelolaan identitas produk, dan praktik promosi. Temuan ini sejalan dengan studi-studi sebelumnya yang menekankan pentingnya branding dan komunikasi pemasaran dalam memberdayakan industri kecil lokal agar dapat bersaing secara lebih efektif, sehingga mengonfirmasi relevansi teori ekuitas merek dalam konteks ini. Model JEMPOL menawarkan strategi branding yang terstruktur untuk memperkuat citra produk, memperluas jaringan pasar, dan meningkatkan daya saing perajin gula kelapa di Desa Ngoran.

Kata Kunci: JEMPOL, Strategi Branding, Gula Kelapa, Perajin Gula, Desa Ngoran.

INTRODUCTION

Ngoran Village, located in Nglegok District, Blitar Regency, is widely recognized for its abundant natural resources, particularly coconut trees. Most of the villagers rely on coconuts for their livelihoods, working either as coconut farmers or as craftsmen producing derivative products such as

coconut sugar (Agustina, 2020). Coconut has become an inseparable part of the community's socio-economic life, as coconut trees are spread across residents' land and have long served as a source of economic strength. According to Ngoran Village Government data (2024), there are approximately 2000 productive coconut trees with around 50 coconut

sugar artisans. This indicates the vast economic opportunities embedded in the development of coconut derivative products.

In processing their harvest, the majority of villagers sell coconuts in raw form, while solely a smaller portion processes them into derivative products such as coconut sugar and palm sugar. However, previous studies revealed that processing coconuts into derivative products can increase their added value significantly (Jauhari, Sundari, & Heryadi, 2023). This aligns with the economic potential of coconut sugar in Ngoran, which can be developed into a more competitive product with higher market value.

Although the tradition of producing coconut sugar has been passed down from generation to generation, most artisans still rely on simple, traditional tools in the production process (Triwahyudi, 2021). This finding resonates with Amiriyah and Nanang (2022), who argue that coconut-based community industries in rural areas often face limitations in technology utilization and modernization. Nonetheless, the traditional method of production has become the main strength of Ngoran's coconut sugar, as it is considered more natural, pure, and free from chemical additives or preservatives.

On the other hand, field observations reveal that the natural quality of Ngoran coconut sugar has not been supported by proper packaging design or modern marketing practices. Products are generally sold in simple plastic packaging of 5–10 kilograms and distributed through conventional channels such as traditional markets and small local shops (Rohmah, 2020). In contrast, organic coconut sugar products with attractive packaging in retail markets can reach prices up to twice as high (Charoline, Oktaviany, & Adisetnya,

2023; Pulungan et al., 2018). This situation reduces the appeal of Ngoran coconut sugar among modern consumers, leading to slow sales turnover and frequent product oversupply.

Previous research also shows that business capital, raw material costs, and distribution strategies have a significant impact on the income of coconut sugar producers (Triwahyudi, 2021; Yuroh & Maesaroh, 2018). Thus, the main challenges faced by Ngoran's coconut sugar artisans are not only related to production but also to downstream aspects such as marketing and branding strategies. Branding plays an essential role in building product identity and consumer perception, which are critical for increasing market competitiveness (Muntazori & Listya, 2021; Mahfudz, 2020). Studies further emphasize that branding can strengthen product positioning, create customer loyalty, and ensure long-term sustainability (Ahonen, 2008; Imsa & Fatimah, 2024). Therefore, branding strategies tailored to local product characteristics are crucial in enhancing the competitiveness of Ngoran's coconut sugar.

In addition to branding, integrated marketing communication strategies are also required. Wijayanti and Sari (2023) highlight that marketing communication mix is vital for enhancing the attractiveness of local-based products. This corresponds to consumer behavior trends that increasingly demand product differentiation, uniqueness, and quality. For coconut sugar from Ngoran, modern marketing strategies should emphasize identity development, creative promotion, and customer relationship management.

Based on these theoretical and empirical insights, this study proposes a branding-based marketing strategy model called JEMPOL (Jelajah Pasar, Eksplorasi

Identitas, Merk, Promosi, Olah Pelanggan, dan Loyalitas). This model is designed to strengthen the product image, expand market reach, and enhance the long-term competitiveness of Ngoran's coconut sugar.

Accordingly, the research questions formulated are: (1) how can coconut processing optimization improve the selling value for coconut sugar artisans in Ngoran Village? and (2) what branding and marketing strategies are effective in enhancing the competitiveness of Ngoran coconut sugar products? This study is expected to contribute theoretically to the discourse on branding strategies for local products and practically by offering applicable marketing solutions for coconut sugar artisans in Ngoran Village.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach combined with the ADDIE development model (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate) to design and implement the JEMPOL model (Jelajah Pasar, Eksplorasi Identitas, Merek, Promosi, Olah Pelanggan, and Loyalitas) as a branding strategy for coconut sugar artisans in Ngoran Village, Blitar (Rayanto, 2020). The ADDIE framework was selected to ensure that the development process of the model was systematic, structured, and measurable. Figure 5 illustrates the design flow based on the ADDIE stages.

The research was conducted in Ngoran Village, Nglegok District, Blitar Regency, East Java, Indonesia in 2025. Participants consisted of 20 coconut sugar artisans who are members of the Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) group. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling (Robinson, 2024) based on three main criteria: (1) experience in coconut sugar production, (2) involvement in product marketing,

and (3) readiness to adopt branding strategies. Selection was carried out in coordination with the village government and artisan groups to obtain participants who met the research criteria.

The study employed multiple techniques, including in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation of existing marketing practices (Rahardjo, 2011). These methods were applied to gain comprehensive insights into the artisans' challenges, opportunities, and expectations regarding branding.

The collected data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Huberman & Miles, 2002). This method was selected to systematically identify recurring themes and patterns related to branding challenges and opportunities. The effectiveness of the JEMPOL model was evaluated based on two indicators: validity and acceptability. Model validity was tested by three branding experts and three digital marketing experts using Aiken's V method, ensuring that the model was theoretically sound and practically applicable. Acceptability was measured through feedback from participating artisans, focusing on their perceptions of the model's relevance and usability as a branding strategy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study highlight the socio-economic conditions of coconut sugar artisans in Ngoran Village, the characteristics of their products, the challenges they face, and the potential of implementing the JEMPOL model as a branding strategy. The discussion is presented systematically, beginning with the general socio-economic context, proceeding to specific production and

marketing challenges, and ultimately linking the findings to relevant branding theories.

The socio-economic conditions of coconut sugar artisans in Ngoran Village indicate that coconut remains a central source of livelihood, although the number of active artisans has significantly declined over time. Table 1 shows that, while some farmers still own between 50 to 90 coconut trees, the number of households actively producing coconut sugar has decreased to less than 50% compared to almost every household in the 1990s. This decline is attributed to the absence of regeneration, as younger generations prefer alternative professions such as police officers, soldiers, or civil servants rather than continuing coconut sugar production.

Table 1. Socio-Economic Conditions of Coconut Sugar Artisans in Ngoran

Aspect	Field finding	Moerth east
Ownership of coconut trees	One person may own 50–90 trees	Sufficient raw material availability.
Number of active artisans	In the 1990s, 99% of households produced sugar. Today, less than 50%	Sharp decline due to lack of regeneration.
Daily income	Production of ± 10 kg/day with Rp 20,000	Potential for steady household income
Alternative jobs	Youth prefer police, army, or	Socio-cultural factors affect artisan regeneration.

civil
service

Source: Interview 2025-09-04 at 08.00

Product characteristics also distinguish Ngoran's coconut sugar in the regional market. The sugar is known for its larger size, darker color, and unique sweet-savory taste with a distinct coconut aroma (Table 2). These attributes emphasize the natural and authentic qualities of the product. However, the shorter shelf life compared to processed sugar reduces its competitiveness in modern retail channels.

Table 2. Product Characteristics of Ngoran Coconut Sugar

Characteristic	Description	Differentiator
Color	Darker (black)	Sign of authenticity without chemicals.
Taste	Sweet-savory with coconut aroma	Different from processed sugar, which is only sweet.
Size	Larger than other coconut sugar products	Unique identity of Ngoran sugar.
Shelf life	Shorter compared to processed sugar	Challenge for wider distribution.

Source: Interview 2025-09-04 at 08.00

Despite its distinctive qualities, coconut sugar artisans face multiple challenges related to production and marketing (Table 3). Packaging remains simple and unattractive, limiting the product's value in retail and export markets. Furthermore, while mobile phones are widely used, they are often perceived as tools for entertainment rather than for business or promotion. This indicates a gap in digital literacy and the use of social media for marketing.

Table 3. Main Challenges Faced by Artisans

Challenge	Description	Impact
Packaging	Simple and unattractive	Low selling value, weak competitiveness

Regeneration	Lack of young successors, shortage of climbers	Decreasing number of artisans.
Branding	No collective effort to differentiate Ngoran products	Weak product identity in wider markets.
Digital use	Phones used for leisure, not business	Limited digital promotion.

Source: Interview 2025-09-04 at 08.00

To address these issues, the JEMPOL model was applied as a branding strategy. This model integrates six dimensions: Jelajah Pasar (Market Exploration), Eksplorasi Identitas (Identity Exploration), Merek (Brand), Promosi (Promotion), Olah Pelanggan (Customer Management), and Loyalitas (Loyalty). As shown in Table 4, the model helps systematize the branding process while highlighting artisans’ unique strengths and weaknesses.

Table 4. Implementation of the JEMPOL Model in Ngoran Coconut Sugar

JEMPOL Dimension	Field Findings	Strategic Implications
Jelajah Pasar	Natural sugar differs from processed sugar; modern markets demand differentiation	Conduct market surveys and emphasize authenticity.
Eksplorasi Identitas	Unique traits: larger size, dark color, sweet-savory taste, coconut aroma	Identity should be the core of branding.
Merek	Individual brands exist, e.g., <i>Gula Kelapa Bubuk</i> 57	Need for collective village branding
Promosi	Some artisans join exhibitions, but most remain passive	Expand digital promotion and improve packaging.
Olah Pelanggan	Consumers prefer “bright” sugar, assuming it is better	Consumer education is vital to highlight the quality of natural sugar.

Loyalitas	Artisans value coconut sugar as family heritage	Narratives of tradition can strengthen branding.
-----------	---	--

Source: Interview 2025-09-04 at 08.00

When linked with branding theories, the findings align with scholars such as Ahonen (2008), who emphasizes branding’s role in creating customer loyalty, and Imsa and Fatimah (2024), who highlight the importance of brand identity through visual design. In Ngoran’s case, the lack of attractive packaging weakens visibility, even though unique product identity already exists. Similarly, Wijayanti and Sari (2023) argue for the importance of the marketing communication mix, which resonates with the artisans’ limited digital promotion. The theoretical integration is summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Comparison of Theoretical Insights with Field Findings

Theory/Reference	Relevance to Findings
Ahonen (2008): Branding creates loyalty	Artisan attachment to coconut sugar tradition can foster customer loyalty.
Muntazori & Listya (2021): Branding as communication	Limited communication and promotion highlight the need for stronger branding
Imsa & Fatimah (2024): Visual identity is key	Ngoran products need modern packaging and logo to enhance retail appeal.
Wijayanti & Sari (2023): Marketing communication mix	Combination of exhibitions (offline) and social media (online) can expand reach.

Source: Interview 2025-09-04 at 08.00

The novelty of this study lies in integrating the JEMPOL model into the branding of coconut sugar in Ngoran. Previous research primarily focused on economic and production factors (Triwahyudi, 2021; Yuroh & Maesaroh, 2018), but none specifically addressed branding as a strategic communication tool. By combining empirical findings

with branding theory, this study provides a practical and systematic approach to enhance the competitiveness of Ngoran's coconut sugar.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of the JEMPOL model provides a novel and systematic approach to strengthening the branding of coconut sugar in Ngoran Village. Unlike previous studies that mainly focused on production, income, or socio-economic impacts, this research highlights branding as a strategic communication tool to enhance product competitiveness. The novelty lies in integrating six key dimensions: Jelajah Pasar, Eksplorasi Identitas, Merek, Promosi, Olah Pelanggan, and Loyalitas, which collectively address both upstream and downstream challenges faced by artisans. By aligning these dimensions with branding theories, this study advances scholarly discourse on how localized branding strategies can be tailored to traditional agro-industries.

Beyond its theoretical contribution, the study also offers practical benefits for society. The JEMPOL model equips coconut sugar artisans with actionable communication strategies, such as strengthening brand identity, improving packaging, and utilizing digital promotion, which can increase consumer trust and expand market reach. In turn, this enhances the socio-economic resilience of rural communities, preserves cultural heritage, and fosters sustainable development through communication-driven branding innovations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the coconut sugar artisans and the Village Government of Ngoran, Blitar Regency, for their valuable cooperation and support

during data collection. Special thanks are also extended to colleagues who assisted in language editing, proofreading, and providing constructive feedback throughout the preparation of this manuscript. This research was financially supported by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) through the Penelitian Dosen Pemula (PDP) grant scheme. The authors are deeply grateful for this funding support, which made the completion of this study possible.

REFERENCES

- Agustina, S. (2020). Peran usaha gula kelapa dalam meningkatkan ekonomi masyarakat pedesaan. *Jurnal Ekonomi dan Pembangunan*, 18(2), 145–153.
- Jauhari, S., Sundari, D., & Heryadi, R. (2023). The economic potential of coconut sugar processing in rural Indonesia. *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 15(3), 211–225.
- Amiriyah, S., & Nanang, A. (2022). Kendala pemanfaatan teknologi pada industri gula kelapa di pedesaan. *Jurnal Teknologi dan Masyarakat*, 5(1), 33–41.
- Rohmah, S. (2020). Traditional packaging and market barriers of coconut sugar products in rural Blitar. *Jurnal Ekonomi Pertanian*, 9(2), 119–127.
- Charoline, I., Oktaviany, E., & Adisetya, A. (2023). Packaging design as a determinant of consumer attraction in coconut sugar products. *Journal of Food and Agro-Industry Marketing*, 7(2), 55–66.
- Triwahyudi, D. (2021). Analisis faktor produksi dan pendapatan perajin gula kelapa di Jawa Timur. *Jurnal Sosial Ekonomi Pertanian*, 17(1), 66–78.
- Muntazori, A., & Listya, R. (2021). Branding as a communication

- strategy to strengthen local product identity. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 19(1), 11–22.
- Mahfudz, A. (2020). Branding strategies for increasing competitiveness of local SMEs. *Jurnal Manajemen Pemasaran*, 14(2), 87–98.
- Ahonen, M. (2008). Branding – does it even exist among SMEs? *Proceedings of the 16th Nordic Conference on Small Business Research*. Tallinn, Estonia.
- Hardiyanto, B. (2020). Agroindustri gula kelapa: Peluang dan tantangan dalam meningkatkan kesejahteraan masyarakat desa. *Jurnal Agribisnis Indonesia*, 8(1), 77–88.
- Sisco van Gelder, S. (2004). *Global brand strategy: Unlocking brand potential across countries, cultures and markets*. Kogan Page.
- Leibold, N., & Schwarz, L. M. (2015). The art of giving online feedback. *Journal of Effective Teaching*, 15(1), 34–46.
- Wijayanti, D., & Sari, M. (2023). Integrated marketing communication for strengthening local product competitiveness. *Journal of Marketing Communication*, 10(1), 44–59.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management* (15th ed.). Pearson.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Imsa, F., & Fatimah, N. (2024). Visual branding strategies for local food products: Building consumer trust through packaging. *Journal of Communication and Marketing Studies*, 12(1), 21–33.
- Yuroh, N., & Maesaroh, S. (2018). Factors affecting income of coconut sugar artisans in Central Java. *Jurnal Agro Ekonomi*, 29(1), 54–62.