



## The impact of event marketing and social media marketing on brand awareness of MSMEs in Ambon City

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### ABSTRACT

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are one of the main pillars of regional economies that need to strengthen their competitiveness through effective marketing strategies such as event marketing and social media marketing. This study aims to analyze the effect of these two strategies on brand awareness of MSMEs in Ambon City. The research employed a quantitative method with an associative approach, involving 100 respondents who had attended MSME events or interacted with MSME promotions through social media. Data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed using multiple linear regression with the JASP software. The findings show that event marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness ( $p < 0.05$ ), as it creates real experiences and emotional connections between consumers and brands. Similarly, social media marketing also has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness ( $p < 0.05$ ), particularly through consistent promotional activities and creative content on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. Both strategies complement each other in strengthening consumer recognition and recall of brands. These results highlight the importance of integrating offline and online marketing activities to expand market reach and build a strong brand image for MSMEs in society.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

MSMEs are one of the main pillars of regional economies, including in Ambon City. Various strategies have been implemented to enhance their competitiveness, one of which is through event marketing. Activities such as MSME exhibitions initiated by state-owned enterprises (SOEs), banking institutions, universities, and local communities serve as regular platforms to introduce MSME products to the people of Ambon. "Rabu-Rabu Market" initiated by Ambon Creative Maker (ACM) community, and "Maluku Manggurebe" organized by Bank Indonesia Maluku, are examples of recurring event marketing activities held in recent years. Interestingly, although approximately 80% of

MSME participants tend to be the same across events, visitor enthusiasm remains consistently high. This indicates the potential contribution of event marketing to increasing MSME brand awareness in Ambon City.

Event marketing is an additional strategy with great potential to attract prospective customers and open untapped markets beyond online platforms (Martensen et al., 2007). Through activities such as exhibitions, festivals, workshops, and bazaars, business owners can build emotional connections and engage in direct interactions with their audience. Event marketing serves as a powerful tool capable of creating strong brand awareness in the minds of consumers (Gupta, 2003). From a contemporary perspective within relationship marketing theory, event marketing enables companies to build long-term bonds through authentic experiences. The experiences created during events can serve as sensory and emotional stimuli that influence consumers' perceptions of brand identity. For MSMEs, such activities provide an effective means to introduce local products, build a positive reputation within the community, and enhance consumer trust as an outcome that is often difficult to achieve through conventional advertising.

Research by (Sandana et al., 2025), indicates that event marketing has a positive and significant effect on increasing brand awareness of local products, such as the MSME *Kacandipa* in Sunju Village, because it provides consumers with direct experiences, expands reach through promotional media and social media, and strengthens memory and emotional attachment to the brand. This finding is supported by (Laili et al., 2021) who state that direct engagement and emotional experiences generated during events can reinforce brand associations and foster long-term relationships with consumers. Consequently, event marketing activities not only enhance short-term brand awareness but also strengthen brand positioning and image in a sustainable manner.

In addition to offline strategies, MSMEs in Ambon City actively utilize social media marketing to expand their promotional reach. Social media marketing encompasses a variety of direct and indirect marketing methods aimed at increasing awareness, recognition, and recall of a brand, business, product, or individual. This is achieved by leveraging various tools available on social platforms, such as blogging, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking, and content sharing (Sony & Barkah, 2024). Unlike traditional media, which is one-way in nature, social media is interactive and enables two-way communication between producers and consumers. A strategic approach to utilizing digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp allows businesses to foster interaction, disseminate brand messages, and build long-term relationships with customers (Tubalawony et al., 2025). Research by (Fariandi & Ariani, 2022) emphasizes that social media marketing activities have a positive and significant influence on brand awareness, specifically (Ekaputri et al., 2021) state that creating social media content that creatively follows viral trends can increase brand awareness by up to 70%, especially when the content is aligned with the company's product identity.

However, while the potential of social media marketing is substantial, many MSMEs still encounter practical challenges in fully integrating it with offline event marketing efforts. Despite these positive outcomes, MSMEs in Ambon face several challenges in integrating event and social media marketing. Limited financial and human resources constrain their ability to sustain consistent promotional efforts. Many MSME owners rely on informal event participation without strategic planning or post-event digital follow-up. Moreover, low digital literacy and limited access to professional content creators hinder their ability to maintain high-quality and continuous online engagement.

On the other hand, brand awareness is one of the key indicators used to measure marketing effectiveness, assessed through consumers' ability to recognize and recall the names, images, and symbols associated with a particular brand (Nerissa & Juwito, 2021). In the context of MSMEs, increasing brand awareness is a key factor in competing

with larger brands. Through creative and consistent promotional activities, MSMEs can build a strong brand identity and enhance the likelihood of repeat purchases. Research by (Karina et al., 2022) shows that viral phenomena can significantly enhance brand visibility, as engaging and easily shareable content can reach a wider audience. Thus, startups can leverage viral moments to capture the attention of new consumers and increase brand awareness. Theoretically, both event marketing and social media marketing have a direct influence on the formation of brand awareness. Event marketing creates real experiences and emotional closeness. It can serve as a highly effective tool for marketers to strengthen consumers' awareness of a product's brand (Martensen et al., 2007). Meanwhile, social media marketing expands the reach of brand messages through digital channels. The combination of the two can create a synergy that enhances consumers' recognition and recall of the brand. Several studies have also highlighted the importance of synergy between event marketing and digital marketing. The finding of (Rita & Nabilla, 2022) demonstrates that the combination of promotional activities through social media and the direct implementation of event marketing can strengthen brand recall and stimulate consumers' purchase intention. Similar results were also presented by (Dharma, 2025) who explained that event marketing provides consumers with real-life experiences, while social media promotion expands the reach of messages digitally. Therefore, the two can complement each other in enhancing brand awareness.

However, studies that simultaneously examine the effects of event marketing and social media marketing on brand awareness remain limited, particularly in the context of MSMEs in island regions such as Ambon City. The unique phenomenon in Ambon, where recurring events feature relatively the same MSME participants yet continue to attract large crowds, reveals an interesting research gap. Therefore, this study is essential to provide empirical evidence on how the combination of event marketing and social media marketing can contribute to building brand awareness among MSMEs in Ambon City.

Furthermore the effectiveness of event and social media marketing in island regions such as Ambon differs significantly from that in large urban areas. Geographic isolation, smaller market size, and limited digital infrastructure make Ambon's MSMEs rely more heavily on community-based trust and local events. In contrast, MSMEs in metropolitan areas benefit from broader audience reach and advanced digital ecosystems. Therefore, in Ambon, emotional connection and cultural proximity are more influential drivers of brand awareness than digital advertising intensity alone.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative method with an associative approach, as it aims to explain the causal relationship between the independent variables (event marketing and social media marketing) and the dependent variable (brand awareness) using empirical numerical data analyzed statistically (Nanere et al., 2025). This research was conducted on MSMEs in Ambon City, with a primary focus on consumers as the subjects of the study. The total number of respondents was set at 100 consumers.

The study population includes all MSME consumers in Ambon City who have experience with event marketing and social media marketing. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, a method of selecting respondents based on specific considerations or criteria to ensure that the data collected are relevant to the research objectives (Ahmed, 2024). The selected respondents were consumers who had attended or were aware of event marketing activities organized by MSMEs in Ambon City, had seen, followed, or interacted with MSME promotions through social media, and were at least 17 years old, as they were considered capable of making independent decisions. The sample size of 100 respondents was determined based on the minimum recommended number for quantitative research (Memon et al., 2020).

The types of data used in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through questionnaires distributed to respondents both directly and via online media (Google Forms). Meanwhile, secondary data were collected from various sources, including literature, scientific articles, and previous research relevant to the topics of event marketing, social media marketing, and brand awareness.

The research variables are operationally defined as follows. Event Marketing (X1) is a marketing strategy that utilizes event organization to enhance interaction and attract consumer attention (Setiawan R et al., 2022), with indicators adapted from (Nuraeni & Hadita, 2022) consisting of: local emotional engagement, social-educative interaction, authentic immersion, event continuity, local uniqueness, local-based innovation, and socio-economic integrity. Social Media Marketing (X2) refers to a form of marketing conducted through social media platforms that emphasizes content quality, interactivity, and communication consistency (Tabelessy, 2024), with indicators adapted from (saununu et al., 2024) consisting of: local content exposure, visual & creative appeal, cultural relevance, community engagement, authenticity, and local brand recall. Brand Awareness (Y) is the consumers' ability to recognize and recall a brand (France et al., 2025), with indicators adapted from (Tabelessy et al., 2025) consisting of: local brand recognition, local brand recall ability, emotional connection, and top-of-mind preference. The research instrument used was a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Data analysis was carried out using multiple linear regression with the assistance of JASP software. This technique was employed to measure the influence of the independent variables (event marketing and social media marketing) on the dependent variable (brand awareness) (AbuElgasim Abbas Abow, 2022). The entire analysis process was conducted to determine the extent of the direct influence of each independent variable on the brand awareness of MSME consumers in Ambon City.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the research findings based on data analysis using the JASP application, which includes validity and reliability tests, classical assumption testing, the coefficient of determination, and hypothesis testing.

Table 1. Validity Test

Variable	Item	Item-Rest Correlation	Description
Event Marketing (EM)	EM1-EM7	0,504 – 0,760	Valid
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	SMM1-SMM6	0,436 – 0,732	Valid
Brand Awareness (BA)	BA1-BA4	0,665 – 0,736	Valid

Source: Processed Data, JASP 2025

Based on the analysis results, all items have item-rest correlation values above 0.30, indicating that all indicators are valid and suitable for further analysis. According to (Larsson et al., 2021), an item correlation value above 0.30 signifies that each item contributes significantly to the construct being measured.

Table 2. Reliability Test

Variable	Omega Coefficient( $\omega$ )	Criterion( $\geq 0.70$ )	Description
Event Marketing (EM)	0,840	$\geq 0,70$	Reliabel
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	0,819	$\geq 0,70$	Reliabel
Brand Awareness (BA)	0,859	$\geq 0,70$	Reliabel

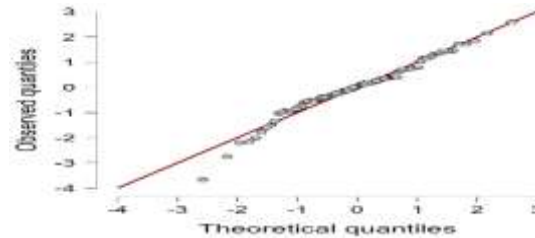
Source: Processed Data, JASP 2025

The test results show that all variables have omega coefficient values above 0.70, indicating a high level of internal consistency. Therefore, the instrument is considered reliable (Mokhtaryan-Gilani et al., 2021).

Table 3. Classical Assumption Test

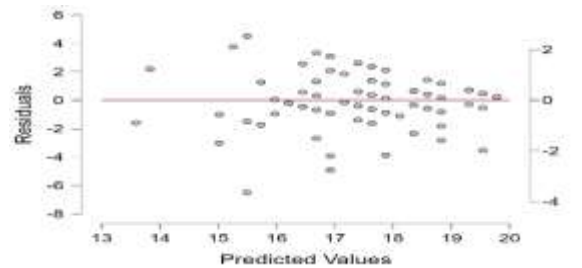
Type of Test	Result	Conclusion
Multicollinearity	Tolerance = 0,921; VIF = 1,086	No multicollinearity

Normality



The Q-Q Plot points follow the diagonal line, so the data are normally distributed

Heteroscedasticity



The residual scatterplot shows a random pattern, so no heteroscedasticity detected

Source: Processed Data, JASP 2025

Based on the results of the classical assumption tests, the regression model meets the BLUE (Best Linear Unbiased Estimator) criteria. No multicollinearity issues were found, the data are normally distributed, and no heteroscedasticity was detected (Koyande, 2024).

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination

Model	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
Model 0 (Intercept only)	0,000	0,000
Model 1 (EM, SMM → BA)	0,341	0,328

Source: Processed Data, JASP 2025

An R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.341 and an Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.328 indicate that Event Marketing and Social Media Marketing together explain 34.1% of the variation in Brand Awareness. According to (Brydges, 2019), an R<sup>2</sup> value ranging from 0.26 to 0.50 falls into the moderate to strong effect category.

Table 5. Hypothesis Test (Multiple Linear Regression)

Independent Variable	Coefficient (B)	t	Sig. (p)	Description
Event Marketing (EM)	0,238	4,854	< 0,001	Significant
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	0,237	3,596	< 0,001	Significant

Source: Processed Data, JASP 2025

The test results indicate that both independent variables, Event Marketing and Social Media Marketing, have a positive and significant effect on Brand Awareness ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, both hypotheses in this study are accepted. Meanwhile, the F-test produced an F-value of 25.13 with  $p < 0.001$ , indicating that the overall regression model is statistically significant.

- a. The Influence of Event Marketing (EM) on Brand Awareness among MSMEs in Ambon City

The hypothesis test results show that event marketing has a positive and significant effect ( $p < 0.05$ ) on the brand awareness of MSMEs in Ambon City. The t-test yielded a value of  $t = 4.854$  with  $p < 0.001$ , indicating that the first hypothesis (H1) is accepted. The findings reveal that event marketing (EM) implemented in Ambon City plays a positive role in enhancing the growth of MSMEs by increasing brand awareness. Events provide MSME owners with valuable experiences that foster business development and create opportunities to introduce their products and brands to the market. Some recurring events held in recent years in Ambon City include Rabu-Rabu Market and Maluku Manggurebe. These initiatives focus on supporting local MSMEs and are strongly backed by Ambon Creative Maker (ACM) Community, Bank Indonesia Maluku and also the Ambon City Government.

A wide variety of local MSMEs participate in these events, including those in the food and beverage, local brand apparel, handicraft, and service sectors. The uniqueness of event marketing in Ambon lies in the ability of local MSMEs to offer competitive prices without compromising quality. The Maluku Manggurebe event even invites national-level food vloggers and influencers to help promote participating MSMEs, indirectly boosting their brand awareness.

MSMEs that participate regularly and consistently in event marketing activities are able to build stronger brand recognition and recall among consumers, leading to increased loyalty. Offline event marketing activities also help establish personal branding by fostering emotional connections with customers. Several local MSMEs in Ambon such as Levanict88, Ginza Kitchen, Toko Kopi Palma, Kopi Nakke, M Artwear, WE GO, B'Gaya by Effe, and several local handicraft businesses, demonstrate that their brands have already gained a place in consumers' minds. Even after events conclude, customers continue to purchase their products online or through in-store visits, reflecting sustained brand engagement.

This study aligns with the findings of (Suryana, 2022) in the research titled "Event Marketing Strategy in Increasing Brand Awareness," which concluded that the use of event marketing strategies has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness. The study further emphasized that event marketing can serve as a promotional medium that facilitates communication processes aimed at enhancing brand trust in the minds of consumers.

b. The Influence of Social Media Marketing (SMM) on Brand Awareness among MSMEs in Ambon City

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that Social Media Marketing (SMM) has a positive and significant effect on Brand Awareness ( $p < 0.05$ ) among MSMEs in Ambon City. The t-test value of 3.596 with  $p < 0.001$  shows that the second hypothesis (H2) is accepted. These findings suggest that Social Media Marketing plays a crucial role in enhancing the growth of local MSMEs in Ambon by increasing their brand awareness. Social media provides a broad platform for brands to reach larger audiences in a short time, making them more recognizable and memorable to potential customers. The shared content such as posts, videos, and images, serves as a medium for brands to consistently express their identity, values, and personality to the public.

Beyond general digital strategies, local and cultural digital content also plays a crucial role in amplifying the effectiveness of social media promotion. Incorporating Ambon's unique cultural identity such as local dialects, traditional music, or Maluku culinary heritage, helps create authenticity and emotional resonance among audiences. When MSMEs embed local cultural elements into their visual or narrative content, they strengthen brand attachment and improve recall value. This localization strategy also differentiates Ambon's MSMEs from competitors in larger cities that rely on generic digital content.

With the rapid growth of digital business, several MSMEs in Ambon City have shifted their focus to social media marketing through platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. This indicates that they have been consistently promoting their products online by creating engaging content, running social media promotions, and even conducting live sessions on TikTok to capture customer attention and increase viewer traffic, helping their brands become more memorable to consumers. Without engaging in social media marketing, MSMEs would struggle to experience growth. Entrepreneurs must adapt to the digital era, as relying solely on conventional marketing methods can weaken brand awareness and cause their brands to be easily forgotten.

Highly engaging social media content allows respondents, who are consumers in this context, to easily find the social media accounts of local MSMEs in Ambon City. The effectiveness of using social media to promote brands and increase their public visibility has a significant impact and strong potential to boost sales. This study aligns with previous research by (Setiawan et al., 2024) titled "The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Brand Awareness, Brand Image, Customer Engagement, and Purchase Decisions". The study concluded that social media marketing is one of the key factors in enhancing brand awareness.

The synergy between event marketing and social media marketing provides critical managerial implications for MSME sustainability. Managers should design marketing calendars that synchronize offline and online campaigns for example, promoting event teasers via social media before the event and sharing testimonials or live-stream content during and after the event. This integrated approach not only maximizes exposure but also builds long-term customer loyalty and community-based brand equity, essential for sustaining small businesses in limited island markets.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted on the influence of event marketing and social media marketing on brand awareness among MSMEs in Ambon City, several clear conclusions can be drawn to address the identified research objectives. The findings indicate that regularly organized event marketing activities have a strong correlation and a highly beneficial impact on enhancing brand awareness for local MSMEs in Ambon City. Respondents agreed that MSMEs seeking greater customer attention and recall should consistently participate in event marketing activities that focus on supporting and promoting local MSMEs.

Furthermore, social media marketing (SMM) provides a significant and positive contribution to increasing brand awareness among MSMEs in Ambon City, particularly when executed consistently. Respondents agreed that to strengthen brand awareness, MSME owners should engage in continuous and sustained social media marketing efforts, especially through platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook to attract customer attention and maintain online visibility.

From a managerial perspective, these findings suggest several practical implications. MSMEs should allocate resources proportionally between offline events and digital marketing. Event marketing is effective for building initial brand exposure and personal relationships, while social media marketing maintains engagement and extends reach beyond the event. An optimal balance may involve dedicating around 60% of promotional budgets to social media activities for sustained visibility, and 40% to event participation that reinforces trust and experiential value. Collaborative programs supported by local governments or universities could help MSMEs share promotional costs and build integrated marketing campaigns.

Future research could expand the current model by incorporating mediating variables such as brand engagement or moderating variables such as customer trust. These constructs would provide deeper insights into the mechanisms linking marketing

activities and brand awareness. Additionally, longitudinal or comparative studies across different island provinces could explore how cultural and digital maturity levels affect marketing effectiveness among MSMEs.

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