



## Enhancing Competitiveness through Marketing Strategy Optimization and Product Innovation: Evidence from Choco Bakery

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### Abstract

This study analyzes the marketing strategies and product innovations implemented by Choco Bakery as part of its efforts to strengthen competitiveness in the bakery industry. Established in 2020 in the post-pandemic era, Choco Bakery has demonstrated notable growth by adopting product differentiation strategies such as the use of premium chocolate ingredients and the introduction of unique flavor variations. In addition, the bakery has effectively utilized digital marketing channels, including social media platforms and online delivery applications, to broaden its market reach and engage consumers more interactively. The research adopts a mini-research method, with data collected through interviews and direct observation of the bakery's operational activities. The findings reveal that innovation driven by customer feedback, multi-channel promotional efforts, and consistent product quality play a central role in enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Furthermore, the study emphasizes that continuous monitoring of market trends and consumer preferences contributes to Choco Bakery's adaptability and sustained market relevance. Based on the results, this study recommends future development strategies, including expanding seasonal and limited-edition product lines, strengthening brand storytelling, and increasing strategic partnerships with local suppliers and digital platforms to ensure long-term business growth.

**Keywords:** *Marketing Strategy; Product Innovation; Competitiveness; Bakery*

**Abstrak:** Studi ini menganalisis strategi pemasaran dan inovasi produk yang diterapkan oleh Choco Bakery sebagai bagian dari upaya untuk meningkatkan daya saing di industri toko roti. Didirikan pada tahun 2020 setelah pandemi, Choco Bakery menunjukkan pertumbuhan yang signifikan melalui penerapan strategi diferensiasi produk, seperti penggunaan bahan coklat premium dan pengembangan variasi rasa yang unik. Lebih lanjut, Choco Bakery secara efektif memanfaatkan saluran pemasaran digital, termasuk platform media sosial dan aplikasi pengiriman, untuk memperluas jangkauannya dan meningkatkan keterlibatan konsumen. Studi ini menggunakan metode penelitian mini, mengumpulkan data melalui wawancara dan pengamatan langsung terhadap operasional toko. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa inovasi berdasarkan umpan balik konsumen, strategi promosi multi-saluran, dan kualitas produk yang konsisten memainkan peran penting dalam meningkatkan kepuasan dan loyalitas pelanggan. Lebih lanjut, studi ini menekankan bahwa pemantauan berkelanjutan terhadap tren pasar dan preferensi konsumen membantu Choco Bakery tetap adaptif dan relevan di pasar. Berdasarkan temuan ini, studi ini merekomendasikan pengembangan



strategi lebih lanjut, termasuk perluasan produk musiman dan edisi terbatas, penguatan strategi penceritaan merek, dan peningkatan kolaborasi strategis dengan pemasok lokal dan platform digital untuk mendukung pertumbuhan bisnis jangka panjang.

**Kata Kunci:** *Strategi Pemasaran, Inovasi Produk, Daya Saing, Toko Roti*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Indonesian bakery industry has experienced rapid growth over the past decade, with its market value continuing to rise as lifestyles shift toward bread and cakes as an alternative source of food. Competition in this sector is intensifying with the emergence of numerous local and international brands offering similar products with innovative marketing strategies. In this context, product differentiation and effective marketing strategies are key to success for bakery businesses, ensuring their survival and growth amidst the dynamic competition.

Choco Bakery is a bakery business founded in 2020, right after the COVID-19 pandemic brought fundamental changes in consumer behavior and the global business landscape. Despite being founded amidst challenging economic conditions, Choco Bakery successfully identified market opportunities by focusing on premium chocolate-based products with high added value. This strategic decision is in line with differentiation theory, which emphasizes the importance of creating a unique value proposition to differentiate products from competitors. (Victor Diwantara et al., 2025)

Choco Bakery's uniqueness lies in the consistent quality of its products, produced through its signature homemade recipes, the use of premium ingredients, and a fresh and aesthetic presentation. This strategy not only visually captures consumers' attention but also builds high quality expectations. Strong brand differentiation can create a sustainable competitive advantage, especially when combined with a positive customer experience.

In today's digital era, marketing strategies are inseparable from the use of technology and social media. Choco Bakery recognizes the importance of digital transformation in reaching a wider target market, especially millennials and Gen Z, who are active social media users. The use of platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp Broadcast has become an integral part of its marketing communication strategy. However, success in a competitive industry requires more than just a digital presence. Continuous product innovation, a deep understanding of customer needs, and the ability to adapt to market trends are crucial factors determining business sustainability. Choco Bakery faces challenges in developing new products, from finding the right flavor combination and maintaining consistent ingredient quality to... This research is relevant considering the limited empirical studies that

comprehensively analyze how medium-scale bakery businesses can optimize marketing strategies and product innovation in the digital era, especially in the context of the Indonesian market. This research is expected to provide practical contributions for other bakery businesses and add to the academic literature on marketing strategies and innovation management in the food and beverage industry, balancing innovation and production cost efficiency. (Ghaida et al., 2024)

## **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method at Choco Bakery to gain an in-depth understanding of its marketing strategies and business operations. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore business phenomena comprehensively and contextually, as well as understand the meaning behind the practices implemented by business actors. The case study method is considered appropriate because it can provide a detailed and comprehensive picture of how Choco Bakery runs its business operations, develops marketing strategies, and adapts to constantly changing market dynamics.

Data collection was conducted through three main techniques to ensure the validity and depth of the information obtained. First, in-depth interviews were conducted with the owners and managers of Choco Bakery to obtain information about the business's products, implemented strategies, challenges faced, and decision-making in business development. Second, direct observations were conducted of Choco Bakery's operational processes, including production, packaging, customer service, and marketing activities to understand actual business practices. Third, internal document analysis was conducted on data related to marketing strategies, product development, sales records, and promotional materials to complement the primary data obtained from interviews and observations.

The data collected from various sources were then analyzed descriptively to identify patterns, strategies, and business practices implemented in Choco Bakery's operations. Descriptive analysis allows researchers to systematically and factually describe the phenomena being studied, as well as interpret the meaning of the collected data. The analysis process was carried out by organizing the data, identifying key themes, looking for interrelationships between themes, and drawing conclusions based on consistent findings from various data sources. Data triangulation from interviews, observations, and internal documents was conducted to ensure the credibility and reliability of the research results.

The research was conducted by exploring fifteen key aspects, including product differentiation, promotional strategies, customer characteristics, product innovation processes, social media utilization, customer feedback mechanisms, promotional effectiveness evaluation, strategic collaboration,

and adaptation to market trends. This exploratory approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of Choco Bakery's business dynamics from various interrelated dimensions. Each aspect is explored in depth to identify how Choco Bakery builds competitive advantage, interacts with customers, and develops sustainable business strategies in the competitive bakery industry. Through this holistic approach, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the key factors contributing to Choco Bakery's success in running its business. (Widyaningrum & Rahayu, 2024)

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Product Differentiation as a Primary Strategy**

The bakery builds its business identity through a product differentiation strategy that focuses on the use of premium chocolate as a key element. This approach not only differentiates Choco Bakery from competitors but also creates a higher perception of quality in the eyes of consumers. The use of quality raw materials, combined with authentic homemade recipes that are continuously refined through trial and error and customer feedback, results in a distinctive and difficult-to-imitate taste. This serves as the basis for a sustainable competitive advantage.

Beyond taste, aesthetics are also a key focus in the production process. Choco Bakery ensures that each product has an attractive and modern visual appearance, in line with today's consumer preferences, which increasingly prioritize aesthetics, especially for social media posting. Sleek packaging, a tantalizing dark chocolate color, and detailed decorations enhance the product's appeal.

Choco Bakery's differentiation value extends beyond taste and presentation to the consistency of the customer experience. Consumers aren't just purchasing bread or pastries as functional products, but rather as an experience encompassing aroma, texture, taste, and emotional satisfaction. Consistent quality over time builds trust and builds customer loyalty.

This differentiation strategy aligns with changing consumption patterns in modern society, where food is valued not only for its utility but also for its symbolic value, lifestyle identity, and accompanying sensory experience. Premium products, aesthetic designs, and a pleasurable consumption experience make Choco Bakery not just a food provider but also a part of the urban consumer lifestyle. (Dewi Sartika, Maharani Syahputri, Lamria Siregar, 2024)

### **Multi-Channel Marketing Strategy**

Choco Bakery implements a multi-channel marketing strategy designed to expand market reach while strengthening customer relationships. This approach emphasizes the use of various complementary digital platforms, creating a dynamic, measurable, and adaptive marketing ecosystem to

changing consumer preferences. Social media is a core component of this strategy, providing flexibility in building visual, narrative, and interactive communications.

Instagram is used as the primary channel for building brand image through aesthetic visual content, from product photos and menu designs to customer testimonials. Meanwhile, TikTok is used as a platform for presenting more creative and lighthearted content, such as behind-the-scenes videos of bread-making, audio trends, and storytelling that builds emotional branding. In addition to these two platforms, WhatsApp Broadcast is used as a means of direct communication with loyal customers, particularly to inform them of exclusive offers, reminders of limited-time promotions, and sending weekly menu catalogs.

The promotional programs implemented by Choco Bakery demonstrate a deep understanding of consumer behavior and purchasing cycles. Buy-one-get-one promotions are the most effective strategy for increasing sales volume, especially on low-traffic days. Meanwhile, video content showing the bread-making process plays a crucial role in boosting consumer trust through transparency and storytelling that showcases the freshness of ingredients, the cleanliness of the kitchen, and the commitment to quality. (Hadi & Pratminingsih, 2023)

Furthermore, community-based marketing strategies like giveaways on Instagram have been proven to increase engagement rates and expand organic reach through tagging friends, sharing content, and reposting. This aligns with digital marketing trends based on user-generated content, which strengthens word-of-mouth in the digital age.

Price-based promotions and sales packages are also implemented through bundling programs, daily discounts on certain products, and seasonal flash sales. This strategy is considered effective because it provides more flexible purchasing options for consumers, especially those who are price-sensitive or want to try new variants. To strengthen long-term customer loyalty, Choco Bakery also runs a points-based loyalty program and repeat purchase incentives. Customers who make consistent purchases receive rewards in the form of discounts, free products, or access to special offers before they are released to the public. (Rahmat, 2025)

### **Market Segmentation and Targeting**

An analysis of Choco Bakery's customer base reveals a structured market segmentation pattern relevant to the dynamics of the modern bakery industry. This segmentation is not only based on demographic factors but also encompasses psychographic and consumer behavioral aspects. Choco Bakery's segmentative approach provides a strategic foundation for product design, positioning, and formulating targeted communication strategies.

The first segment of primary concern is students. This group exhibits consumer behavior that is highly responsive to digital trends, attractive pricing, and lifestyle-based product differentiation. Affordable, accessible, and visually appealing bakery products are the dominant attractions in this segment's purchasing decisions. Furthermore, students tend to prioritize products that are not only delicious but also Instagrammable for social media posting, so the symbolic value of the product plays a role in purchasing decisions. In this context, promotions based on discounts, menu bundling, and loyalty programs are highly effective in encouraging repeat purchases in this segment.

The second segment is young families, which is one of Choco Bakery's strategic customer bases. The characteristics of this segment differ from the previous ones, as this group places greater emphasis on quality, raw material safety, and product sizes suitable for shared consumption. Purchasing decisions in this segment are more rational and consider value for quality, not just low prices. Therefore, Choco Bakery's strategy for this segment includes the use of premium ingredients, clear ingredient labels, and the provision of sharing-sized products suitable for family consumption. Furthermore, the launch of seasonal menus that can be enjoyed together is a relevant strategy adaptation for this segment.

The third segment is dessert lovers, or a consumer group with a strong preference for premium and innovative taste experiences. This group often consists of consumers with higher purchasing power and a consumption orientation driven by sensory factors, product exclusivity, and taste exploration. Dessert lovers typically look for bread not just as a daily staple, but rather as an experiential product with a narrative of flavor, production techniques, and presentation aesthetics. To reach this segment, Choco Bakery offers a premium menu series based on specific chocolate origins, limited-edition variants, and collaborations with food influencers.

A comprehensive understanding of this segmentation allows Choco Bakery to develop an adaptive and multi-layered communication strategy. For the student and college student segment, promotional messages that emphasize creativity, affordable prices, and attractive packaging are the main focus. Meanwhile, the strategy for young families focuses on messages that emphasize ingredient safety, consistent quality, and emotional benefits such as togetherness. For dessert lovers, a differentiation approach through exclusivity, ingredient storytelling, and premium aesthetics is an effective strategy. (Siti Ahdina Saadatirrohmi, 2024)

### **Customer-Driven Product Innovation Process**

The product innovation process at Choco Bakery is a measurable process, not a random process or simply following a passing trend. Innovation is carried out through a systematic approach oriented toward customer needs

and preferences, ensuring each new product has high market relevance. This innovation model adopts the principles of customer-driven product development, where the voice of the consumer is a key component in the decision-making process.

The initial step in the innovation process begins with gathering information and feedback from customers. Choco Bakery actively utilizes social media platforms, particularly Instagram, to conduct polls, short surveys, and two-way interactions with followers and regular customers. Informal feedback is also obtained through in-store conversations and customer reviews gathered from digital channels. These practices not only help the company identify popular flavor trends but also uncover unmet needs in the market. (Rahman & Alexandro, 2024)

Based on the data collected, the production team then develops a product idea, followed by a formulation exploration phase. The developed product is not immediately launched to the market but undergoes a series of internal trials and limited market testing. This phased approach allows for refinement of flavor, texture, size, and packaging design until the product reaches acceptable quality standards.

Some product innovations successfully marketed through this approach include the Chocolate Melt Bun, which delivers the sensation of melted chocolate in a soft, textured bun, making it suitable for consumers who love premium chocolate. Another product is the Choco Cheese Soft Bread, a combination of chocolate and cheese flavors aimed at consumers who enjoy sweet and savory flavors. Furthermore, Mini Brownie Bites were launched in response to consumers who want smaller portions for personal consumption or quick snacks.

While this innovation process has a positive impact on business sustainability, it faces a number of challenges. One key challenge is finding the ideal flavor combination, which requires repeated experimentation and a deep understanding of dynamic consumer tastes. Another challenge relates to the consistency of raw material quality. Choco Bakery must maintain quality standards while maintaining cost efficiency, ultimately requiring effective negotiation with suppliers and flexible supply chain management. (Melesse & Orrù, 2025)

Furthermore, determining the selling price is a crucial part of the innovation process. Choco Bakery must ensure that the price of its new products remains competitive in the market while also providing an adequate profit margin for business sustainability. Therefore, every innovation decision takes into account not only sensory aspects and consumer preferences but also the overall business strategy.

### **Evaluation of Promotion Effectiveness**

Choco Bakery implements a measurable and ongoing marketing evaluation mechanism to ensure its promotional strategies deliver optimal impact on business performance. This evaluation is conducted through a combination of quantitative and qualitative data analysis collected from various marketing channels and sales activities. Key indicators used include daily sales volume increases, digital order frequency, new customer numbers, and social media engagement metrics such as likes, comments, shares, and views. Customer retention and repeat order rates are also used as indicators of long-term success.

Evaluation results showed that video content depicting the bread-making process was the promotional format with the highest engagement rate. This is due to the content's characteristics, which simultaneously provide educational and entertaining value, creating an emotional connection with the audience. This strategy also increases perceptions of transparency and trust in product quality.

Buy-one-get-one promotions have proven effective in increasing sales volume quickly. However, evaluations also show that this strategy needs to be strategically managed to avoid diminishing the perceived value of the product and creating consumer dependence on discount promotions.

Meanwhile, giveaway programs on social media have demonstrated high effectiveness in reaching new audiences and increasing brand awareness. However, evaluation findings emphasize the importance of a follow-up remarketing strategy to convert giveaway participants into loyal customers, rather than just passive followers. (Avisianiy & Widaningsih, 2024)

### **Strategic Collaboration**

To expand its market reach and create stronger service value, Choco Bakery collaborates with various parties. Collaborations with local beverage vendors create attractive bundling packages and provide a more comprehensive consumption experience. Partnerships with schools and universities open access to the younger customer segment directly through bazaars and festivals. This collaboration not only increases brand visibility but also provides new insights into consumer preferences in various settings. The data and insights gained from these collaborations serve as valuable input for product development and subsequent marketing strategies. Utilizing Feedback for Customer Input is treated as a strategic asset in Choco Bakery's operations. All feedback, both positive and constructive, is documented and analyzed to identify areas for improvement. Feedback on taste informs recipes, comments on product size influence size variant decisions, and suggestions on promotions shape marketing communication strategies. This feedback system creates a continuous cycle of improvement that keeps Choco Bakery relevant to customer expectations. Responding to feedback also builds

trust because customers feel valued and their voices are heard. (Haryanto & Siregar, 2025)

### **Competitive Strategy**

Facing increasingly fierce competition in the bakery industry, Choco Bakery implements a competitive strategy oriented toward value creation (value-based competition) through three main pillars: consistent product quality, strong product differentiation, and excellence in customer service. This approach focuses not only on price but also on creating a superior perception of value in the minds of consumers.

The first pillar, consistent product quality, is the foundation of Choco Bakery's reputation. Consumers tend to build long-term trust in brands that consistently deliver products with the same taste, texture, aroma, and freshness over time. To maintain this consistency, Choco Bakery implements strict operational standards, from raw material selection and dough measurement to packaging. This consistency has proven to be a factor that encourages repeat purchases, as consumers feel confident that their next purchase will meet their expectations. (Hesniati & Diarti, 2024)

The second pillar is product uniqueness, a form of differentiation that is difficult for competitors to imitate. Choco Bakery positions itself as a bakery brand with a strong identity through the use of premium chocolate as a key product element. Furthermore, innovative flavor creations, seasonal product trends, and aesthetically pleasing bakery visual designs reinforce the product's character as part of a lifestyle, not just a food item. This differentiation creates emotional added value, so the product is judged not only by its functional aspects but also by the consumption experience and aesthetics.

The third pillar is excellence in fast, responsive, and friendly customer service. In the digital age, customers assess not only product quality but also the quality of interactions. Choco Bakery understands this and implements a proactive service approach through fast ordering features, responsive customer support, and a convenient shopping experience both online and offline. This approach creates a positive customer journey and strengthens loyalty.

With these three pillars, Choco Bakery doesn't engage in aggressive price competition, but instead competes on a value basis. Consumers are willing to pay a premium when they experience consistent quality, a pleasant experience, and clear product differentiation. This strategy not only creates a short-term competitive advantage but also creates a barrier to entry for new competitors seeking to replicate the concept. (Nosratabadi et al., 2020)

### **The Importance of Quality in Retention**

Product quality plays a strategic role in building customer retention, particularly in the bakery industry, which relies heavily on the customer's sensory experience. Soft texture, consistent taste, and product freshness are key indicators of customer satisfaction. When customers experience repeated positive experiences, they are more likely to make repeat purchases and even recommend products to others. This form of customer experience-based promotion is a highly effective marketing channel because it occurs organically and builds trust.

To maintain product quality, Choco Bakery prioritizes investment in recipe standardization, raw material quality control, and human resource training. This process ensures that each product has consistent taste and texture characteristics, even when produced at different times and by different personnel. This consistent quality not only increases short-term customer satisfaction but also strengthens the brand image in the long term. (Fajri et al., 2024)

### **Adapting to Market Trends**

Choco Bakery demonstrates strong adaptive capabilities in keeping up with the rapidly evolving dynamics of dessert trends. The modern bakery and dessert industry is known for its relatively short trend cycles, where consumer preferences are often influenced by social media virality, flavor innovation, and presentation aesthetics. In this context, Choco Bakery actively monitors trends through platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and customer reviews to identify changes in market interest early. This approach reflects market sensing capability, the ability to detect market changes before a trend reaches saturation point.

This adaptation process is implemented through the exploration of new recipes, experimentation with flavor variations, and regular menu updates. However, these innovations are not random or simply driven by viral trends, but rather remain within the brand's identity as a specialist in premium chocolate processing. Thus, each new product released consistently reflects the alignment between market trends and the company's positioning strategy.

Choco Bakery's ability to adopt and adapt to trends without losing its core brand character is a crucial factor in maintaining its relevance among consumers, particularly the younger segment, which is responsive to changing trends. This approach not only strengthens customer retention but also increases the potential for acquiring new customers through viral effects and digital word-of-mouth. By maintaining a balance between innovation and consistent brand identity, Choco Bakery has successfully positioned itself as an adaptive and strong player in the competitive bakery ecosystem. (Adisty et al., 2023)

### **Future Development Plans**

To achieve sustainable growth and strengthen its competitive position in the bakery industry, Choco Bakery has formulated several long-term strategic plans. One key initiative is the development of seasonal products that capitalize on specific occasions such as Eid al-Fitr, Valentine's Day, Christmas, and the back-to-school period. This approach not only creates consumer anticipation and enthusiasm but also serves as a demand stimulation strategy that increases sales during specific periods.

Additionally, Choco Bakery plans to expand its chocolate product offerings by exploring new ingredients, such as ruby chocolate, white chocolate, and single-origin chocolate from various premium cocoa-producing regions. This move is aimed at strengthening the premium market segment, which demands more complex, exclusive flavors, and a rich story.

In terms of marketing, intensifying digital promotions is a priority. Optimizing the use of e-commerce and integrating data-driven marketing campaigns is expected to increase the effectiveness of messaging to more specific consumer targets. Choco Bakery also intends to experiment with a customer lifetime value-based marketing approach to increase retention and long-term profitability. Developing data analytics capabilities is a key pillar in the next phase, as the company recognizes that data-driven decision-making will improve the accuracy of marketing strategies, inventory planning, and product innovation. By implementing these strategies, Choco Bakery is targeting growth that is not only expansive but also stable and oriented towards sustainable competitive advantage. (Hesniati & Diarti, 2024)

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The results of this study indicate that Choco Bakery's success in building competitiveness in the bakery industry is achieved through a combination of product differentiation strategies, utilization of diverse marketing channels, and a culture of continuous innovation based on customer feedback. Focusing on premium chocolate as the product's primary identity creates a strong positioning in the minds of consumers, while taste consistency is a crucial element in building customer trust and loyalty. The use of social media and interactive promotional programs strengthens engagement and expands audience reach. Additionally, collaboration with external parties such as influencers, suppliers, and other supporting partners contributes to expanding business capabilities while enhancing perceived customer value. An organization's ability to respond quickly to changing market preferences reflects flexibility and a strong customer focus. For long-term sustainable growth, Choco Bakery requires a strategy to strengthen its competitive advantage through seasonal product innovation, digital expansion, and the development of personalized customer retention programs. Investment in employee training and the use of operational support technology will also be key foundations for improving business efficiency, quality, and scalability.

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