

REBRANDING STRATEGY FOR COFFEE SMES: NAVIGATING BRAND IDENTITY TRANSFORMATION IN A COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

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Abstract: While the coffee industry in Bandung experiences rapid saturation, many local businesses struggle with brand stagnation and loss of consumer relevance. This study investigates the rebranding strategy of Tovi Kohi, a cafe in East Bandung, focusing on the strategic reconfiguration of brand image to maintain competitive advantage. The research fills a gap in localized rebranding studies within the coffee sector, specifically exploring how visual identity and packaging transformation can recalibrate consumer perception in a niche geographic market. Utilizing a qualitative approach, data were collected through purposive semi-structured interviews with owners and customers, field observations, and document analysis, which were then processed using thematic analysis techniques. Results demonstrate that rebranding success hinges on four critical dimensions: consistent visual identity development, mnemonic brand naming, community-centric marketing, and the implementation of fresh, energetic packaging design—specifically utilizing color psychology (pink/yellow) to attract Gen Z and female demographics. This research contributes to the discourse on brand management by providing a framework for small-scale F&B enterprises to achieve strategic alignment with shifting market preferences.

Keywords: brand strategy, coffee industry, packaging design, rebranding, visual identity

Abstrak: Di tengah saturasi industri kopi di Kota Bandung, banyak pelaku usaha lokal menghadapi stagnasi merek dan penurunan relevansi konsumen. Penelitian ini mengkaji strategi rebranding pada Tovi Kohi di Bandung Timur, dengan fokus pada rekonfigurasi citra merek untuk mempertahankan keunggulan kompetitif. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada eksplorasi strategi rebranding pada ceruk pasar geografis tertentu, yang menyoroti bagaimana transformasi identitas visual dan kemasan dapat mengkalibrasi ulang persepsi konsumen. Menggunakan metode kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui

wawancara semistruktur (purposive sampling) dengan pemilik dan pelanggan, observasi lapangan, serta analisis dokumen yang diolah melalui teknik analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keberhasilan rebranding dipengaruhi oleh empat dimensi kritis: pengembangan identitas visual yang konsisten, pemilihan nama merek yang mnemoni, strategi pemasaran berbasis komunitas, dan desain kemasan yang energetik—khususnya penggunaan psikologi warna (pink/kuning) untuk menarik demografi Gen Z dan perempuan. Studi ini memberikan kontribusi pada literatur manajemen merek mengenai kerangka kerja bagi UMKM sektor F&B dalam mencapai penyelarasan strategis dengan preferensi pasar yang dinamis.

Kata kunci: *desain kemasan, identitas visual, industri kopi, rebranding, strategi brand*

INTRODUCTION

The coffee industry in Indonesia has witnessed exponential growth, particularly within urban hubs like Bandung, where cafés have evolved into essential leisure and social interaction spaces (Nabila & Saifudin, 2024; Pratiwi & Dwijayanti, 2022). Despite this expansion, small independent brands frequently face declining consumer interest due to outdated visual identities that fail to resonate with modern demographics (Tsaniya & Telagawathi, 2022). A critical challenge in this saturated market is the lack of strategic frameworks for packaging-led rebranding, which is essential for repositioning local businesses effectively.

Rebranding serves as a comprehensive strategic process to reshape brand identity—encompassing names, logos, colors, and core values—to establish a new market position (Gunarso et al., 2021; Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006). The primary objective is to realign the brand with its target market, update its image, and adapt to evolving market dynamics (Pinandoyo et al., 2022; Ardilla et al., 2024; Adi, 2025). When executed strategically, rebranding has proven effective in enhancing consumer appeal, building loyalty, and reviving brand equity (Hasani & Kurniawati, 2024 ; Kristianto & Wahyudi, 2019; Miller et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the dominance of Millennial and Gen Z consumers has shifted market demand toward experiential value, sustainability, and brand authenticity (Agustinar et al., 2023; Napoli et al., 2014). Consequently, rebranding must transcend mere visual changes; it requires a holistic narrative and a future-oriented vision to rebuild customer trust (Munzier et al., 2024). Through precise reconfiguration, coffee brands can enhance their added value and expand their reach within a disruptive industrial landscape (Halim, 2024).

The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on the reconfiguration of visual identity and packaging design as primary instruments for rebranding within the localized niche of East Bandung, a context that remains under-explored in existing literature. To address this gap, this study utilizes a qualitative methodology involving semi-structured interviews, field observations, and document analysis to provide a detailed strategic framework for local coffee shop sustainability.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative single-case study design (Rahman, 2022) to facilitate an in-depth exploration of rebranding phenomena within a specific business context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data were gathered through purposive sampling involving eight informants, comprising three internal stakeholders (the owner and marketing staff) and five regular customers aged 18–35, selected based on a minimum frequency of three visits within the last six months to ensure reliable perceptual insights. To achieve data triangulation, collection procedures included semi-structured interviews lasting 30–45 minutes, systematic field observations conducted over a four-

week period, and the analysis of five internal documents, including visual identity guides and social media engagement metrics.

The data were processed using thematic analysis, involving data familiarization and the identification of themes regarding visual reconfiguration and consumer response. The scope of this research is focused on the rebranding strategy and initial consumer perception at Tovi Kohi in East Bandung; while the results have limited generalizability due to the case-specific focus, they offer strategic insights transferable to small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) in similar competitive urban markets facing brand stagnation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are structured into three primary themes: visual identity reconfiguration, strategic packaging transformation, and the resulting recalibration of consumer perception. These results demonstrate how Tovi Kohi utilized design as a strategic tool to navigate market saturation in East Bandung. The rebranding of Tovi Kohi involved a radical shift in its visual DNA (Table 1). Data from field observations and document analysis revealed a transition from conventional "coffee colors" (dark brown and black as shown in Figure 1 to a vibrant palette of Energetic Pink and Bright Yellow. This shift was specifically designed to align with the "experiential value" sought by younger demographics.

Table 1 Visual Identity Transformation of Tovi Kohi

Element	Pre-Rebranding	Post-Rebranding	Strategic Rationale
Primary Color	Dark Brown/ Black	Pink/ Yellow	To attract Gen Z and female demographics
Typography	Formal Serif	Playful Sans-Serif	Enhancing approachability and modernity
Brand Persona	Traditional/ Masculine	Vibrant/ Inclusive	Aligning with "leisure and social" trends.

Source: Personal Documentation (2024)

The majority of internal stakeholders (3 out of 3) emphasized that the previous identity felt stagnant. This shift aligns with color psychology, where pink and yellow evoke friendliness and optimism (Figure 2). Four out of five interviewed customers (80%) noted that the new colors made the café feel more "Instagrammable" and welcoming compared to its previous state.



Figure 1. Coffee packaging before the rebranding process
Source: Personal Documentation (2024)

The increased packaging size serves two strategic purposes, it offers higher "value for money" for regular consumers, and it enhances the product's visual dominance on the shelf. Observational notes during the two-week period showed that the larger, vibrant pouches acted as a "visual magnet," leading to higher spontaneous inquiries from new customers.



Figure 2. New packaging structure
Source: Personal Documentation (2024)

The typography used was also changed to be more feminine and modern, with blue providing an attractive contrast on the packaging. In addition, a new logo representing the updated product name was added, reinforcing a fresher brand identity that aligns with current trends. The packaging design now adopts more artistic and appealing coffee illustrations, while information about coffee variants remains clear and legible. These changes not only cover visual aspects but also expand the target market, with a new design that is more acceptable to a wider consumer segment, including young people and women.

The results of these changes indicate that rebranding is able to create a stronger and more attractive visual identity, which is expected to increase consumer appeal, strengthen customer loyalty, and differentiate this product from competitors in an increasingly competitive market. This rebranding also demonstrates the importance of adapting to changing market trends and consumer tastes to maintain brand relevance in the market.



Figure 3. Packaging mockup
Source: Personal Documentation (2024)

One interesting and advantageous aspect of this rebranding process is the more robust and visible packaging, which also reflects a change in consumption patterns where consumers now prioritize stock availability and perceived value for home-brewing. The change in packaging size illustrated in Figure 3 reflects the brand's confidence in dominating shelf space, while providing greater flexibility for consumers in choosing products according to their weekly consumption needs. Overall, this packaging rebranding not only focuses on visual appearance but also reflects a deeper understanding of consumer behavior and market needs, which ultimately can increase product competitiveness in the growing coffee market.

The results reinforce the framework by Muzellec & Lambkin (2006) that rebranding is an essential instrument for creating new brand equity. However, while Hasani & Kurniawati, (2024) argue that product quality is the primary driver of loyalty, this case study reveals that in a saturated urban market, visual disruption is the initial and most critical trigger for consumer re-engagement.

The novelty of this research lies in the "Localized Niche Rebranding" model. It suggests that for SMEs, the reconfiguration of visual identity and packaging capacity is not merely an aesthetic choice but a survival mechanism in a disruptive industrial landscape (Halim, 2024). The "mismatch" between traditional coffee expectations and Tovi Kohi's new energetic persona created a curiosity gap that successfully captured a new market segment without alienating the existing customer base.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the rebranding strategy of Tovi Kohi in East Bandung, focusing on how the reconfiguration of brand identity and packaging serves as a strategic instrument to recalibrate consumer perception in a saturated market. The findings reveal that successful rebranding in the SME coffee sector requires a holistic transformation across four critical dimensions: visual identity, where the transition to an energetic pink and yellow palette successfully attracted Gen Z and female demographics; strategic naming, which enhanced mnemonic recall and emotional resonance; packaging design, where upsizing from 150g to 250g and 350g improved shelf presence and perceived value; and integrated marketing, through social media engagement and community-based collaboration that solidified the new brand persona.

The scientific contribution of this research lies in the development of the "Localized Niche Rebranding" model, demonstrating that for small-scale enterprises, visual disruption—rather than traditional price competition—is the primary driver for market re-engagement. Practically, this study provides a roadmap for entrepreneurs and designers to utilize color psychology and capacity reconfiguration as tools for brand sustainability. For marketers, the results emphasize the importance of "Instagrammable" visual triggers in creating a curiosity gap within urban consumer clusters. To build upon these insights, future research should employ quantitative methods to measure the long-term impact of these visual shifts on brand loyalty and expand the scope to include comparative multi-case studies across different geographic regions to test the model's generalizability.

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