CRAFTING FOLKTALE NARRATIVES: BANGFLO COFFEE’S INNOVATIVE DIGITAL STORYTELLING JOURNEY ON INSTAGRAM

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to explore the impact of integrating the Sasando folktale into Bangflo Coffee’s brand identity on Instagram, focusing on its effects on consumer behavior, loyalty, and market positioning in the Jakarta coffee industry.

Theoretical framework: The study is grounded in the foundations of storytelling in human culture, the strategic application of storytelling in digital communication, and the multidimensional nature of brand identity.

Method: Employing a robust action research methodology rooted in Lewin’s cycle, the study emphasizes the strategic use of storytelling. Multiple action research cycles are conducted to adapt the Sasando as a central symbol, aligning with President Joko Widodo’s support for local entrepreneurs.

Results and conclusion: The Sasando assumes a prominent role in Bangflo Coffee’s identity, symbolizing cultural heritage and connecting deeply with the audience. The storytelling approach resonates with socially conscious millennials, fostering community, social responsibility, and heightened brand awareness. The integration of folktales proves effective in transforming the brand beyond a simple coffee supplier into a meaningful cultural ambassador.

Originality/value: This research contributes to the field by showcasing the innovative use of digital storytelling in the coffee industry, bridging traditional folklore with modern branding strategies. It emphasizes the importance of cultural integration in creating authentic and enduring connections with consumers, particularly in the context of social media platforms like Instagram.

Keywords: folktale, folklore, storytelling, coffee, action research, Instagram, branding.
RESUMO

Objetivo: Este estudo tem como objetivo explorar o impacto da integração do conto popular Sasando na identidade da marca Bangflo Coffee no Instagram, centrando-se nos seus efeitos no comportamento do consumidor, na lealdade e no posicionamento no mercado da indústria do café de Jacarta.

Estrutura teórica: O estudo baseia-se nos fundamentos da narração de histórias na cultura humana, na aplicação estratégica da narração de histórias na comunicação digital e na natureza multidimensional da identidade da marca.


Resultados e conclusões: O Sasando assume um papel proeminente na identidade do Bangflo Coffee, simbolizando o património cultural e estabelecendo uma ligação profunda com o público. A abordagem de contar histórias ressoa com os millennials socialmente conscientes, promovendo a comunidade, a responsabilidade social e uma maior consciencialização da marca. A integração de contos populares revela-se eficaz para transformar a marca, para além de um simples fornecedor de café, num embaixador cultural significativo.

Originalidade/valor: Esta investigação contribui para o campo ao mostrar a utilização inovadora da narração digital de histórias na indústria do café, fazendo a ponte entre o folclore tradicional e as estratégias modernas de branding. O estudo sublinha a importância da integração cultural na criação de ligações autênticas e duradouras com os consumidores, em particular no contexto de plataformas de redes sociais como o Instagram.

Palavras-chave: conto popular, folclore, narração de histórias, café, investigação-ação, Instagram, branding.

1 INTRODUCTION

The coffee industry in Jakarta has experienced remarkable expansion, witnessing the emergence of a diverse array of brands designed to cater to the continually evolving preferences of consumers. Historically confined to high-end options, the contemporary market now offers affordable choices with a variety of taste profiles. However, amidst this growth, a prevalent emphasis on adhering to market trends has often obscured the crucial development of a distinct brand identity, posing challenges to the long-term sustainability of coffee businesses (Ismadi, 2023). Joko Widodo, the 7th President of the Republic of Indonesia, has greatly boosted business prospects in Jakarta's coffee industry by supporting local entrepreneurs. This support extends to both Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) as well as global franchises. This aligns with the ethos of the third
wave coffee movement, which underscores the importance of artisanal experiences (Ismadi, 2023; Prakosa, 2019; Manzo, 2010).

The third wave generation encompasses growers, roasters, baristas, and consumers, shaping a narrative-driven experience (Manzo, 2014; Fischer, 2019). With coffee consumption in Indonesia reaching 370 thousand tons, there is a notable shift towards appreciating coffee as both an artisanal and cultural phenomenon (Olayya P. et al., 2020).

*Bangflo Coffee*, established in 2013, contributes to this cultural shift by sourcing single-origin beans from Flores and emphasizing a commitment to Arabica farmers’ well-being. Despite facing challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, *Bangflo* adapted by enhancing its e-commerce model and utilizing digital communication to maintain customer loyalty. Jakarta's small and medium enterprises (SMEs), including *Bangflo*, leverage social media and cultural narratives to navigate the evolving consumer landscape, aligning with responsible consumption values and strategically positioning themselves for success in the competitive coffee industry.

*Bangflo Coffee* explores the potential impact of incorporating folktales into its cultural identity on consumer behavior, loyalty, and market positioning. This strategic inquiry examines how the integration of folktales aligns with the brand's values and communication strategies, aiming to comprehend its broader implications (Manzo, 2014; Bauman, 1992). By embracing the folktale "The Story of Sasando" from East Nusa Tenggara, *Bangflo* seeks authenticity, fostering a meaningful connection with consumers and distinguishing itself in the competitive coffee market (Olayya P. et al., 2020). Through this exploration, *Bangflo Coffee*'s cultural integration aims to transform its identity beyond a simple coffee supplier into a meaningful cultural ambassador. The goal is to provide consumers with an authentic and distinctly Indonesian experience (Latif et al., 2014).

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The innate human inclination for storytelling dates to ancient times, as evidenced by cave paintings and the discovery of a 43,900-year-old cave painting in Sipong, Sulawesi (George, 2019). Mythology, religion, and history all originated from stories, with myths influencing various aspects of human thinking (Sobur, 2014). Across cultures, storytelling serves as a universal form of entertainment, information dissemination, and
preservation of cultural traditions and values. Storytelling, as an ancient skill revived in the modern era, remains an enduring method of human communication, meeting fundamental human needs (Nobili, Henriksen, Tsagalas, & Komodromos, 2021).

In the realm of marketing, storytelling has proven to be a powerful tool for building and nurturing connections between brands and consumers (Brechman & Purvis, 2015; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019). The narrative thinking inherent in storytelling organizes events chronologically, forming coherent frameworks that structure consumer interactions with brands (Woodside, Sood & Miller, 2008). Brand narratives, co-created by consumers, define a brand's essence and values. The integration of storytelling into brand communication offers a potent means for deeper consumer engagement, enabling brands to connect, entertain, persuade, and shape new perspectives (Nobili et al., 2021).

Storytelling, particularly through digital media and social platforms, becomes a dynamic approach for Bangflo Coffee's communication strategy (Escalas, 2004). The Story of Sasando, with its timeless themes and characters, can be adapted into visually appealing, shareable content on Instagram. By combining multimedia elements like images, videos, animation, and interactive features, Bangflo Coffee can create engaging and relatable stories that resonate with diverse audiences. Additionally, Bangflo is exploring an innovative approach by integrating the "warmth" construct, fostering emotional engagement and resonance with consumers through character relationships in commercials (Aaker, Stayman & Hagerty, 1986). This strategic blend of storytelling and emotional resonance positions Bangflo Coffee to create a lasting impact in the digital landscape.

The marketing industry has witnessed significant transformations in the past decade, yet the enduring importance of brands remains unchanged. In the dynamic marketing landscape shaped by technology and evolving consumer behaviors, brands continue to hold a central position. Rooted in commerce history, the concept of branding profoundly influences how consumers perceive and engage with businesses. Tangible elements like name and logo serve as symbols, impacting human communication and influencing complex social dynamics and psychological aspects (Duncan, 1985). Beyond symbols, brand identity extends to a holistic sensory experience, with Schmitt (2010) expanding it to include visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory elements. Colour, as a core component of brand visual equity, holds intrinsic meaning crucial to brand identity, influencing brand recognition and image.
Acknowledging the impact of brand personality and personification in branding research (Avis & Aitken, 2015), Bangflo Coffee strategically employs a storytelling approach that intertwines cultural heritage and meaningful narratives. A brand, as emphasized by Aaker (1996), transcends mere symbols, embodying both tangible and emotional attributes, distinguishing products, or services from competitors. The evolution of brand management from tactical to strategic and visionary is evident, with brands transitioning from reactive to visionary, prioritizing long-term financial performance and brand equity indicators. This approach underscores the brand's commitment to fostering a lasting and meaningful connection with its audience.

Aaker's framework emphasizes the multidimensional nature of brands, extending beyond physical attributes. Managing these dimensions cohesively allows companies to create a strong, differentiated, and memorable brand identity. Aaker's strategy involves positioning a brand as a product, organization, person, and symbol. For example, Bangflo Coffee strategically highlights its product's quality and performance, aligns with organizational values in East Nusa Tenggara, connects on a personal level through its owner, Handrianus Yovin Karwayu, and utilizes its visual identity as a symbol, albeit with some inconsistency in reinforcement. In conclusion, successful brand management integrates these elements to resonate with consumers and shape their perceptions and behaviors.

Digital storytelling represents a departure from traditional oral narratives, integrating technology into the storytelling process (Choo, Abdullah, & Nawi, 2020). In this contemporary approach, digital tools such as cameras and smartphones are employed to create multimedia-enriched narratives, offering a diverse range of formats like digital essays and interactive stories (Daniels, 2013; Nicoli, Henriksen, Tsagalas, & Komodromos, 2021). Digital storytelling aims to bridge understanding across generations and cultures, preserving cultural heritage while catering to the preferences of younger audiences (Podara et al., 2021). Its applications extend to various sectors, including education, marketing, and health science, fostering emotional connections and motivating specific actions (Robin & McNeil, 2019). Social media platforms play a crucial role in enhancing engagement by sharing inclusive narratives and empowering users to craft diverse stories (Johnson, 2018). Combining traditional blogs with social media creates powerful structures supporting counter publics in sharing multifaceted representations of everyday experiences (Canella, 2017; Johnson, 2018; Rodríguez-Torrico, Apadula, San-
The exploration of folklore as a cultural tapestry, beyond its role in entertainment, emerges as a crucial conduit for preserving and transmitting cultural knowledge and values, highlighting the intricate interplay between tradition and adaptation in an increasingly globalized society (Toelken, 1996; Bauman, 1971). Serving as a dynamic construction of narratives, beliefs, and traditions, folklore reflects a community's ethos, functioning as a cultural storehouse capturing collective wisdom, identity, and historical memory (Dundes, 1996; Bauman, 1971; Danandjaja, 1986). Folklore narratives transcend mere storytelling, becoming a means for societies to express emotions, navigate desires, and shape identities (Dundes, 1996; Dorson, 1976).

Key indicators of folklore, such as oral transmission and communal ownership, are observable in Indonesian culture, encompassing verbal and non-verbal expressions (Danandjaja, 1986; Bauman, 1971). Despite challenges, folktales remain valuable resources, applied in creative sectors for mental revolution and innovative reinterpretations (Bascom, 1965; Maulana & Prasetia, 2013; Zulkarnais et al., 2018). In modern branding, the adoption of the "Hero's Journey" motif from folktales strategically establishes connections with consumers, transforming brands into communicators that build communities and deepen connections (Dorson, 1967; Dégh, 2001; Dundes, 1996). This integration enhances brand resonance and engagement, aligning with contemporary branding principles.

In the contemporary digital age, the internet has evolved into a social space fostering global connections and transcending borders, giving rise to digital communities (Peck & Blank, 2020). Social media, a significant player in this transformation, plays a pivotal role in shaping new cultures and subcultures, evident in Indonesia's population of over 276 million, spending about 3.28 hours daily on social media platforms (Mulyana, 2023; Chen & Kim, 2013; OOSGA, 2023).

Understanding the dynamics of social media, Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, and Silvestre's honeycomb model (2011) provides seven building blocks for Bangflo Coffee's Instagram strategy—Sharing, Presence, Relationship, Reputation, Groups, Conversation, and Identity. Integrating these blocks creates a lively digital community connecting with the brand and shaping its identity, fostering lasting relationships and advocacy among followers.

With Instagram’s over 2.35 billion global users and 109 million users in Indonesia,
it has become a powerful platform, second only to WhatsApp in Indonesia (NapoleonCat, 2023). Instagram's impact lies in encouraging visual content consumption and influencing consumer decisions (McNely, 2012; Varkaris & Neuhofer, 2017; Yu, Xie, & Wen, 2020). By employing McNely's scheme, Bangflo Coffee's Instagram strategy can effectively utilize orienting, humanizing, interacting, placemaking, showcasing, and crowdsourcing, fostering genuine audience engagement and establishing a dynamic and interactive brand presence (McNely, 2012; Busca & Bertrandias, 2020). This not only reshapes human interactions and culture but also emphasizes consumer-driven interactions and active engagement, deepening connections and fostering brand loyalty in the realm of digital marketing (Boufim & Barka, 2021).

3 METHOD

This type of research is action research, departing from conventional methods, emphasizes collaborative problem posing and continuous questioning for pragmatic, practitioner-oriented solutions (McNiff, 2016; Coghlan & Brannick, 2014). Rooted in transdisciplinary principles, it seeks practical knowledge for organizational improvement in social and cultural contexts (Mertler, 2019; Nzembayie, Buckley, & Cooney, 2019; Bleijenbergh, Mierlo, & Bondarouk, 2021).

Guided by Kurt Lewin's Action-Reflection Cycle, it embodies inclusivity and dynamism, emphasizing adaptability (Reason & Bradbury, 2008; McNiff, 2016). The Bangflo Coffee Action Research model, influenced by participant-driven, collaborative, and context-specific approaches, integrates Sasando folktale into brand identity through three cycles, employing Instagram for engagement and evaluation (McDonough & McDonough, 1997; Coughlan & Coghlan, 2002; Lewin, 1946). This participatory, multidisciplinary approach aligns with action research's transformative nature, contributing to practical enhancements and scholarly knowledge (Reason & Bradbury, 2008).

Bangflo Coffee employs Kurt Lewin's 1946 Action-Reflection Cycle as the foundational model for its action research cycles, focusing on brand identity, consumer interaction, and online presence. Recognizing the need for flexibility and adaptation, Bangflo Coffee aligns with Nzembayie's demonstration of adaptability in action research (McNiff, 2016). Multiple action research cycles are planned, allowing the company to refine its communication processes and brand marketing strategies, ensuring
competitiveness in the evolving coffee business. The planning phase involves collaboration on communication processes, marketing strategies, and evaluating the Sasando folktale's versions. In the acting stage, stakeholders collaborate on converting folklore into a narrative, working with creative professionals, and uploading digital artwork to Instagram. The observation process tracks metrics to assess follower engagement, followed by post-observation analysis to determine the success of narrative storytelling as a marketing tool and the need for further action research cycles (Nzembayie, Buckley, & Cooney, 2019; McNiff, 2016).

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 SASANDO’S INTEGRAL ROLE IN BANGFLO COFFEE’S IDENTITY

Folklore serves as a cultural repository, reflecting a community's ethos and worldviews (Dundes, 1996; Bauman, 1971). It dynamically reconstructs traditions, offering insight into a culture's enduring core (Danandjaja, 1986), safeguarding cultural richness through collective wisdom, identity, and historical memory (Dundes, 1996). Beyond mere storytelling, folklore becomes a medium for expressing emotions, navigating desires, and shaping identities (Dundes, 1996; Dorson, 1976). Key indicators, such as oral transmission and communal ownership, outlined by Danandjaya (1986, 2019), exist in Indonesian culture through verbal and non-verbal expressions (Bauman, 1971). Despite challenges in adapting, folktales are valued resources (Bascom, 1965; Danandjaja, 2019), with Hadi Ismanto (2023) emphasizing their application in creative sectors for a mental revolution (Maulana & Prasetia, 2013; Zulkarnais et al., 2018).

Within the brand identity of Bangflo Coffee, the Sasando assumes a prominent position, symbolizing both the musical instrument and the skilled Sasandoists who play it. This unique element establishes a profound connection with the culture of East Nusa Tenggara (Chae et al., 2018), serving as a consistent and prominent presence within the brand's imagery and messaging. The Sasando becomes a unifying factor, tapping into deep-rooted cultural significance, resonating strongly with the audience, and effectively reinforcing the brand's heritage and identity (Smith, 2019; Shah et al., 2019). Embedded within the culture of East Nusa Tenggara, the Sasando transcends being a mere symbol; it represents the brand's unique character and the mastery of the Sasandoists. In doing so, it delves beneath the surface, encapsulating the essence of ancient traditions, philosophy, and a profound sense of belonging (Muhtaddin, 2022). By encompassing these aspects,
the Sasando authentically evokes the spirit of East Nusa Tenggara, serving as a living embodiment of the cultural heritage that Bangflo Coffee proudly embraces.

4.2 BUILDING CONNECTIONS THROUGH STORYTELLING

In the contemporary coffee culture, socially conscious consumers, particularly tech-savvy millennials, seek brands that align with their values (Tedjakumala, Damayani, Mulyana, & Perbawasari, 2022). Bangflo Coffee strategically engages this demographic through a compelling storytelling approach, delving into the origin, production, and lives of coffee farmers. This transcends mere transactions, fostering social responsibility and heightened awareness among followers, who often become brand advocates, sharing information and championing the brand.

Bangflo Coffee's Instagram stories, showcasing landscapes, daily life, traditions, and cultural heritage, effectively resonate with the storytelling inclination of Indonesian millennials (Tedjakumala, Damayani, Mulyana, & Perbawasari, 2022). Employing narrative-rich content triggers emotional connections, underscoring the potent influence of storytelling on the brand's followers (Shaw et al., 2013; Escalas, 2004; Manney, 2008).

Storytelling, recognized as a powerful medium, enables brands to nurture relationships with consumers, captivating attention, entertaining, persuading, and shaping perspectives (Brechman & Purvis, 2015; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019). The foundation of strong brands lies in narratives that communicate the company's essence, offerings, and values, evolving into shared narratives co-owned by consumers themselves. The structure of these narratives' shapes consumers' experiences with the brand, contributing to the brand's meaning.

In the current marketing landscape, individuals seek sources of happiness, prompting brands to use storytelling as a powerful means to create joy (Woodside, 2010). Bangflo Coffee, guided by its owner's belief in culture's deep connection to human experiences, employs storytelling to create an immersive experience, forging strong connections with its followers. This aligns with modern branding, where emotions and shared values foster lasting connections, blending the brand's narrative with followers' experiences.

Research validates Bangflo Coffee's storytelling effectiveness, yielding high engagement and appreciation, particularly among Indonesian millennials who value meaningful stories (Shaw et al., 2013; Tedjakumala, Damayani, Mulyana, & Perbawasari,
Beyond surface-level interactions, the brand's storytelling cultivates deep connections and shared values, fostering a sense of togetherness and unity. This strategic approach harmonizes with external perspectives that emphasize community involvement, insights into coffee farming, and narratives of the people behind the brand (Janthaluck & Ounjit, 2012; Dessart & Pitardi, 2019).

4.3 FOLKTALE ON INSTAGRAM

In the digital landscape, the strategic application of social media frameworks is crucial for online engagement. Bangflo Coffee demonstrates adept utilization of McNely's (2012) honeycomb model tailored for Instagram, specifically employing orientations, humanizing elements, interactive content, showcasing narratives, placemaking, and crowdsourcing. These strategies enhance user involvement and loyalty through compelling narratives, incorporating diverse cultural perspectives to ensure sustained content creation and resonance (Tedjakumala, Damayani, Mulyana, & Perbawasari, Creating Sustainable Content By Integrating Cultural Heritage on Instagram, 2023).

Furthermore, Bangflo Coffee strategically leverages Kietzmann et al.'s (2011) Seven Building Blocks to shape its Instagram presence. The brand excels in orienting its audience with clear and informative content, humanizing the brand by showcasing its people, actively interacting with followers, highlighting the beauty of Flores, creating a virtual space that fosters emotional connection, and involving the audience in content creation. This strategic approach establishes a vibrant and engaging platform, aligning with the brand's identity and values.

The sustainability of Bangflo Coffee's Instagram content strategy lies in its emphasis on integrating diverse cultural perspectives. This approach ensures content relevance and resonance over time, catering to followers' preferences while reflecting the brand's identity. By aligning with cultural viewpoints and narratives, the brand continuously inspires content creation, fostering a meaningful and enduring connection with its audience.

In the realm of folklore, the internet's expansive reach has preserved and revitalized traditional narratives. Folklore's resilience in the digital age, as evidenced by the Sasando folktale integrated into Bangflo Coffee's Instagram narrative, showcases its adaptability and lasting importance (Dundes, 2007; Blank, 2009). Digitizing folklore on platforms like Instagram enhances its dynamism, allowing for the introduction of new
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narratives and ideas that create immersive interactions between the brand and consumers.

Instagram's popularity, as Indonesia's second most-used platform, significantly influences consumer choices, particularly in product and service decisions. Instagram's mix of visuals, storytelling, and user engagement serves as a potent formula for building brand identity, fostering loyalty, and influencing consumer choices (Varkaris & Neuhofer, 2017; Yu, Xie, & Wen, 2020). Aligning traditional folktales with Instagram provides an innovative modern branding strategy, allowing brands to connect emotionally, identify with resonant narratives, and establish rapport with audiences, thereby leveraging the platform's impactful environment (Busca & Bertrandias, 2020; Varkaris & Neuhofer, 2017).

Overall, Bangflo Coffee strategically utilizes Instagram to weave a narrative that resonates deeply with its millennial audience. Recognizing the influential role of brand personality and personification in branding research (Avis & Aitken, 2015), the brand crafts a storytelling strategy that integrates cultural heritage and meaningful narratives.

By fostering engagement and a sense of community, Bangflo Coffee aligns with contemporary branding principles, harnessing the power of social media dynamics to evoke genuine brand affection. As millennials actively participate, their sense of community responsibility complements the brand's commitment to cultural preservation and storytelling. The concept of brand love, as defined by Fournier (Fournier & Alvarez, 2012; Fournier, 1998), underscores the profound and enduring emotion that surpasses mere preference, shaping consumer behaviors and interactions. Bangflo Coffee's strategic use of the Sasando folktale on Instagram exemplifies how brand personality, personification, and engaging narratives collaboratively cultivate a lasting emotional connection with the audience, enhancing brand loyalty.

Bangflo Coffee's Sasando folktale aligns with its mission to globally introduce Flores coffee, intertwining tradition and innovation through digitalization. Leveraging Instagram, the ancient tale undergoes a transformative process, preserving and rejuvenating cultural narratives (Bruijn, 2019). This digital adaptation not only safeguards tradition but ensures its relevance in contemporary contexts (Wang, Ghalih, & Porter, 2017). The Sasando folktale serves as a strategic communication tool, employing Instagram's structural framework to orient, humanize, interact, showcase, and crowdssource, bridging the temporal gap between the past and present. This harmonious fusion of heritage and innovation elevates Bangflo Coffee's brand identity within the
evolving dynamics of digital-era brand communication (Bronner, 2009; McNeely, 2023).

5 CONCLUSION

In summary, the integration of the Sasando folktale into Bangflo Coffee's brand identity on Instagram has proven highly successful. The Sasando, symbolizing both a musical instrument and cultural heritage, has become a central and authentic element of the brand, fostering a profound connection with East Nusa Tenggara's culture. The strategic use of storytelling on Instagram has effectively engaged socially conscious consumers, particularly millennials, leading to increased brand awareness and loyalty.

Bangflo Coffee's Instagram stories, featuring landscapes, traditions, and daily life, have resonated strongly with the storytelling preferences of Indonesian millennials. This narrative-rich content has triggered emotional connections, fostering a sense of social responsibility among followers who have become brand advocates. The brand's storytelling approach has successfully moved beyond transactions, creating lasting connections and shared values with its audience. On the digital front, the brand has adeptly utilized Instagram's framework, incorporated diverse cultural perspectives and ensured sustained content creation. The Sasando folktale's integration into the digital landscape preserves and revitalizes cultural narratives, showcasing adaptability in the digital age.

In conclusion, Bangflo Coffee's approach exemplifies a successful modern branding strategy, effectively merging traditional folklore with innovative digital storytelling. This harmonious fusion of heritage and innovation not only elevates the brand's identity but also contributes valuable insights to the evolving dynamics of digital-era brand communication. The study underscores the significance of cultural integration in creating authentic and enduring connections with consumers in the contemporary marketing landscape.
REFERENCES


