

REBRANDING AND DIGITALIZATION AS DRIVERS OF SME GROWTH: EVIDENCE FROM BASO PRAPATAN, CIKIDANG VILLAGE

Itto Turyandi^{1)*}, Muhammad Rafi S¹⁾, Rizky Zakaria¹⁾, Arvan Putra Maulana S¹⁾, Muhammad Azis Pasha N¹⁾, Abdul Malik Rahman Kasim¹⁾, Yundha Destianty¹⁾, Dela Nawa Aprilianti¹⁾, Maisa Nidalatifah¹⁾, Silvi Adriyani W¹⁾ & Dzysmi Nurani Fatimah¹⁾
Universitas Al-Ghifari Bandung, Indonesia¹⁾
*Email: sittooss@unfari.ac.id**

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Abstract

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) face persistent barriers such as limited branding capacity, low digital literacy, and restricted market access, which threaten their sustainability in rural contexts. This study aims to analyze the role of rebranding and digitalization in enhancing SME growth, with evidence from Baso Prapatan in Cikidang Village. The research employs the Theory of Planned Behavior, Resource-Based View, and Innovation Diffusion Theory as theoretical frameworks. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and analyzed with Miles and Huberman's interactive model. The findings show that rebranding through the creation of a new logo and promotional banner significantly improved the SME's identity and credibility, while digitalization via social media and Google Maps expanded market visibility and consumer engagement. The study highlights that even low-cost interventions can strengthen competitiveness and contribute to rural economic development.

Keywords: Rebranding, Digitalization, SMEs

A. INTRODUCTION

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a vital role in supporting national and regional economies by driving inclusive growth and competitiveness (Ma'rifah et al., 2022). The contribution of SMEs to economic development is particularly evident in their ability to provide employment opportunities and stimulate local income generation (Polnaya, 2015). However, despite their significant potential, SMEs often face structural challenges that limit their growth and sustainability (Rochmah et al., 2023a). These challenges include limited access to capital, inadequate managerial skills, and restricted market penetration (Wardhana, 2018). Therefore, strategic interventions are necessary to enable SMEs to adapt to changing market dynamics and sustain their role in economic development (Daisy et al., 2024).

The rapid advancement of digital technology has transformed business landscapes, offering SMEs new opportunities to expand market reach and efficiency (Wasito et al., 2024). Social media platforms, when strategically utilized, can enhance consumer trust and support brand development for SMEs (Rizki & Mulyanti, 2023). Nevertheless, many small businesses in Indonesia remain unaware of the advantages of digital adoption for competitiveness (Wardhana, 2018). Strengthening digital literacy and brand awareness has been found crucial in increasing SMEs' resilience in an increasingly digital economy (Daisy et al., 2024). This

indicates that digitalization and rebranding are not only optional strategies but essential requirements for SMEs to thrive in the modern marketplace (Rochmah et al., 2023a).

In Cikidang Village, SMEs still operate predominantly through traditional business practices and rely heavily on word-of-mouth marketing. This condition reflects a low level of digital literacy and limited awareness of the importance of rebranding strategies among local entrepreneurs. The majority of SMEs lack structured efforts to develop strong brand identities that can attract wider market segments. Furthermore, the absence of digital marketing initiatives hinders their ability to compete with businesses from more advanced areas. These conditions highlight the urgency of empowering SMEs in Cikidang through the adoption of rebranding and digitalization strategies tailored to their local context.

Previous research has underlined the importance of digital adoption and branding for SMEs. Wardhana (2018) revealed that many SMEs underestimate the potential benefits of information technology and social media in expanding market reach and improving operational efficiency. Similarly, Daisy et al. (2024) emphasized the necessity of digital literacy education to enhance SMEs' competitiveness in the digital era. Moreover, Wasito et al. (2024) found that social media, when paired with strong brand image strategies, can significantly enhance consumer trust and purchasing decisions. These studies collectively demonstrate that rebranding and digital transformation are strategic levers for SME development, yet their adoption remains uneven across local business contexts.

In line with the above studies, this research shares the same focus on the role of digitalization and branding in fostering SME growth. The similarities lie in recognizing that SMEs can leverage technology and branding to enhance competitiveness and customer engagement. However, the difference in this study lies in its specific focus on a rural SME, namely *Baso Prapatan* in Cikidang Village, through a community service-based mentoring program. Unlike the previous research, which generally assessed SMEs at a broader level, this study provides localized evidence of how rebranding and digitalization can be practically implemented in micro-level businesses.

This distinction contributes to the originality of the study, as it highlights how digitalization and rebranding strategies can be tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities of rural SMEs. By situating the analysis within the context of community-based mentoring, this research not only addresses theoretical gaps but also provides practical insights for SME empowerment in underdeveloped areas.

Given these considerations, the urgency of this research lies in the pressing need to strengthen rural SMEs' capacity to compete in an increasingly digital economy. Without digital adaptation and effective branding, SMEs in villages such as Cikidang risk being left behind in the face of intensifying competition and shifting consumer behaviors. Therefore, empowering SMEs through structured rebranding and digitalization initiatives is vital for enhancing their sustainability and long-term contribution to local economic development.

Based on this urgency, the objective of this study is to analyze the implementation of rebranding and digitalization as drivers of SME growth in Cikidang Village, with specific evidence from *Baso Prapatan*. The study aims to evaluate how these strategies can improve market reach, strengthen brand image, and increase sales performance, thereby providing a model for other rural SMEs facing similar challenges.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explains that an individual's behavior is guided by three main factors: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Attitudes reflect the degree to which a person evaluates a

behavior as favorable or unfavorable. Subjective norms refer to social pressures or influences that shape whether the individual engages in a specific action. Perceived behavioral control highlights the individual's belief in their ability to perform the behavior successfully. Within the context of SMEs, TPB is relevant in understanding how entrepreneurs adopt digitalization and branding strategies:

- Attitudes toward digitalization and branding
- Influence of social norms and community expectations
- Perceived ability to adopt technology and rebranding initiatives

Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory emphasizes that the competitive advantage of an enterprise is determined by the uniqueness and strategic utilization of its internal resources (Barney, 1991). Resources include tangible assets such as technology and intangible ones such as brand image and organizational culture. According to this theory, resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) enable firms to achieve sustainable growth. In SMEs, branding and digital literacy can be considered critical resources that determine competitiveness. Thus, RBV provides a framework to analyze how SMEs optimize rebranding and digitalization for long-term success.

- Tangible resources (technology, capital, facilities)
- Intangible resources (brand image, reputation, knowledge)
- VRIN characteristics of SME resources

Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT)

Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT) explains how new ideas, technologies, and practices spread within a social system (Rogers, 2003). The adoption of innovation depends on factors such as perceived benefits, compatibility with existing practices, and complexity of use. This theory highlights the role of communication channels and social influence in accelerating the diffusion of innovation. In the SME context, IDT helps to explain how entrepreneurs adopt digitalization strategies and rebranding practices. The framework also clarifies why some SMEs are more adaptive to technological changes than others.

- Perceived relative advantage of innovation (digitalization, branding)
- Compatibility with SME business culture and practices
- Complexity and ease of use of digital platforms
- Role of communication channels in spreading innovation

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the influence of rebranding and digitalization on the business growth of the *Baso Prapatan* SME located in Cikidang Village, Lembang District, West Bandung Regency. According to Creswell (2014), descriptive qualitative research aims to portray social phenomena based on empirical facts gathered from the field in a detailed and contextual manner. This method was chosen because it is relevant to capturing the dynamics of rebranding and digitalization as experienced by micro-business actors in their actual context. The use of qualitative description is particularly significant as it allows the researcher to explore subjective perspectives, lived experiences, and the meanings attached by entrepreneurs to the strategies implemented. Thus, the chosen method is appropriate to assess the effectiveness of the mentoring program conducted for the *Baso Prapatan* SME.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Direct observation was conducted at the business site to identify the implementation of rebranding and digitalization strategies, including changes in visual identity such as logos and banners, improvements in service standards, the use of social media for promotion, and the integration

of the business location into Google Maps. In-depth interviews were carried out with the owner of *Baso Prapatan* as the key informant, using a semi-structured format to ensure both consistency and flexibility in responses. Documentation in the form of photographs, digital promotional materials, and social media activity records was also utilized to complement and validate the primary data.

The sampling technique applied in this research was purposive sampling, which refers to the deliberate selection of informants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2018). The owner of *Baso Prapatan* was chosen as the main informant because of their central role in decision-making and direct involvement in the implementation of rebranding and digitalization. This selection ensured that the data obtained reflected both strategic and practical perspectives on the challenges and outcomes of the program.

The data analysis process followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was conducted by organizing and simplifying the findings from observation, interviews, and documentation in order to focus on the most relevant aspects. The data were then presented in a systematic narrative form to allow clear interpretation and thematic categorization. Finally, conclusions were drawn by connecting empirical findings with theoretical frameworks, enabling the formulation of insights into how rebranding and digitalization contribute to SME growth in a rural context.

D. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Initial Business Constraints of Baso Prapatan

Prior to the intervention, Baso Prapatan encountered several structural and marketing limitations that hindered its potential for growth. One of the most significant issues was the absence of a clear brand identity, as the business lacked a distinctive logo, promotional banner, or any form of standardized visual representation. This limitation weakened consumer recognition and made it difficult to differentiate the product from competitors in the same sector. Branding has been considered a critical factor in establishing consumer trust, credibility, and product positioning in highly competitive markets (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Without these elements, the business operated with minimal visibility and struggled to project itself as a professional and trustworthy enterprise.

In addition to branding constraints, the lack of digital presence further limited the market accessibility of Baso Prapatan. At the time, the SME did not have any official social media accounts, nor was its location registered on Google Maps, which posed a significant barrier for new customers seeking to locate the business. This absence of online visibility meant that potential consumers relied heavily on word-of-mouth or physical visits, reducing the SME's ability to expand its customer base. Scholars have emphasized that in the digital era, online presence serves as a primary channel for promoting products and engaging with customers (Ramadhany et al., 2023). Consequently, without adopting digital tools, Baso Prapatan risked being excluded from the growing consumer base that increasingly depends on online search and social media interaction.

Furthermore, the business owner faced internal challenges related to knowledge and skills in marketing, particularly in branding and digital utilization. Limited capacity in these areas reflected a broader issue commonly experienced by rural SMEs, where business practices are often informal and lack structured promotional strategies. The owner had not been exposed to the benefits of rebranding or digital marketing, which hindered efforts to adapt to evolving consumer behaviors. Previous studies have shown that SMEs with limited awareness of branding and digital marketing often struggle to compete with larger enterprises that actively invest in these strategies (Prameswari et al., 2019). This condition underscored

the urgency of interventions that not only provided tangible branding materials but also equipped the business owner with the necessary knowledge to sustain growth in the long term.

Implementation of Rebranding Strategies

The first stage of the intervention focused on strengthening the visual identity of Baso Prapatan through the creation of a new logo and promotional banner. These elements were designed to reflect the unique characteristics of the product while also providing a more professional image to consumers. A distinctive logo plays a crucial role in shaping customer perceptions, as it functions as both a symbol of product quality and a tool for differentiation in competitive markets (Rizki & Mulyanti, 2023). Similarly, the promotional banner served as a visible marker of the business, attracting potential customers passing by the location. The introduction of these branding components addressed the absence of formal identity that had previously constrained the SME's growth potential.

The installation of the banner and the formal introduction of the new logo represented more than just visual improvements; they symbolized a transformation in how the business positioned itself within the market. According to research, the adoption of professional branding materials helps SMEs build credibility and gain consumer trust (Rochmah et al., 2023b). By placing the banner in front of the production site, Baso Prapatan projected itself as a legitimate and competitive enterprise rather than an informal food stall. This shift in presentation not only improved customer perception but also enhanced the visibility of the business to passersby and first-time visitors. In turn, the enhanced identity provided a foundation for broader marketing strategies to be implemented.

Moreover, the rebranding process fostered greater confidence in the business owner, who began to recognize the importance of brand identity as a strategic asset. Rebranding is not merely about aesthetics but also about aligning consumer perceptions with the values and uniqueness of the product (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Through the program, the owner developed an appreciation for the long-term benefits of consistent branding, including higher customer retention and stronger market positioning. This experiential learning process was crucial, as it enabled the SME to view branding not as an additional cost but as an investment in business growth. Ultimately, the rebranding initiative laid the groundwork for the subsequent digitalization phase, where visual identity would play a central role in online marketing.

Adoption of Digitalization Practices

The program emphasized the integration of digital tools by creating official Instagram and Facebook accounts for Baso Prapatan and registering its business location on Google Maps. Establishing an online presence allowed the SME to reach wider audiences beyond its immediate geographic area, which is increasingly critical for small enterprises in the digital era (Ramadhany et al., 2023). The use of Google Maps also made it easier for new customers to locate the business, addressing one of the key accessibility constraints faced before the intervention. Social media platforms served as both promotional channels and communication tools, enabling the business to engage directly with consumers. This digital visibility strengthened the SME's ability to compete in an increasingly dynamic marketplace.

Beyond the creation of accounts, the program involved mentoring the business owner on practical aspects of managing digital platforms. Training sessions covered activities such as designing simple promotional posts, responding to customer inquiries, and maintaining consistency in brand visuals. This practical approach addressed the knowledge gap that many SMEs face, where digital tools are often available but not fully utilized due to limited marketing expertise (Prameswari et al., 2019). The mentoring encouraged active participation from the business owner, ensuring that digital practices were not only introduced but also

embedded into daily operations. As a result, the SME was better equipped to sustain its digital presence independently after the program.

The adoption of digitalization practices also contributed to enhancing the confidence and professionalism of Baso Prapatan as a business entity. By engaging with customers online and receiving positive responses, the owner realized the tangible benefits of maintaining an active digital footprint. Scholars have highlighted that digitalization enhances SME competitiveness by facilitating market expansion and strengthening customer relationships (Mason et al., 2021). The transformation experienced by Baso Prapatan demonstrates how simple, low-cost digital interventions can generate immediate value for small businesses in rural or semi-urban areas. Ultimately, the digitalization initiative complemented the rebranding strategy, forming a cohesive approach to boosting visibility, credibility, and long-term growth potential.

Outcomes and Community Responses

The activation of social media accounts and the registration of Baso Prapatan on Google Maps significantly improved customer accessibility and visibility. By showcasing promotional content, customer testimonials, and behind-the-scenes production processes, the SME created a more engaging consumer experience. These activities align with Wasito et al. (2024), who emphasized that social media enhances SME market reach by fostering interactive relationships with consumers. The professional appearance of digital content also elevated the business's credibility, making it more attractive to potential buyers. As a result, Baso Prapatan was able to reach both local and non-local consumers who previously had limited awareness of the business.

Community feedback further highlighted the effectiveness of the interventions. Several new customers indicated that they discovered the business through Google Maps or Instagram, demonstrating the role of digital tools in broadening market opportunities. Positive responses from the surrounding community also reinforced the idea that branding and digital presence contribute to a stronger perception of professionalism. Daisy et al. (2024) argued that digital literacy is a key determinant of SME competitiveness, and the case of Baso Prapatan provides evidence of this claim. This outcome shows that even basic digital strategies can have measurable impacts on consumer awareness and business growth.

The long-term implications of these outcomes suggest that rebranding and digitalization should not be seen as temporary improvements but as sustainable strategies for SME development. The consistent use of digital platforms allows SMEs to build customer trust, adapt to changing consumer preferences, and respond to competition more effectively. This reflects Mason et al. (2021), who highlighted the importance of digital adoption for strengthening SME resilience in dynamic markets. For the local community, the success of Baso Prapatan also serves as an inspiring model that other small businesses can emulate. Therefore, the program contributes not only to the growth of one SME but also to the broader ecosystem of community-based economic development.

Impact on Business Growth and Rural Economic Development

Although the program encountered challenges such as limited access to technology and the SME owner's initial unfamiliarity with digital tools, the outcomes were predominantly positive. The rebranding initiative enhanced the business's professional image, while the adoption of digital platforms increased visibility and accessibility. These improvements translated into higher consumer awareness and more frequent customer visits, confirming the potential of branding and digitalization as catalysts for SME competitiveness. According to Nur Sarfiah et al. (2019), SMEs play a vital role in rural economic development when supported by capacity-building initiatives that address their operational gaps. In the case of

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Baso Prapatan, the intervention not only improved business performance but also laid the groundwork for long-term growth.

The success of Baso Prapatan highlights the importance of simple yet strategic interventions in empowering rural-based SMEs. Unlike large-scale modernization programs that often require substantial financial resources, the use of free and accessible tools such as Google Maps, Instagram, and Facebook proved highly effective in expanding market reach. This aligns with Hapsari and Cahyani (2022), who found that digital platforms can serve as equalizers for rural businesses with limited capital. By combining visual branding with digital literacy, the program demonstrated that SMEs can compete more effectively despite resource constraints. This case illustrates how localized interventions can be tailored to the specific needs and capacities of rural entrepreneurs.

Beyond the individual business, the positive outcomes of the intervention also contribute to broader community-based economic development. Strengthening SMEs in rural areas can generate a multiplier effect, as increased business activity stimulates local supply chains and creates opportunities for employment. As noted by Putra and Ardiansyah (2021), sustainable rural development depends on empowering small enterprises to adapt to changing economic landscapes. The transformation of Baso Prapatan into a more competitive and digitally visible business can inspire other local entrepreneurs to adopt similar strategies. Consequently, the program not only enhanced one SME's growth trajectory but also provided a replicable model for rural economic empowerment.



Figure 1. Documentation of the New Banner and Logo Design

This figure illustrates the redesigned banner and logo created as part of the rebranding strategy for Baso Prapatan. The visual identity was carefully crafted to reflect the unique characteristics of the product, emphasizing its authenticity and local appeal. By presenting a professional and cohesive design, the banner and logo serve as key tools to enhance the SME's visibility and recognition among potential customers. The rebranding process demonstrates how strategic design elements can transform a traditional business into a more competitive and credible enterprise within its local market.

Moreover, the new visual identity functions not only as a marketing tool but also as a medium for building customer trust and loyalty. A well-designed logo and banner can communicate quality, consistency, and attention to detail, which are critical factors influencing consumer perception and purchasing decisions. This tangible representation of the SME's brand enables customers to quickly identify and remember the business, facilitating stronger brand awareness. Consequently, the redesigned materials contribute directly to the overall effectiveness of the rebranding strategy and support the broader objective of business growth.



Figure 2. Documentation of the New Banner and Menu Design

This figure presents the newly designed promotional banner and updated menu for Baso Prapatan. The redesign aimed to enhance the clarity and attractiveness of the product presentation while projecting a professional business image. By updating the visual elements, the banner and menu provide customers with immediate recognition of the brand and facilitate a more engaging experience. These materials are integral to the rebranding strategy, helping to distinguish Baso Prapatan from competitors and strengthen its presence within the local market.

In addition, the banner and menu serve as practical tools for communicating the SME's product offerings effectively. A visually appealing menu organizes information clearly, making it easier for customers to understand and choose products, while the banner attracts attention from passersby and reinforces the brand identity. Together, these design elements contribute to improving customer perception, enhancing engagement, and promoting a consistent brand image, which are essential factors for increasing business visibility and competitiveness.

Table 1. Summary of Findings and Implications for Baso Prapatan SME

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Key Activities/Findings</i>	<i>Implications</i>
Initial Business Constraints	Lack of brand identity (no logo/banner); No social media presence; Unregistered on Google Maps.	Limited customer awareness and weak market positioning.
Implementation of Rebranding Strategies	Creation of new logo and banner; Installation at business site to strengthen visual identity.	Improved professionalism, increased trust, and higher visibility among potential customers.
Adoption of Digitalization Practices	Establishment of Instagram and Facebook accounts; Registration on Google Maps; Training for owner in digital marketing.	Expanded online presence, enhanced accessibility, and improved digital literacy of the owner.
Outcomes and Community Responses	Increased consumer engagement through online content; Positive community feedback; New customers discovered the business digitally.	Validation of digital marketing effectiveness in rural SMEs; Social media as a tool for strengthening customer relationships.
Impact on Business Growth and Rural Economic Development	Strengthened business identity and customer visits; Contribution to local supply chains; Model for rural SME empowerment.	Demonstrates that low-cost interventions (rebranding + digital tools) can drive SME growth and support rural economic sustainability.

Source: Processed by Researcher (2025)

The analysis of the intervention demonstrates that rebranding served as a crucial entry point for strengthening the competitiveness of Baso Prapatan. By introducing a new logo and promotional banner, the SME was able to construct a stronger visual identity that not only enhanced customer perception but also provided a more professional image. This finding aligns with branding theories, which emphasize that visual elements contribute to building trust and shaping consumer decisions. The practical evidence from Baso Prapatan illustrates that even simple design improvements can significantly change how customers perceive a local SME.

Furthermore, the adoption of digitalization practices proved to be transformative for the SME. Through the creation of official Instagram and Facebook accounts, along with Google Maps registration, Baso Prapatan expanded its visibility and accessibility. The mentoring activities further empowered the SME owner with digital skills, which addressed the common challenge of limited marketing knowledge among small enterprises. The active use of digital platforms not only connected the business with new customers but also fostered continuous interaction and customer engagement. This result reflects the broader academic consensus that digital literacy is indispensable for SME survival in an increasingly digital economy.

Lastly, the outcomes of this intervention highlight the broader implications for rural economic development. Increased consumer awareness, higher business visits, and positive community responses indicate that rebranding and digitalization can generate a ripple effect beyond the business itself. The experience of Baso Prapatan confirms that when small enterprises adopt modern branding and digital tools, they are better positioned to contribute to local economic sustainability. Although challenges such as limited technology access remain, the evidence underscores that capacity-building programs are effective strategies to accelerate SME growth in rural contexts.

E. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that rebranding and digitalization serve as critical drivers of SME growth, as evidenced by the Baso Prapatan case in Cikidang Village. The findings reveal that the absence of a clear brand identity and digital presence previously constrained the business, while the introduction of visual identity elements, social media platforms, and Google Maps registration significantly enhanced its visibility, professionalism, and customer engagement. These results confirm that the research objectives have been achieved by demonstrating the effectiveness of simple yet strategic interventions in strengthening rural SMEs' competitiveness. The study contributes to the literature by providing localized empirical evidence of how community-based mentoring programs can facilitate digital adoption and branding in micro-enterprises. Based on these insights, it is recommended that SME practitioners and stakeholders continuously integrate branding and digitalization into daily business practices, while future research should broaden the scope to multiple SMEs and employ quantitative approaches to measure financial outcomes more objectively. Despite the limitation of focusing on a single case, the findings carry policy implications, particularly the need for government support in promoting accessible digital literacy and branding empowerment programs for rural SMEs.

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