

## Promotional Strategies to Increase Sales of Entrepreneurial Students' Products at the Independent Campus of Manado State Polytechnic

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze promotional strategies to increase sales of student entrepreneurial products from the Merdeka Campus program in the Business Management Study Program at Manado State Polytechnic. The main challenge is how to develop appropriate promotional strategies to attract consumer interest, increase sales volume, and support the sustainability of student businesses. This study used a qualitative descriptive approach, collecting data through interviews and documentation. The data obtained were then analyzed using statistical analysis techniques to determine the effect of promotions on sales. The results indicate that promotional strategies, whether through social media, direct promotions, or discounts, significantly influence sales growth for student products. Therefore, implementing appropriate promotional strategies can improve the competitiveness and performance of student businesses within the Merdeka Campus environment

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Research Problem

Unemployment in Indonesia is currently increasing due to numerous companies closing down or going bankrupt, among other factors, such as internal problems such as poor management, financial problems, intense competition with other companies, and unstable economic conditions. This directly impacts employee layoffs, leading to increased unemployment. Rising unemployment leads to fiercer competition for jobs and a broader selection criteria.

One of the government's roles in addressing the unemployment problem is the Campus Independent Entrepreneurship Program (WMK) within the academic environment (campus). WMK, a program in the educational world, aims to develop knowledge, skills, and support to meet the initial needs when students want to start a business, so that their business ventures can be successful. This program is implemented by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, in collaboration with external parties such as industry partners and universities that have submitted proposals and passed the WMK program.

Manado State Polytechnic (Polimdo) students have the opportunity, especially through academic and student affairs, to participate in this WMK program for 1 full semester by fulfilling the requirements in credits totaling 20 credits for 5 (five) departments at Polimdo. The lecturers who come from entrepreneurship teaching lecturers from each department who then receive supplies from Polimdo as well as lecturers from outside the campus or mentors who are experienced in the business field to provide knowledge and share experiences to WMK students, especially sharing experiences in managing a good business management system to gain profits from the business they run. But not all students participate in this program because the WMK program is given to students who are interested in becoming an entrepreneur. The following is a table list of the number of students who participated in the WMK program:

Table 1 Number of Students Participating in the WMK Program

| No          | Major                   | Number of Students | Note |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------|------|
| 1           | Electrical Engineering  | 9                  |      |
| 2           | Business Administration | 173                |      |
| 3           | Accounting              | 120                |      |
| 4           | Tourist                 | 14                 |      |
| 5           | Mechanical Engineering  | 1                  |      |
| 6           | External                | 4                  |      |
|             | Total Students          | 321                |      |
| Total Group |                         | 64 Groups          |      |

Source: 2025 Data

From the data displayed, it can be seen that 321 students participated in the WMK program, and from the Manado State Polytechnic, 321 students were divided into several departments such as 9 students from electrical engineering, 120 students from accounting, 173 students from business administration, 14 students from tourism, 1 student from mechanical engineering and 4 students from outside the Manado State Polytechnic campus.

Manado State Polytechnic students as WMK participants who are divided into groups in the WMK program must be able to maintain the businesses they have started and be able to compete with MSMEs outside the campus so that this WMK program can succeed in accordance with existing goals and can open up job opportunities for those in need. However, this WMK program has not been able to run well because the business is only run during the current semester (6 months) and the sales period is only during the demo day for 4 days so that the products sold have not yet obtained maximum profits and the business group has not implemented a maximum marketing strategy.

The obstacles faced by the WMK group are, the products we sell are accessories in the form of necklaces from fish tails, where our products experience sales problems due to lack of time to promote this product to consumers and sales are only carried out in the campus environment during demo days so that the products we sell are only affordable in the internal campus community so that sales have not experienced maximum profits or only return on business capital. Actually, the products we offer are relatively new because they have aesthetic value when used or have an eccentric / edgy style, while the target area to be marketed this product is the community or young people in Manado City aged 15-24 years,

However sales are made only to Polimdo students and the most buyers are students majoring in Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering. The number of male residents aged 15-19 years is 104.99 thousand people, while the female population aged 15-19 years is 97.71 thousand people. For the 20-24 year old population, there are 105.84 thousand males and 98.33 thousand females. The total population for the 15-19 year old population is 202.7 thousand, and for the 20-24 year old population is 204.17 thousand. Therefore, promotional activities have not been implemented in selling this product. More details can be seen in the following table:

Table 1 Data on the Number of Youth in Manado in 2025

| No | Age   | Gender (Thousand People) |       | Amount | Information |
|----|-------|--------------------------|-------|--------|-------------|
|    |       | Man                      | Woman |        |             |
| 1  | 15-19 | 104.99                   | 97.71 | 202.7  |             |
| 2  | 20-24 | 105.84                   | 98.33 | 204.17 |             |

Source: BPS Data for North Sulawesi Province, March 2025

The promotions that we have not done are: promotional messages where promotional messages should have a unique appeal, both from the style of

language used and the way of delivery, promotional messages are able to convey messages about a product/service well. Next, related to promotional media where the use of print media, audio, audiovisual, exhibitions has not been fully utilized because it is related to the lack of costs or budget for promotion and brand awareness. Likewise, related to promotional time where the time provided to carry out promotions is only a moment without considering the time that can be recognized by the public. And finally related to promotional frequency where promotions are not carried out routinely or use a time period to carry out promotions.

### **Research purposes**

To analyze the promotional strategies that should be used to increase sales. To analyze the sales strategies that have been carried out in sales. To implement promotional strategies that should be carried out by WMK students. Implementation of promotional strategies that should be applied to increase sales for WMK Polimdo students.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Promotion Concept**

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2019:63), "promotion is an activity in an effort to convey product benefits and persuade customers to buy the products offered. Promotion is one of the determining factors regarding the success of a marketing program. If consumers have never heard or known about the products offered by the company and also the benefits that consumers will receive, then consumers will never buy the products offered" Promotion according to Buchari Alma in Hurriyati (2018:58), as follows: "A form of marketing communication that seeks to disseminate information, influence or persuade, remind the target market of the company and its products so that they are willing to buy and be loyal to the products offered by the company".

### **Sales Concept**

Sales is one of the activities carried out to maintain a business so that it can grow and achieve the desired profit or gain. Sales also means the process of selling activities, namely from the activity of setting the selling price to the distribution of products to the hands of consumers. Sales refers to the exchange of goods and services in exchange for money. According to Thamrin Abdullah and Francis Tantri (2016:3), sales are part of promotion, and promotion is one part of the overall marketing system.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Approach**

The research method used is qualitative analysis.

This type of research is based on a philosophy used to conduct research under scientific conditions (experiments), where the researcher acts as the instrument, and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques emphasize meaning. This research is conducted to address problems whose truth is unclear.

### Method of collecting data

Data is collected through three main techniques:

1. Interviews are a data collection process by asking questions to informants (students participating in the Polimdo WMK).
2. Observation is a method used by the author by conducting systematic observation and recording of the research being studied. In this study, observation was used so that the problem could be researched directly.
3. Literature study is a theoretical link and other references related to the values, culture and norms that develop in the social situation being studied.

### Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was carried out interactively following the Miles and Huberman model, which includes:

1. Data collection through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data collection is carried out on the social situation/object being studied , by sorting relevant information.
2. Data reduction is the process of summarizing notes from research findings and then organizing them systematically to provide a clear picture and make it easier for researchers to collect data.
3. Data Display, namely presenting data that has been researched
4. Verification and Drawing Conclusions is the process of verifying and drawing conclusions about

### Data Validity Test .

Data validity was tested using triangulation methods (interviews, observation, documentation). This approach ensures that research findings accurately reflect field conditions.

## RESULTS

### Research Findings Regarding Promotion Coverage

- A. Who is the target market for the promotion being carried out?

**Table 3** Informant's Answers Regarding Promotion Coverage

| Manado State Polytechnic |                                                                         |                   |                 |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Informant                | Answer                                                                  | Date              | Note<br>O'clock |
| 1                        | Polytechnic students, because they are closest to the business location | December 11, 2025 | 09.00-09.45     |
| 2                        | Students who have an edgy style or are better known as Skena            | December 12, 2025 | 10.15-11.00     |

|   |                                                                       |                   |             |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 3 | People around campus who like an edgy style                           | December 13, 2025 | 11.25-12.10 |
| 4 | More towards young men aged 15-23 years                               | December 14, 2025 | 12.00-12.45 |
| 5 | People from outside the campus who are looking for unique accessories | December 15, 2025 | 13.45-14.35 |

Source: Processed Data 2026

B. What is the most effective promotional media?

Table 4 Informant's Answers Regarding Promotion Coverage

| Manado State Polytechnic |                                                                                                |                   |      |             |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------|-------------|
| Informant                | Answer                                                                                         | Date              | Note | O'clock     |
| 1                        | We usually promote through TikTok because almost all young people have the TikTok application. | December 11, 2025 |      | 09.00-09.45 |
| 2                        | Through Instagram because many students are active on the Instagram application                | December 12, 2025 |      | 10.15-11.00 |
| 3                        | Whatsapp group, and share it with class groups so that classmates can promote this product     | December 13, 2025 |      | 11.25-12.10 |
| 4                        | Make a banner in the business location environment                                             | December 14, 2025 |      | 12.00-12.45 |
| 5                        | Direct promotion between male and female students                                              | December 15, 2025 |      | 13.45-14.35 |

Source: Processed Data 2026

C. What types of promotions have been carried out?

Table 5 Informant's Answers Regarding Promotion Coverage

| Manado State Polytechnic |                                                       |                   |      |             |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------|-------------|
| Informant                | Answer                                                | Date              | Note | O'clock     |
| 1                        | Make a discount on the second purchase                | December 11, 2025 |      | 09.00-09.45 |
| 2                        | We offer savings packages or bundling                 | December 12, 2025 |      | 10.15-11.00 |
| 3                        | Distributing brochures in the campus area             | December 13, 2025 |      | 11.25-12.10 |
| 4                        | We make short videos and upload them on social media. | December 14, 2025 |      | 12.00-12.45 |

|                  |                                                                                                 |             |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 5                | Providing free product samples at the opening event of the December Independent Campus 15, 2025 | 13.45-14.35 |
| Entrepreneurship |                                                                                                 |             |

Source: Processed Data 2026

D. What are the challenges faced in running promotions?

Table 6 Informant's Answers Regarding Promotion Coverage

| Manado State Polytechnic |                                                                          |                   |             |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Informant                | Answer                                                                   | Note<br>Date      | O'clock     |
| 1                        | There is competition with similar products                               | December 11, 2025 | 09.00-09.45 |
| 2                        | Have limited funds for promotion                                         | December 12, 2025 | 10.15-11.00 |
| 3                        | Our lack of experience in designing promotions to look attractive        | December 13, 2025 | 11.25-12.10 |
| 4                        | It's hard to maintain consistency in posting promotions on social media. | December 14, 2025 | 12.00-12.45 |
| 5                        | The reach for promotion is still limited to the campus area.             | December 15, 2025 | 13.45-14.35 |

Source: Processed Data 2026

E. What is the purpose of the promotion being carried out?

Table 7 Informant's Answers Regarding Promotion Coverage

| Manado State Polytechnic |                                                                         |                   |             |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Informant                | Answer                                                                  | Note<br>Date      | O'clock     |
| 1                        | To attract students to try products that can be said to be new products | December 11, 2025 | 09.00-09.45 |
| 2                        | To increase profits on sales                                            | December 12, 2025 | 10.15-11.00 |
| 3                        | In order to get regular customers in the campus environment             | December 13, 2025 | 11.25-12.10 |
| 4                        | Attracting the interest of buyers from young men to adults              | December 14, 2025 | 12.00-12.45 |
| 5                        | So that this product can be more widely known to the local community    | December 15, 2025 | 13.45-14.35 |

Source: Processed Data 2026

In general, it can be concluded that promotions are primarily targeted at university students, particularly students at Manado State Polytechnic. However, this coverage is not exclusive, as it also involves the local community and external consumers with specific tastes. Thus, the promotional target focuses on young people, yet remains open to a broader market. This aligns with Kotler and Keller's (2016) opinion, which states that promotions are an important element in the marketing mix. The marketing mix is used to inform, persuade, and remind consumers about a product or service. This study's findings indicate that company promotions encompass various forms, such as advertising, sales promotions, public relations, personal selling, and digital marketing. Each form of promotion contributes differently to shaping consumer perceptions and driving purchasing decisions.

Promotional relevance is also closely related to the ability to build emotional connection between the product and the consumer. When consumers perceive that the promotion reflects their needs and aspirations, they are more motivated to try the product. Several informants stated that they are more attracted to promotions that emphasize practical benefits relevant to students' daily activities, compared to promotions that simply highlight low prices without explaining the product's added value.

The images of observations, direct interviews with informants and independent campus activities can be seen in the following images.



**Figure 1. Interview with Informant**



**Figure 2. Independent Campus Activities**

Furthermore, research findings related to sales volume based on informant answers.

A. What is your strategy to achieve higher sales volume targets?

Table 8 Informant's Answers Regarding Sales Volume

| <b>Manado State Polytechnic</b> |                                          |                   |        |                |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------|----------------|
| <b>Informant</b>                | <b>Answer</b>                            | <b>Note</b>       |        |                |
|                                 |                                          | <b>Date</b>       |        | <b>O'clock</b> |
| <b>1</b>                        | Increase online promotion                | December 11, 2025 | 09.00- | 09.45          |
| <b>2</b>                        | Maintaining material quality             | December 12, 2025 | 10.15- | 11.00          |
| <b>3</b>                        | Expanding sales locations outside campus | December 13, 2025 | 11.25- | 12.10          |
| <b>4</b>                        | Create seasonal promotions               | December 14, 2025 | 12.00- | 12.45          |
| <b>5</b>                        | Focus on loyal customers                 | December 15, 2025 | 13.45- | 14.35          |

Source: Processed Data 2026

B. What factors influence sales volume?

Table 9 Informant's Answers Regarding Sales Volume

| <b>Manado State Polytechnic</b> |                                                       |                   |        |                |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------|----------------|
| <b>Informant</b>                | <b>Answer</b>                                         | <b>Note</b>       |        |                |
|                                 |                                                       | <b>Date</b>       |        | <b>O'clock</b> |
| <b>1</b>                        | The main factor is the quality of the product itself. | December 11, 2025 | 09.00- | 09.45          |
| <b>2</b>                        | Price and quality of materials                        | December 12, 2025 | 10.15- | 11.00          |
| <b>3</b>                        | How to promote products                               | December 13, 2025 | 11.25- | 12.10          |
| <b>4</b>                        | Friendly service to consumers                         | December 14, 2025 | 12.00- | 12.45          |
| <b>5</b>                        | Locations that are close and accessible to consumers  | December 15, 2025 | 13.45- | 14.35          |

Source: Processed Data 2026

C. How do you adapt to changing market trends to maintain sales volume?

Table 10 Informant's Answers Regarding Sales Volume

| <b>Manado State Polytechnic</b> |                                          |                   |  |                |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------|--|----------------|
| <b>Informant</b>                | <b>Answer</b>                            | <b>Note</b>       |  |                |
|                                 |                                          | <b>Date</b>       |  | <b>O'clock</b> |
| <b>1</b>                        | Following market trends                  | December 11, 2025 |  | 09.00-09.45    |
| <b>2</b>                        | Change the packaging to be better        | December 12, 2025 |  | 10.15-11.00    |
| <b>3</b>                        | Changing the necklace model              | December 13, 2025 |  | 11.25-12.10    |
| <b>4</b>                        | Create content according to viral trends | December 14, 2025 |  | 12.00-12.45    |
| <b>5</b>                        | Create seasonal promotions               | December 15, 2025 |  | 13.45-14.35    |

Source: 2025 Processed Data

## DISCUSSION

Sales volume is a key indicator reflecting the success of promotions and marketing strategies. Sales volume reflects the extent to which a product is absorbed by the market within a given period, thus establishing an important benchmark for assessing the effectiveness of promotional activities. These findings indicate that sales increases often occur during periods of active promotion, such as discounts, bonuses, or social media campaigns. Consumers who receive promotional information are more quickly motivated to make purchases, resulting in increased product sales compared to periods without promotions. When promotional frequency is low, sales tend to decline, sometimes even experiencing declines.

Business growth is a crucial indicator reflecting the success of promotional strategies, product quality, and overall management effectiveness. In this context, business growth is measured not only by increased sales volume, but also by expanding market reach, increasing customer base, increasing profits, and the business's ability to survive and thrive in the long term. These findings indicate that businesses that consistently promote, maintain product quality, and manage costs effectively experience faster growth than businesses whose promotions and management are sporadic.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

Based on the research and discussion conducted, I conclude that promotional strategies play a crucial role in improving the business performance of the Independent Campus Entrepreneurship Program at Manado State Polytechnic. The limited scope of these promotions suggests that they are limited to reaching consumers within the campus environment. However, expanding through social media significantly increases the potential for increased sales. Promotional quality has proven to be a significant factor, as engaging,

communicative, and consumer-centered content can build a positive product image while increasing purchasing interest. The number of promotions also significantly impacts success, as consistent promotions help maintain consumer retention of the product.

The relevance of promotions to the target market has proven crucial because consumers respond more to promotions that align with their lifestyles and needs. The findings of this study show that sales volume increases when promotions are implemented effectively and consistently, although fluctuations may occur due to limited promotional intensity. Increased sales directly contribute to profit, while profitability depends on the balance between sales revenue and promotional costs. Ultimately, all of these variables influence company growth, with student businesses that are able to implement promotions effectively and efficiently demonstrating more stable development and the potential for continued growth in the future.

### **Recommendations**

1. Business actors need to expand their promotional reach by utilizing various digital platforms so that their products are better known to the wider community, not just limited to the campus environment.
2. Promotion quality must continue to be improved by presenting creative content that attracts the attention of young consumers, using relevant visual designs, and communicative language.

The number of promotions needs to be increased with a more consistent frequency so that consumers continue to remember the product and are encouraged to make repeat purchases

### **FURTHER STUDY**

This study still has limitations, so further research on Promotional Strategies to Increase Sales of Entrepreneurial Students' Products at the Independent Campus is needed to refine this study and enhance the insights of readers and the authors.

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