

## Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Strategy of @kueliam to Increase Sales during Ramadan 2025

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to examine a partial and adaptive implementation of integrated marketing communication (IMC) applied by a micro and small enterprise (MSE) during a seasonal campaign, and to identify empirical indications of its contribution to sales performance. A qualitative case study approach is used to explore communication practices carried out across various channels, both online and offline. Data is collected through participant observation and documentation, and analysed using the Miles & Huberman model. The findings reveal that although all elements of the marketing communication mix were taken into consideration, Kue Liam, as an MSE, was only able to implement two main channels: direct selling and online & social media marketing. These two channels proved effective in reaching consumers, fostering engagement, and significantly driving sales during the Ramadan period. This study offers practical insights into the application of IMC by MSEs in the context of seasonal campaigns and serves as a strategic reference for similar businesses.*

**Keywords:** *integrated marketing communication, marketing communications mix, sales, Kue Liam, Ramadan*

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji implementasi parsial dan adaptif dari komunikasi pemasaran terpadu (Integrated Marketing Communication / IMC) yang diterapkan oleh usaha mikro dan kecil (UMK) dalam kampanye musiman, serta mengidentifikasi indikasi empiris kontribusinya terhadap kinerja penjualan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif untuk mengeksplorasi praktik komunikasi yang dilakukan melalui berbagai saluran, baik secara daring maupun luring. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model analisis Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun seluruh elemen bauran komunikasi pemasaran telah dipertimbangkan, Kue Liam sebagai UMK hanya mampu mengimplementasikan dua saluran utama, yaitu penjualan langsung (direct selling) serta pemasaran daring dan media sosial. Kedua saluran tersebut terbukti efektif dalam menjangkau konsumen, membangun keterlibatan, serta mendorong peningkatan penjualan secara signifikan selama periode Ramadan. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan praktis mengenai penerapan IMC oleh UMK dalam konteks kampanye musiman serta dapat menjadi referensi strategis bagi pelaku usaha serupa.

**Kata kunci:** komunikasi pemasaran terpadu, bauran komunikasi pemasaran, penjualan, Kue Liam, Ramadan

## INTRODUCTION

According to data collected from the Central Bureau of Statistics (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS) of DKI Jakarta, as presented in the publication *Profile of Micro and Small Industries in DKI Jakarta 2023*, released in October 2024, 50,166 out of 79,992 micro and small enterprise units operate in the food industry (BPS DKI Jakarta, 2024). One cultural practice among Indonesians that contributes to the growth of the food and beverage business is the exchange of hampers or gift-giving during religious holidays or special occasions. This tradition, particularly during Eid al-Fitr, has deep historical roots in early Javanese cultural practices. In the past, it was referred to as *ater-ater*, which was closely associated with food sharing. The term refers to a tradition in which one family delivers food to another for specific social or cultural purposes (Khairunnisa & Aisyah, 2021).

This tradition presents a significant opportunity for entrepreneurs to meet market demands, particularly in the food sector. Nevertheless, fierce market competition presents a significant obstacle for new comers like Kue Liam, given the strong customer loyalty of long-standing competitors. Kue Liam originated as a family-run home business based in West Jakarta, specializing in Indonesian cookies, such as nastar (pineapple tarts), kastengel (Dutch-Indonesian cheese stick), cheese sago, katetong, and snow-white cookies. These cookies were offered in various packaging formats. The brand positions itself as a premium-quality homemade cookie business with flavors and textures that reflect high standards, yet remain affordable and accessible to a wide range of consumers.

In the season of Ramadan and Eid-al Fitr 2025, Kue Liam implemented an IMC approach in its promotional efforts. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), IMC is a strategic approach to deliver consistent and relevant messages to consumers through multiple communication channels. It is also outlined that eight elements of the marketing communications mix are: advertising; sales promotion; personal selling; public relations and publicity; direct selling and data base; events and experiences; online and social media marketing; mobile marketing.

This study aims to examine how selected elements of the IMC mix are adaptively implemented by a food-based MSE during Ramadan 2025, and to describe the empirical outcomes within the contextual limitations of small-scale business. This case study also aims to provide practical insights into how food-based MSEs implement IMC in the digital era, particularly during seasonal events. Through the case of Kue Liam, this study seeks to advance scholarly understanding of MSE marketing communication practices and provide a strategic model for home-based food businesses in designing integrated and impactful seasonal marketing campaigns.

## METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a case study design, enabling an in-depth exploration of programs, processes and activities relevant to the research focus. Case study is a research method designed to conduct a thorough analysis of a specific case, such as activity, process, program, or event, where data are gathered comprehensively through multiple methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The primary data were collected through participatory observation, in which the researcher was fully involved as an active participant in the subject being studied. Specifically, the researcher employed a complete participation role, meaning direct and sustained involvement in the observed activities (Sugiyono & Lestari, 2021).

The participatory observation was conducted throughout the month of March 2025, coinciding with the Ramadan period. During this time, researcher engaged in key marketing activities of Kue Liam, including preparation, content creation, sales execution, and customer interactions, both online and offline.

Secondary data were gathered from literature review and documentation, including internal communication materials, social media posts, promotional content, and sales records generated during the observation period. All collected data were analyzed using the Miles & Huberman model of qualitative data analysis, which includes four interactive stages: data collection; data reduction; data display; and conclusion drawing and verification.

As this study employed participant observation, the researcher simultaneously assumed the role of business owner and marketing practitioner within the observed case. This positionality provided in-depth access to decision-making processes and implementation dynamics, while also introducing potential subjective bias. To address this, the researcher maintained reflexive awareness throughout the research process by systematically documenting activities, outcomes, and observations, and by analytically separating descriptive findings from interpretive reflections. Such reflexivity enhances the trustworthiness of qualitative case study research by acknowledging the researcher's influence on the field (Creswell, 2022).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Presenting the Results

During the duration, a total of 79 products were sold, both individual items and packaged sets. These orders were distributed to various locations, including local deliveries within Jakarta, and shipments to other cities such as Surabaya and Bogor. All of these sales were generated through two main marketing communication mix tools: direct selling and online & social media marketing.

### Direct Selling & Database

The first primary sales channel used was direct selling, which involved personalized promotions. As part of this initiative, the researcher brought product samples, allowing colleagues and relatives to directly experience the products' taste and quality. Additionally, informal promotions were also carried out, generating interest through personal

recommendations and one-on-one conversations. These interactions created a sense of trust and familiarity, which was associated with increased purchase activity during the observation period.

Ideally, this direct selling approach should have been paired with a customer database, as mentioned in the concept of marketing communications mix by Kotler & Keller (2016). Unfortunately, no formal customer database existed at the time. As a result, the outreach relied heavily on personal networks, particularly relatives and friend, who in turn, became the foundation for building the brand’s initial database for future marketing efforts.

**Table 1. Overview of Direct Selling & Database**

Activity	Frequency	Output (Products Sold)
Bringing testers/samples	3x	28
Promoting to relatives	Informal	29

Source: Author’s processing, 2025

While the approach done by the researcher is informal and grassroots, it still reflects the core values of direct marketing by Kotler & Keller (2016): relationship building, personalization, and measurable interaction.

**A. Personalized Promotion and Relationship Building**

Kue Liam’s strategy of giving out samples and using one-on-one conversations to push sales, aligns with the foundational goal of direct marketing, which is to create personalized customer interactions that lead to measurable outcomes. This approach mirrors how marketers seek to build trust and familiarity, exactly reflected through the increased sales through personalized engagement.

**B. Informal Networks and Word-of-Mouth Activation**

While the method relied mostly on personal networks, this aligns with the claim that direct marketing flourishes in niche and relationship-based markets, especially when time-strapped consumers seek trusted recommendations. The grassroots marketing through informal recommendations can be seen as a low-tech, high-trust version of direct marketing that capitalizes on relationship capital instead of digital infrastructure.

**C. Absence of a Formal Customer Database**

The absence of a formal database limited the brand’s ability to track and segment buyers systematically. This missed opportunity is acknowledged in the book as a critical component of modern direct marketing.

**Online & Social Media Marketing**

Online & social media marketing played a central role in Kue Liam’s promotional efforts during Ramadan 2025. The brand utilized several digital platforms to build awareness, engage with audiences, and facilitate orders.

Content creation was regularly done across multiple channels, such as Instagram Stories, Instagram Feeds, TikTok Videos, and WhatsApp Status updates. These posts featured product photos, behind-the-scenes baking processes, testimonials, and daily sales updates. This consistent presence helped create a sense of urgency and connection with the audience.

To expand beyond its Jakarta-based market, Kue Liam also collaborated with a key opinion leader (KOL) based in Surabaya. The KOL is @aliciaamaris on Instagram, with 79,5K followers. This endorsement strategy aimed to introduce the brand to new audiences in East Java, utilizing the influencer’s regional reach and credibility to establish familiarity and trust. Although the collaboration was limited in scope, it marked an important step in exploring influencer-based marketing as a way to access new customer segments.

The brand also explored e-commerce integration through TikTok Live, to activate TikTok Shop. This was intended to tap into live-selling trends and reach impulse buyers through an interactive platform. While this approach had yet to yield direct sales during the observed period, it served as an early-stage experiment in leveraging TikTok’s commercial features for future campaigns.

Overall, these combined efforts in social media marketing supported Kue Liam’s visibility and customer engagement throughout Ramadan, complementing more personal and offline strategies of direct selling.

**Table 2. Overview of Online and Social Media Marketing Result**

Activity	Frequency	Output (Products Sold)
TikTok Live	4x	0
TikTok Shop activation (TikTok Video)	9x	0
Instagram Story	6x	9
Instagram Feeds	1x	0
WhatsApp Status	3x	10
KOL Collaboration	1x	7

Source: Author’s processing, 2025

The online and social media marketing strategy adopted by Kue Liam align strongly with established principles by Kotler & Keller (2016).

### **A. Multi-platform Content Strategy and Consumer Engagement**

According to their book, it is said that the consistent use of social media platforms for real time content demonstrates a classic case of digital engagement. This form of tailored content marketing is designed to build relationships and encourage brand intimacy, consistent with the claim that social media lets marketers create an online presence and voice.

### **B. Influencer Marketing for Market Expansion**

The use of a key opinion leader (KOL) to introduce the brand to Surabaya market is an application of influencer strategy to widen outreach. It aligns with the claim that marketers can use social networks to attract more attention. This tactic leverages social proof and peer influence, which is particularly effective in building trust among new or regional audiences.

### **C. E-Commerce Experimentation via TikTok Live**

By using TikTok's commercial features, it demonstrates responsiveness to platform – specific behaviors – particularly impulse buying in a live setting. Although there were no immediate sales, this aligns with the claim that it may not be as effective enough to get new consumers through social media, but it drives future consumers to make any engagement.

This study contributes to IMC literature by illustrating how integrated marketing communication can function as a partial, adaptive, and situational strategy within micro and small enterprise (MSE) contexts. Rather than implementing the full IMC framework, the case demonstrates that selective use of high-impact communication tools may be more realistic and effective for resource-constrained businesses. Furthermore, the findings highlight the relevance of seasonal marketing as a contextual variable that intensifies the effectiveness of certain IMC elements, particularly direct selling and social media engagement. This supports the view that IMC implementation should be understood as context-dependent rather than universally standardized.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study set out to examine the implementation of an integrated marketing communications (IMC) strategy by a home-based micro-small enterprise food industry, named Kue Liam, during the Ramadan 2025 period. In doing so, it aimed to provide practical insights into how food-based MSEs can leverage IMC, particularly within seasonal moments.

This research revealed that two main communication tools: direct selling and online & social media marketing, were central to the campaign's success. Personalized promotions through direct selling, built trust and drove purchase intent, though the absence of a formal customer database limited long-term relationship building.

Meanwhile, consistent social media presence and KOL collaboration helped to expand visibility and engage audiences beyond Jakarta. Early experiments with TikTok Shop also showed potential for future e-commerce integration.

In sum, the case of Kue Liam suggests that, home-based food MSEs can selectively adopt IMC principles in an adaptive and resource-constrained manner, particularly during seasonal peak periods such as Ramadan. However, to improve effectiveness in the long term, businesses like Kue Liam should consider to develop customer database and explore more data-driven marketing strategies.

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