

MARKETING AND BRANDING IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERN BUSINESS STRATEGY: A LITERATURE REVIEW OF PROMOTION STRATEGY, MARKET SEGMENTATION, PRICING, DISTRIBUTION, AND BRAND IDENTITY FORMATION THROUGH PERSONAL, PRODUCT, CULTURAL, AND GEOGRAPHIC BRANDING — A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

This study discusses marketing and branding in the context of modern business strategy through a literature review approach. The analysis focuses on the elements of marketing strategy, namely promotion strategy, market segmentation, pricing, and distribution, as well as brand identity formation through personal branding, product branding, cultural branding, and geographic branding. This study shows that modern marketing no longer stands alone but must be integrated with consistent branding practices to create differentiation, build brand equity, and strengthen long-term relationships with consumers. Through a synthesis of the literature, this study develops a conceptual framework that links the 4P/7P marketing mix with various branding approaches, thereby providing a theoretical basis for the development of more effective and sustainable business strategies in the digital age.

Keywords: modern marketing, branding, brand identity, promotional strategy, market segmentation, pricing, distribution, personal branding, product branding, cultural branding, geographic branding, modern business strategy.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of an increasingly connected and fast-moving global economy, marketing and branding are no longer merely operational functions, but have become strategic pillars that determine the sustainability and competitiveness of companies in the modern market (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Changes in consumption patterns, advances in digital technology, and the emergence of social media and e-commerce platforms have shifted the way companies understand consumers, design products, and build long-term relationships with customers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In this situation, marketing and branding strategies must be designed holistically to integrate the elements of product, price, distribution, and promotion with a strong and consistent brand identity (Armstrong et al., 2020).

One of the basic frameworks that remains relevant in modern marketing strategy is the 4Ps marketing mix, namely *product*, *price*, *place*, and *promotion*, which was later developed into 7Ps by adding *people*, *process*, and *physical evidence* for the context of services and customer experience (Booms & Bitner, 1981; Zeithaml et al., 2018). In the digital age, the 4Ps no longer stand alone but must be adapted to the online marketing ecosystem, such as content personalisation, digital channel optimisation, and the utilisation of consumer behaviour data (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). This expansion indicates that modern marketing is not only about selling goods but also about creating value, experiences, and meaningful relationships with customers (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Thus, promotional strategies serve as a link between companies and markets, both through traditional and digital media. Advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and digital marketing are the main instruments for building brand awareness, influencing attitudes, and driving purchasing decisions (Belch & Belch, 2018). In this era of abundant information, consumers are more selective and critical; therefore, effective promotions must be relevant, personalised, and data-driven so that they do not simply become "noise" amid the hustle and bustle of content (Chaffey, 2022).

On the other hand, market segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) are important foundations to ensure that marketing strategies are not generic but are directed at segments that are truly potential. Segmentation divides the market into homogeneous groups based on geography, demographics, psychographics, and behaviour, while targeting selects the most financially and strategically promising segments (Kotler & Armstrong, 2021). Positioning then determines how the brand wants to be positioned in the minds of consumers compared to competitors, so that every decision regarding product, price, distribution, and promotion must be aligned with the desired position (Ries & Trout, 2001).

Pricing is one of the most sensitive elements in marketing strategy, as it is directly related to perceived value, purchasing power, and competition in the market. Pricing approaches can be *cost-based*, *demand-based*, or *competition-based*, each with different strategic implications (Nagle et al., 2016). In addition, psychological pricing strategies, discounts, bundling, and different pricing for specific geographic markets are also important tools for optimising profitability while maintaining brand appeal (Monroe, 2003). Distribution and marketing channels connect products from producers to consumers, either through direct or indirect channels. In the context of modern business, the role of e-commerce, marketplaces, and digital logistics platforms is increasingly prominent, requiring companies to design distribution channels that are efficient, flexible, and capable of providing *a seamless customer experience* (Laudon & Traver, 2022). Choosing the right channel not only determines market reach but also

influences perceptions of quality, service speed, and brand trust (Christopher et al., 2017).

Amidst fierce competition, branding has emerged as a crucial element of differentiation. A brand is not just a name, logo, or tagline, but reflects the promises, values, and experiences that a company offers to consumers (Aaker, 1996). In modern business strategy, brands have become highly valuable intellectual assets because they are able to build trust, loyalty, and premium pricing (Keller, 2013). Therefore, brand identity formation must be designed systematically, not only as a matter of visual design, but as part of the overall business strategy (Kapferer, 2012). One form of branding that is increasingly relevant in the digital age is personal branding, which is the formation of brand identity through individual figures such as founders, influencers, or public figures. Personal branding leverages trust and personal relationships to strengthen the image of a particular organisation or product (Schawbel, 2011). In the context of modern business, personal branding often becomes the "face" of the company on social media and online communities, so the consistency of the values, communication, and behaviour of these figures greatly determines consumer perceptions of the brand as a whole (Giles, 2016).

Product branding refers to a branding strategy that focuses on the product itself, including its features, quality, design, and user experience. Through product branding, companies seek to create strong associations between the brand and certain attributes, such as innovation, reliability, or convenience (Keller, 2013). In a competitive market, products with strong brands tend to be more easily recognised, remembered, and chosen by consumers, making product branding one of the main pillars in building *brand equity* (Aaker, 1996).

Cultural branding emphasises the use of cultural values, traditions, and local or global identities in building a brand. By integrating cultural symbols, narratives, and practices into marketing strategies, companies can create a deeper emotional connection with consumers (Holt, 2004). Cultural branding also allows brands to appear authentic and relevant in various social contexts, especially in highly heterogeneous and multicultural markets (Askegaard et al., 2005).

Geographic branding (or regional/city branding) utilises geographic identity—such as a country, city, or specific region—as the basis for brand differentiation. This approach is often used in food products, tourism, and the creative industries, where geographic origin is part of the brand's added value and credibility (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). Geographic branding not only helps build a unique image, but also strengthens perceptions of quality, authenticity, and sustainability, especially when linked to specific local resources or cultural heritage (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002).

Departing from the urgency of integrating marketing and branding in modern business strategies, this study aims to conduct a literature analysis on promotion strategies, market segmentation, pricing, distribution, and brand identity formation

through personal, product, cultural, and geographic branding. Through a systematic literature review, this study aims to develop a conceptual framework that connects elements of modern marketing with various branding approaches, thereby providing a strong theoretical foundation for practitioners and academics in designing more effective and sustainable business strategies.

Research Method

This study utilises a **literature review** method with a descriptive-analytical approach, which involves collecting, reviewing, and analysing various relevant literature sources related to marketing and branding in the context of modern business strategies. The sources used include textbooks, scientific journals, online articles, and official documents containing concepts of promotional strategy, market segmentation, pricing, distribution, as well as personal, product, cultural, and geographic branding. The data was analysed qualitatively through synthesis and comparison techniques to construct a conceptual framework that integrates marketing and branding elements into a coherent business strategy framework (Eliyah & Aslan, 2025) ; (Booth & Clarke, 2021).

Results and Discussion

Modern Marketing Strategy

Modern marketing strategy is a systematic series of decisions and actions designed to understand, reach, and satisfy customers in a dynamic and technology-driven business context (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Unlike traditional marketing, which tends to be one-way and focused on product sales, modern marketing strategies place customers at the centre (customer-centric) and emphasise building long-term relationships through value, experience, and two-way communication (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Within this framework, the 4Ps of marketing—product, *price*, place, and promotion—remain the foundation, but have been expanded to 7Ps by adding *people*, *process*, and *physical evidence* to accommodate the complexity of services and customer experiences in the digital age (Booms & Bitner, 1981; Zeithaml et al., 2018).

Advances in information and communication technology have given rise to digital marketing as one of the main pillars of modern marketing strategy, which utilises online media, social media, e-commerce, and analytical tools to reach audiences in a more targeted and measurable way (Chaffey, 2022; Solihin, 2024). Digital marketing enables message personalisation, micro-segmentation, and real-time campaign performance measurement, allowing companies to optimise budgets and improve marketing efficiency (Mammassis, 2025; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). On the other hand, content marketing and brand storytelling approaches are important instruments for building relevant, emotional, and consistent brand narratives across various digital channels (Kapferer, 2012; Mammassis, 2025).

Modern marketing strategies are also increasingly integrating segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) as a foundation for designing specific offerings for particular market segments (Kotler & Armstrong, 2021). Demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioural segmentation enables companies to identify groups of consumers with homogeneous needs and preferences, while targeting selects the most financially and strategically promising segments (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Positioning then determines how the brand wants to be perceived by consumers compared to competitors, so that every decision regarding product, price, distribution, and promotion must be aligned with the desired position (Ries & Trout, 2001).

In the context of pricing, modern marketing strategies consider not only production costs but also consumer value perceptions and competitive dynamics (Nagle et al., 2016). A demand- and competitor-based approach allows companies to design flexible pricing schemes, such as dynamic discounts, bundling, or different pricing in specific geographic markets, to maximise profits while maintaining brand appeal (Monroe, 2003). On the distribution side, digital transformation expands channels from physical to hybrid and digital, requiring companies to design an integrated channel ecosystem between offline stores, marketplaces, and e-commerce platforms to provide a seamless customer experience (Laudon & Traver, 2022; Solihin, 2024).

Modern marketing strategies also emphasise customer experience as a key differentiator, where every touchpoint between consumers and the brand—from information search, purchase, to after-sales—must be designed to create a consistent positive impression (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). In this regard, *people* (human resources), *process* (service processes), and *physical evidence* (physical proof) are key elements that determine the quality of interactions and brand quality perception (Zeithaml et al., 2018; Impacta, 2024). Furthermore, the integration of digital branding into modern marketing strategies enables companies to build a strong brand identity in the digital realm through visual consistency, messaging, and values across all channels (Keller, 2013; Almaata, 2025).

Finally, modern marketing strategies cannot be separated from the use of data and analytics, which enable companies to understand consumer behaviour, measure campaign effectiveness, and make evidence-based decisions. By combining the 4P/7P framework, STP, digital marketing, and customer experience, modern marketing strategies become a holistic approach that not only aims to increase sales but also build long-term relationships, loyalty, and sustainable *brand equity*.

Branding and Brand Identity

Branding and brand identity are two interrelated but distinct concepts, where branding refers to the active process of shaping and managing consumer perceptions of a brand, while brand identity is the totality of elements deliberately created by a

company to present the brand to the public (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2013). In the context of modern business strategy, branding not only serves as a tool for differentiation, but also as a strategic asset capable of creating *brand equity*, loyalty, and long-term competitive advantage (Keller, 2013; Aaker, 2017). Brand identity, on the other hand, is the "face" of the brand, which includes the name, logo, colours, typography, brand voice, style of language, and all visual and verbal expressions that are consistently used in every communication (MyRobin, 2023; MELON, 2025).

Brand identity serves as the foundation that distinguishes one brand from its competitors and shapes a unique image in the minds of consumers (BINUS, 2025; Accurate, 2025). Through a strong and consistent identity, brands can build *brand awareness*, *brand image*, and *brand trust*, which form the basis of customer loyalty (Keller, 2013; Aaker, 2017). In the digital age, brand identity is not only displayed in print media and TV advertisements, but also on websites, social media, applications, and various other digital touchpoints, making consistency the key to keeping consumer perceptions focused and well-managed (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

One increasingly important form of branding is **personal branding**, which is the creation of a brand identity through individual figures such as founders, CEOs, influencers, or certain public figures (Schawbel, 2011; Bliss, 2025). Personal branding utilises the personal relationships, reputation, and trust of these figures to strengthen the image of the organisation or product they represent (Giles, 2016). In the era of social media, personal branding often becomes the "face" of the brand that is closest to consumers, so that every action, communication, and narrative conveyed by these figures directly influences the perception of the brand as a whole (Kapferer, 2012).

Product branding emphasises the creation of a brand identity centred on the product itself, including its physical attributes, quality, design, and user experience (United Creative, 2024; Keller, 2013). Through product branding, companies strive to create strong associations between the brand and specific attributes, such as innovation, reliability, or ease of use, so that consumers can quickly recognise and choose the product among a crowd of competitors (Aaker, 1996). Strong product branding also enables companies to implement *premium pricing* and build higher loyalty, as consumers feel they are getting more value from the products they purchase (Keller, 2013).

Cultural branding utilises cultural values, traditions, and social identities to build brands that are relevant and meaningful to specific groups (Holt, 2004; Askegaard et al., 2005). By integrating cultural symbols, narratives, and practices into their marketing strategies, companies can create a deeper emotional connection with consumers, especially in highly heterogeneous and multicultural markets (DigitalMarketReports, 2024). Authentic cultural branding highlights the authenticity and uniqueness of a brand, so that consumers feel that the brand understands and appreciates their background (Holt, 2004).

Geographic branding (or regional/city branding) utilises geographic identity—such as a country, city, or specific region—as the basis for brand differentiation (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005; DigitalMarketReports, 2024). This approach is often used in food products, tourism, and the creative industries, where geographical origin becomes part of the brand's added value and credibility (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002). Geographic branding not only helps build a unique image, but also reinforces perceptions of quality, authenticity, and sustainability, especially when linked to specific local resources or cultural heritage (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005).

In a broader framework, **brand equity** is the ultimate goal of branding practices and brand identity formation, as it reflects the economic and psychological value that a brand holds in the eyes of consumers (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2013). Brand equity is built through a combination of *brand awareness*, *brand image*, *perceived quality*, *brand trust*, and *brand loyalty*, all of which influence each other (Aaker, 2017; Dinasti, 2023). Brands with high brand equity tend to be more resistant to competitor attacks, have more room to raise prices, and are able to enter new market segments more easily (Keller, 2013).

A strong brand identity also contributes to the formation of **brand personality**, which are human characteristics associated with the brand, such as being friendly, professional, innovative, or exclusive (Keller, 2013; Kapferer, 2012). Brand personality helps consumers build emotional connections with brands, as they feel as if they are interacting with a "friend" or "individual" who shares similar values and attitudes (Aaker, 1997). In the digital age, brand personality is increasingly evident through communication styles on social media, the tone of voice in content, and how brands respond to comments and criticism from consumers (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). In addition, **brand experience** is an important element in shaping brand identity, because every touchpoint between consumers and brands—from information search, purchase, product use, to after-sales—forms an overall impression (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). A consistent and positive brand experience will strengthen brand identity, while a poor experience can damage the brand's image and reduce loyalty, even if the visual identity and brand communication appear perfect (Keller, 2013). Therefore, the formation of brand identity should not stop at logo and slogan design, but must be integrated into the entire business process and customer service (Zeithaml et al., 2018).

In the context of modern business strategy, branding and brand identity are also increasingly linked to **digital branding**, which is a strategy of building brand identity in the digital realm through websites, social media, applications, and various other online platforms (Almaata, 2025; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Digital branding enables brands to interact directly with consumers, measure responses in real-time, and tailor messages according to audience behaviour and preferences (Solihin, 2024). On the other hand, digital branding also demands greater transparency and consistency, as

every brand action in the virtual world can quickly spread and become part of the public narrative about the brand (Kapferer, 2012).

Finally, integrating various branding approaches—personal, product, cultural, and geographic—with a strong brand identity enables companies to build a holistic and adaptive strategy in a dynamic market. By understanding that a brand is a combination of the promise offered and the experience felt by consumers, companies can design a brand identity and strategy that is not only visually appealing but also emotionally meaningful and commercially sustainable.

Conclusion

Marketing and branding are two complementary strategic elements in the context of modern business strategy, where the 4P/7P marketing mix (promotion, market segmentation, pricing, distribution) serves as operational execution, while brand identity formation through personal, product, cultural, and geographic branding becomes the emotional foundation and long-term differentiation. The integration of the two allows companies to create strong synergies, where targeted promotional strategies through STP strengthen brand awareness, value-based pricing supports *premium pricing* from a strong identity, digital distribution expands the reach of geographic branding, and personal and cultural branding build loyalty through emotional connections. This holistic approach has been proven to increase *brand equity*, competitiveness, and sustainable business growth, especially in the digital age where consumers are increasingly selective and seek more value than just products.

In practical terms, these findings confirm that companies must design marketing strategies that are not standalone but integrated with branding to produce consistent communication, seamless customer experiences, and authentic differentiation. For example, personal branding can enrich promotions through influencers, product branding can strengthen positioning in specific segments, cultural branding can add local relevance, and geographic branding can leverage regional advantages for distribution and competitive pricing.

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