



Creative Economy Branding in Indonesia: The Oneda Case and Navigating Local Brands in Global Markets

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Abstract:

Purpose: This study explores Oneda's branding strategies, focusing on its use of eco-friendly materials, cultural narratives, and its adaptation to international market demands.

Methods: This study employs a qualitative case study method to examine Oneda, a Semarang based brand specializing in goat leather bags that blends cultural heritage with modern design. Data were collected from marketing materials, social media, and direct observations of branding activities, focusing on Oneda's strategies to align local values with global market demands.

Results: The findings reveal that Oneda leverages cultural narratives and eco-friendly materials to create a unique identity, effectively utilizing digital platforms to amplify its global reach. Despite its success in international markets like Europe and Asia, Oneda faced challenges such as regulatory hurdles in Russia due to the perception of its products as premium goods. These challenges highlight the complexities of navigating global regulations and consumer expectations.

Conclusions: This study underscores the importance of integrating cultural authenticity with innovative branding strategies to enhance competitiveness in global markets. Insights from Oneda's journey provide a framework for stakeholders in Indonesia's creative economy to support local brands in achieving international recognition while contributing to sustainable economic growth.

Keywords:

Creative Economy, Cultural Identity, Global Branding, Local Wisdom, Sustainable Materials

1. Introduction

Building on the opportunities and challenges, this section provides a deeper exploration of Indonesia's creative economy and Oneda's journey as a local brand navigating global markets. The creative economy that is rooted in local culture has emerged as a prominent sector for economic development. Indonesia, with its rich cultural heritage and local wisdom, presents vast potential for creating products that are not only unique but also have high international market appeal. These products can reflect Indonesia's cultural identity while also meeting global consumer demands. One prime example of this success is **Oneda**, a creative business from Semarang, Indonesia, known for producing high-quality bags made from goat leather. Oneda's ability to combine innovative design with cultural values in its branding strategy has allowed it to capture the attention of consumers on a global scale.



Oneda's journey, however, has not been without its challenges. One striking example occurred when the brand was banned from entering the Russian market due to perceptions that their bags were premium branded goods, despite the fact that Oneda's products use alternative, environmentally friendly materials like goat leather. This ban reflects several underlying issues, including international regulatory complexities, consumer perception differences, and the stereotypes that often surround products from developing nations. In this case, Oneda's attempt to break into the global market was hampered by misunderstandings of its brand ethos and the materials it used, underscoring the difficulty local brands face when entering foreign markets with contrasting consumer expectations.

This situation raises important questions about how local brands, such as Oneda, can navigate global markets without compromising their cultural identity. How can they build a distinctive and competitive global brand while staying true to their cultural roots? Furthermore, what strategies can local brands employ to overcome the gap between local values and the global market's demands? Effective branding strategies, the integration of digital technologies, and strong communication frameworks are critical tools in bridging these gaps and positioning local brands to compete on the international stage.

This research seeks to thoroughly explore Oneda's branding strategies, examining how the brand successfully developed and positioned itself within the competitive global market. It will analyze how Oneda leveraged its cultural narrative and innovative use of materials to create a compelling brand identity that resonates both domestically and internationally. Additionally, this study will identify key challenges faced by local brands in the global marketplace, including regulatory barriers, market perceptions, and cultural differences, and propose strategies for overcoming these obstacles.

Furthermore, this study will offer recommendations for stakeholders within Indonesia's creative economy sector, including policymakers, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders, on how to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of local brands. By drawing insights from Oneda's case, the research aims to provide a framework for how Indonesian brands can better integrate cultural values with modern marketing techniques to thrive in the international market.

Through this case study, it is hoped that new insights can be gained regarding the pivotal role of creative economy branding in fostering Indonesia's economic growth. The study also aims to highlight how local products, when marketed effectively, can secure a stronger position in international markets while simultaneously promoting Indonesia's rich cultural heritage globally.

2. Literature Review

To better understand Oneda's success and challenges, it is essential to review existing literature on branding, the creative economy, and cultural identity in global markets. The creative economy is an effort to apply economic principles that include production, distribution, and consumption, such as examples from SME industry players who provide services or produce products that are then distributed to tourists and exported abroad (Pratama et al., 2022). The creative economy is a concept of sustainable economic development that focuses on utilizing creativity as the main resource. This concept



utilizes resources that are not only renewable but also unlimited, such as ideas, concepts, talents, and creativity. In the creative economy era, the economic value of a product or service no longer depends on raw materials or traditional production systems as in the industrial era. Instead, its value is more determined by the ability to harness creativity and create innovations, especially through the adoption of rapidly evolving technologies. In the context of global market competition, industries can no longer rely solely on price or product quality. To remain relevant and competitive, an approach based on innovation, creativity, and imagination is required. Thus, the creative economy becomes an important catalyst for the transformation of the industrial sector, focusing on developing products that not only meet market needs but also offer added value through culture- and technology-based innovation (Aysa, 2022).

A brand is one of the key elements in running a business because it helps consumers identify products and builds trust and confidence in those products (Ainun et al., 2023). According to Kotler (2022), a brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these elements, which functions to identify goods or services from one seller or group of sellers and distinguish them from competitors' products or services (Kotler, 2022). A similar view is presented by Tjiptono (2011) in (Saifulloh, 2021), who explains that a brand includes attributes such as a name, term, sign, symbol, design, color, motion, or a combination of these elements, which are designed to provide identity and differentiation from competitors' products. Based on these various definitions, a brand can be summarized as a visual or symbolic element that gives a unique identity to a product or service, distinguishes it from competitor products, and creates a perception of value in the minds of consumers. A brand is not just a physical attribute but also a strategic tool to build an emotional connection with consumers and create loyalty (Saifulloh, 2021).

Therefore, effective brand management is one of the keys to success in winning the competition in an increasingly competitive market. This approach is relevant in the context of micro, small, and medium enterprises (SMEs), where a strong branding strategy can act as a catalyst in building a strong brand identity and competing in the market. Previous research (Rizaq et al., 2021) shows that a brand does not only serve as a visual identity, but also as a factor that can increase the added value of a product and strengthen its position in the market.

Cultural narratives and local identity play a crucial role in building creative brands because they offer a unique and authentic value to the products or services being offered. These elements not only attract consumers but also strengthen the emotional connection between the brand and its customers. The emphasis on local identity often includes traditional elements such as arts, music, language, or folklore, which are then incorporated into branding strategies to create strong differentiation. Research shows that integrating local culture into branding strategies can help a brand become more easily recognized and trusted by the target market. For example, cultural branding concepts in the tourism industry can enhance the appeal of a destination by creating a unique and relevant experience for tourists. This strategy is often accompanied by the use of digital technologies such as social media and virtual reality to strengthen the brand's narrative and global visibility.



Branding is a key element in building the competitive identity of local products in international markets. Oneda, a local brand from Semarang, Indonesia, focusing on the production of premium goat leather bags, is a successful example of branding that has penetrated global markets. However, Oneda's journey has not always been smooth, especially when faced with challenges such as a ban on entry to Russia due to its products being perceived as resembling international branded bags. This literature review aims to analyze Oneda's branding journey, the key factors of success, the challenges it faced, and the lessons that can be learned for the development of other local brands.

Efforts to support the creative economy in Indonesia have indeed been fostered through various initiatives, including the declaration of creative cities by the Creative Economy Agency (Bekraf), aimed at utilizing local cultural wealth as the foundation for developing the creative industry. Performing arts, handicrafts, and other traditional elements not only enrich Indonesia's cultural identity but also contribute significantly to the local and national economy. By combining traditional elements with modern innovation, Indonesia's creative industry is able to create high-value products in the global market.

In the global business world, companies must be more flexible in formulating product policies to meet local market demands, while maintaining their global brand image and identity. This presents a significant challenge, as companies must be able to adjust their product offerings to local preferences without losing their international brand appeal. The difference between global products and global brands lies in the approach to naming and image. Global products may undergo modifications, both in name and design, to better resonate with local culture or customs, while global brands prioritize consistency in delivering their image and name worldwide. The key to this challenge is finding the balance between adapting to local markets while maintaining a strong global identity.

Consumers perceive global and local brands differently. Global brands are often associated with high quality, reliability, and status, while local brands are more often linked with cultural proximity, authenticity, and relevance to local needs. According to research, consumers who prioritize quality and innovation tend to prefer global brands, while those who value cultural values or products more connected to their environment tend to prefer local brands (Steenkamp et al., 2003). In this regard, a local brand that can adapt global elements while maintaining its local distinctiveness can gain a significant competitive advantage (Sofiah et al., 2023).

It is important to note that in marketing global products, companies must consider consumer preferences in different countries to create relevant and effective marketing mixes. For local brands, this means the ability to innovate while maintaining a strong emotional and cultural connection with consumers, as seen in brands like Oneda, which leverage local cultural identity to strengthen its position in international markets (Sari & Nur, 2024).

Thus, global product policies should include adaptation strategies that take into account differences in preferences and local market needs, while still maintaining brand unity at the international level.



Consumer preference for global or local brands is influenced by several complex psychological, social, cultural, and economic factors (Sari & Nur, 2024). Key factors include:

- a. **Product Quality and Innovation** One of the main drivers of preference for global brands is product quality and innovation. Global brands are often associated with high quality and advanced technology because they have larger resources for research and development. Consumers who prioritize quality and innovation tend to favor global brands due to their guarantee of higher consistency and innovation (Steenkamp, 2020).
- b. **Cultural Attachment and Local Wisdom** Local brands are often valued for their closeness to local culture and needs. Brands that can reflect local cultural values, traditions, and customs tend to earn preference from consumers who value cultural connection. This explains why consumers in many countries prefer local products, which are seen as more authentic and culturally relevant (Uyun & Fahmi, 2024).
- c. **Price and Availability** Local brands are generally more affordable than global brands, which often come with a premium price due to higher production and distribution costs. Therefore, price becomes an important factor in purchasing decisions, especially for price-sensitive consumers. Local brands also have the advantage of wider availability and distribution in the domestic market (Cheng & Tracy, 2010).
- d. **Social Status and Prestige** Global brands are often viewed as symbols of status and prestige, especially in emerging markets. Consumers who wish to signal their social status may be more inclined to choose global brands with international image and reputation. This is particularly evident in high-consumption cultures, where owning products from global brands is often considered a sign of prestige (Aaker, 1997).
- e. **Influence of Media and Advertising** The influence of global media and advertising also plays a significant role in shaping brand preference. Global brands typically have large marketing budgets and utilize international media platforms to introduce their products, which can increase brand awareness among global consumers. In contrast, local brands may rely more on community-focused marketing and direct relationships with consumers (Brown & Hayes, 2008; Jin et al., 2019; Leung et al., 2022).
- f. **Brand Trust** Trust in a brand also significantly influences consumer preference. Global brands that have been long known and have a good reputation are often chosen because consumers feel secure in their reputation. Meanwhile, local brands often build trust through more personal relationships with consumers and can gain credibility through local user experiences and testimonials (Dawar & Parker, 1994) (Nurul et al., 2024).
- g. **Implications for Local Brands Competing in the Global Market** Local brands that wish to compete in the global market must balance the desire to maintain their cultural authenticity with the need for innovation and quality to appeal to



international consumers. Adapting global standards while preserving their local identity can be a key strategy for success.

Branding in the international market presents unique challenges that companies must address to establish a strong, competitive identity. As businesses expand beyond domestic borders, they encounter cultural, regulatory, and market perception hurdles that require a thoughtful and adaptive branding strategy. This literature review explores the key challenges faced by brands when competing in the global arena.

Cultural differences are one of the most significant barriers for brands entering international markets. According to de Mooij (2018), cultural factors such as values, communication styles, and consumer behavior vary greatly across regions. A brand that resonates well in one country may not necessarily connect with consumers in another (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). For example, color symbolism, product associations, or even humor can differ drastically between cultures. Companies must adapt their branding strategies to align with local customs and preferences without losing their core brand identity (Kotler, 2022).

In international markets, consumers often view foreign brands with skepticism. A study by Batra et al. (2019) highlights that international brands often face challenges in being perceived as authentic or trustworthy, especially in markets where local brands have a long-standing reputation. Brands need to build credibility by demonstrating consistent quality and a clear understanding of local consumer needs. As global markets become more saturated, the risk of brand dilution also increases, necessitating stronger brand differentiation and a clear communication of the brand's values and story (Batra, 2019).

Navigating international regulations is another significant hurdle for global branding. Laws related to intellectual property, advertising standards, and product certifications can vary widely across countries. For example, in the case of Oneda, a local Indonesian brand, it was banned from entering the Russian market due to perceptions of being a premium brand, despite using alternative, sustainable materials. Such regulatory challenges can hinder market entry and require companies to invest in legal expertise to ensure compliance with local standards (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2013).

Deciding whether to position a brand globally or locally is another challenge. A global brand strategy seeks to create a consistent identity worldwide, while a local approach allows for tailored branding that reflects regional preferences and needs. According to Akaka and Alden (2010), global branding has the advantage of creating economies of scale, but it risks alienating local markets if cultural nuances are not considered. A hybrid approach, often referred to as "glocalization," is a common strategy where companies maintain a global brand image while adapting specific elements for local relevance (Akaka & Alden, 2010).

International brands often face stiff competition from well-established local brands that have a deep understanding of the market and strong customer loyalty. Local brands are often perceived as more authentic and trustworthy by consumers, particularly in developing economies. As highlighted by Aaker (2004), local brands enjoy competitive advantages because they resonate with consumers' cultural values, and consumers may



feel a stronger emotional connection to them. For new entrants, it becomes essential to craft a unique value proposition that differentiates them from local competitors.

In the digital age, social media and online platforms play a pivotal role in global branding. While the internet offers the opportunity for brands to reach international audiences quickly, it also brings the challenge of managing global communications across diverse online communities. Social media's role in shaping public perception is immense, and brands must ensure that their messaging is both culturally sensitive and consistent. Negative feedback or a social media crisis in one region can quickly spread globally, affecting the brand's reputation (Baym, 2015; Evans, 2015).

Sustainability in branding refers to the practice of integrating environmental, social, and economic considerations into the core identity of a brand. According to Kotler and Keller (2022), sustainability is no longer just an optional add-on for companies; it has become a critical factor that shapes consumer preferences, buying behavior, and brand loyalty. As consumers increasingly demand more from brands in terms of ethical practices, environmental responsibility, and social equity, companies are focusing on creating sustainable products and services that align with these values.

Brands that adopt sustainability practices are not only contributing to environmental conservation and social well-being but also building long-term competitive advantages. Sustainable branding can lead to differentiation in the market, fostering strong customer loyalty and enhancing brand equity. For instance, brands such as Patagonia and The Body Shop have successfully incorporated sustainability into their brand identity, gaining a dedicated consumer base that values ethical production and environmental stewardship (Ameer & Othman, 2012; Maletič et al., 2015).

Brands can integrate sustainability into their strategies in various ways, including product innovation, supply chain management, and communication. One common approach is designing environmentally friendly products that use sustainable materials and are produced with minimal environmental impact (Rusinko, 2010). For example, many fashion brands are shifting to sustainable fabrics and reducing waste by using recycled materials (Liu et al., 2015). Companies also adopt circular economy principles, which aim to reduce waste and extend the lifecycle of products through repair, reuse, and recycling.

In addition to product innovation, brands also focus on ethical sourcing and fair labor practices within their supply chains. Brands that prioritize transparency in their sourcing and production processes can distinguish themselves from competitors. Moreover, the communication of sustainability efforts is crucial; brands that share their sustainability journey through storytelling and transparent reporting can connect with consumers on a deeper level (Weaver & Rotmans, 2006).

Despite the growing importance of sustainability, many brands face challenges in implementing sustainable practices that are both effective and authentic. One of the primary challenges is balancing sustainability with profitability. Sustainable practices, such as sourcing eco-friendly materials or redesigning production processes to reduce waste, often require significant upfront investment. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) may particularly struggle to afford the resources required for such initiatives (Muriithi, 2017; Susman, 2007).



Another challenge is the risk of "greenwashing," where brands make exaggerated or false claims about their sustainability efforts to attract consumers. As consumers become more knowledgeable about sustainability, they are increasingly able to identify misleading claims, which can damage a brand's reputation. This underscores the importance of authenticity and transparency in sustainable branding.

The future of branding lies in integrating sustainability into the DNA of businesses. As sustainability becomes increasingly ingrained in consumer expectations and regulations, brands that fail to adopt sustainable practices risk losing relevance and consumer trust. Companies that effectively incorporate sustainability into their operations and branding strategies can not only enhance their market position but also contribute to long-term environmental and social benefits.

Furthermore, as digital platforms enable brands to communicate more directly with consumers, there is greater potential for brands to engage consumers in their sustainability journey. Interactive digital experiences, social media engagement, and sustainability reports are tools that brands can use to share their initiatives and involve consumers in sustainability efforts.

3. Methods

This research adopts a qualitative case study method to explore Oneda's branding strategies. Data were collected from marketing materials, product catalogs, social media posts, and news articles. Additionally, direct observations of Oneda's branding activities, including product design and consumer engagement, were conducted. Thematic analysis was employed to identify key branding elements and challenges. This approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of Oneda's strategies in navigating international markets while preserving its cultural identity. Data collection was carried out through various sources, including marketing materials, product catalogs, social media posts, news articles, and reports about Oneda to understand the brand image and cultural narrative it carries. Observation was conducted by examining Oneda's branding and marketing activities, including product design, digital campaigns, and interactions with consumers in international markets.

4. Results and Discussion

Effective Strategies in Branding Culturally-Based Local Products

Cultural branding leverages local values, traditions, and heritage as core elements to build an authentic product image. Several effective strategies can be applied to create a competitive, culturally-based local brand in both domestic and international markets. Oneda has successfully utilized local cultural elements as the main identity of its brand, one of which is the use of goat leather as the primary material in its products. Goat leather carries cultural and historical significance, particularly within the context of the Indonesian tradition of celebrating Iduladha (Eid al-Adha) or the sacrificial feast.

The goat leather used by Oneda is often sourced from animals sacrificed during the Iduladha celebrations, a deeply ingrained religious and social tradition in Indonesia. In this tradition, the slaughter of sacrificial animals is not just a religious ritual but also a symbol of social responsibility and community solidarity.



After the meat from the sacrificial animals is distributed, the goat hides, which are often underutilized, are processed by Oneda into high-value products. This process not only reduces waste but also adds value to local resources.

Goat leather has a distinct texture that is lighter and more flexible than cowhide, giving Oneda's products a unique character. Oneda uses the cultural narrative to provide an emotional context for its products. They position the use of goat leather as a form of respect for local traditions and an effort to maintain sustainability. Goat leather, connected to Iduladha, becomes a symbol of harmony between religious practices, tradition, and modernity.

By emphasizing authentic cultural elements, such as goat leather from the Iduladha tradition, Oneda not only highlights local wisdom but also positions its products as unique items that cannot be found elsewhere. In the international market, the use of goat leather becomes a distinguishing feature that sets Oneda apart from its competitors.

Using Unique Designs

Oneda integrates geometric patterns into the design of its bags and accessories. These motifs carry deep stories and meanings that reflect the uniqueness of local culture. The artistic value of these patterns creates differentiation, especially among global consumers who seek products that are not only functional but also culturally significant. For international markets, these designs are seen as products with a touch of art and culture.

Oneda also uses colors inspired by the nature and culture of Indonesia, such as the natural brown of goat leather, brick red, emerald green, or ocean blue. These colors evoke a natural and elegant feel that appeals to international markets, especially premium consumers. The color selection reflects the richness of Indonesia's nature and culture, creating an emotional connection with the story behind the product. Oneda is also flexible in adapting the color palette according to global trends without losing its cultural essence, such as using pastel shades favored in the European market. These colors enhance the aesthetic appeal of the products, making them suitable for various markets and tastes, from modern minimalist to traditional ethnic.

Through social media, catalogs, and its website, Oneda shares stories about the design inspiration and production process, which are highly valued by international consumers. Consumers feel that they are not only buying a product but also becoming a part of a rich and historical culture. The integration of traditional motifs and distinctive colors in product designs is a highly effective strategy for attracting international markets. Oneda not only creates functional products but also brings cultural stories that strengthen emotional connections with consumers. With this approach, Oneda has proven that local cultural wealth can be a major attraction in the global market.

Oneda's Story: From Local MSME to the International Market

In the midst of the competitive global market, Oneda's story began with something simple: a dream to elevate local values into globally recognized creations. Based in Semarang, Oneda embodies the entrepreneurial spirit of Indonesia, rooted in culture, philosophy, and sustainability. Originally a small business started from home, Oneda initially only served orders for goat leather bags from local customers. This material was



chosen for a reason. Goat leather, aside from being lighter and more flexible than cowhide, has a deep cultural connection with Indonesian society. Many of these hides are sourced from sacrificial animals after the Iduladha celebrations, carrying religious, traditional, and sustainability values.

In the hands of local artisans, these hides are processed using traditional techniques passed down through generations. The process may be simple, but the result has soul: bags that not only serve a function but also tell a story. This philosophy is the foundation of every Oneda product.

Steps Toward Recognition: Starting the Branding Journey

Oneda's journey to recognition began with a bold leap of innovation. The founder, believing in the power of combining culture and modernity, started incorporating traditional motifs like Batik and Songket into the designs of their bags. This process not only enhanced the aesthetic value of the products but also brought local stories to a broader stage.

The turning point came when Oneda decided to participate in various national exhibitions supported by the government. There, Oneda's products garnered special attention thanks to the unique combination of local materials, traditional motifs, and modern designs. This positive reception became proof that a small creation from Semarang had universal appeal.

The local community began to realize that Oneda bags were more than just accessories; they had become symbols of cultural pride. The products started to be ordered by various communities that wanted to own items with unique philosophical value. From this point on, Oneda was no longer just a brand but also a story – about how tradition could live in harmony with innovation. The support from the community not only drove business growth but also gave the courage to dream bigger: to take Oneda to international markets.

The journey to the international stage was not easy. Oneda faced significant challenges, including adapting designs to meet global market tastes and ensuring that their products met international quality standards. However, Oneda's unwavering spirit became one of its defining traits. By participating in international exhibitions in cities like Paris and Tokyo, Oneda introduced its products to a global audience. The goat leather bags with traditional motifs quickly became a sensation because they offered something unique and authentic, unlike anything else available in the market.

The name Oneda itself carries deep meaning. Taken from the local language, it means "offering," reflecting the brand's intention to provide the best work that brings beauty, culture, and meaning. Oneda's philosophy is one of harmony. Every bag is designed not only to be functional but also to carry a rich cultural story. The use of goat leather symbolizes sustainability, while the traditional motifs serve as a bridge between the past and the present. Today, Oneda's products are marketed across various countries, from Asia to Europe. In Paris, Oneda received praise for bringing cultural authenticity into modern design. In Tokyo, Oneda's products were warmly embraced by consumers who appreciated art and craftsmanship.

Oneda's success in international markets is not just a win for the brand but a testament to the potential of local Indonesian products to compete on the global stage. Oneda's story



is one of dreams, courage, and the spirit to preserve culture. From a small home-based business to a globally recognized brand, Oneda shows that with a strong philosophy, innovation, and the courage to dream, local products can become a global pride. For Oneda, each bag is more than just an item; it is a story, a tradition, and a spirit brought to life, ready to be carried anywhere in the world.

5. Conclusions

These findings provide critical insights into how local brands can navigate global markets while maintaining cultural authenticity, as summarized in the concluding section. Oneda's journey exemplifies the power of blending local culture with modern design to create a global brand. By embracing the unique qualities of goat leather, a material deeply rooted in Indonesian tradition, Oneda has successfully positioned itself as a brand that not only offers functional products but also tells a rich cultural story. The use of traditional motifs and sustainable practices further reinforces Oneda's commitment to preserving cultural heritage while appealing to global markets.

Oneda's success highlights the growing demand for culturally authentic products in the international marketplace. Through strategic branding, the company has managed to differentiate itself by offering a product that is both unique and meaningful. Oneda's story, from a small local business to a recognized international brand, is a testament to the potential of local craftsmanship and culture in a globalized world.

By staying true to its roots and values, Oneda has proven that local brands can succeed on the global stage if they are built on strong cultural narratives, innovative design, and a commitment to quality. The brand's success also emphasizes the importance of understanding and adapting to international markets without losing the authenticity and essence of the local culture. Oneda is a powerful example of how cultural pride, when combined with creativity and business acumen, can transform a small local venture into a globally admired brand.

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