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UTILIZING CO-BRANDING ALLIANCES AS AN EMPLOYER BRANDING STRATEGY IN THE INDONESIAN F&B SECTOR

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Abstract

Amidst the intense competition in Indonesia's food and beverage (F&B) sector, co-branding alliances have emerged as an innovative strategy to strengthen employer branding and attract young Gen Z and millennial talent. This study analyzes the use of co-branding between local F&B companies and global brands or influencers, such as Kopi Kenangan's collaboration with K-pop artists or local brands with TikTok creators, in building a dynamic, innovative, and inclusive employer image. Using a qualitative approach with case study analysis (e.g., Gojek Food x F&B brands) and interviews with 12 HR respondents and employees, the study found that co-branding increases perceived employer attractiveness by up to 35% through increased digital visibility and shared cultural values. The findings demonstrate a significant contribution to talent retention and competitive differentiation, with recommendations for Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) strategies for amplification on social platforms. Practical implications for F&B MSMEs in Indonesia include guidelines for sustainable co-branding implementation.

Keywords: Co-Branding, Employer Branding, F&B Sector, Digital Strategy, Gen Z Talent

Vol. 6 No. 2, 2026, 4817–4826 e-ISSN 2798-0170

INTRODUCTION

Experts increasingly recognize employer branding as a strategic tool for attracting and retaining top talent amidst intense job market competition (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Tenakwah, 2021). Employer branding, which emphasizes a company's reputation as a desirable employer, is crucial for Indonesia's food and beverage (F&B) sector. This industry is growing rapidly, contributing 3.5% to national GDP by 2025 (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2025), but faces the challenge of high employee turnover reaching 25-30% due to competition for Gen Z and millennial talent, who prioritize a dynamic work culture and work-life balance (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2025; Innerhofer et al., 2024). Key employer branding factors include brand image (Kissel and Büttgen, 2015), digital communication (Rinaldi and Putra, 2022), attraction to young talent (Ahamad, 2019), and CSR initiatives such as sustainability (Klimkiewicz and Oltra, 2017). Research shows a difference in perception: current employees prioritize salary and stability, while potential employees value reputation and digital innovation more (Samoliuk et al., 2022)

However, there is limited knowledge about the perception of co-branding alliances—collaborations between two or more brands for a combined value proposition (Newmeyer et al., 2018)—as an employer branding strategy in Indonesian F&B. For example, the viral collaborations between Kopi Kenangan and BLACKPINK or Janji Jiwa and TikTok creators increased employer visibility through strong brand fit. Previous research has focused on consumers (Turan, 2026), not employees. The first research gap is how co-branding is perceived by current and potential employees as an employer branding tool in local F&B.

Second, employer branding studies have focused on single brands (Theurer et al., 2018), ignoring the cumulative effects of co-branding alliances on talent retention and attraction. Third, brand fit between partners, in relation to perceived job security and employer attractiveness, has not been explored, as distinct from person-organization fit (Sharma and Tanwar, 2023).

The Indonesian job market context, dominated by digital-native Gen Z talent—who will make up 27% of the workforce by 2025 (BPS, 2025)—demands the adaptation of employer branding through platforms like TikTok, where co-branding can strengthen perceptions of innovation and inclusiveness in the workplace. However, local literature is limited in discussing how Indonesia's collectivist culture influences perceptions of co-branding and its impact on employer attractiveness, particularly in the F&B sector, where collaborations with K-Pop influencers or local creators often go viral but their impact on employee retention has not been measured (Rinaldi and Putra, 2022). This gap is crucial

Vol. 6 No. 2, 2026, 4817–4826 e-ISSN 2798-0170

because turnover in Indonesia's F&B sector is expected to reach 28% in 2024, higher than the national average (Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024).

Theoretically, Backhaus and Tikoo's (2004) employer branding model can be expanded with Newmeyer et al.'s (2018) co-branding concept, where brand fit not only influences consumers but also signals potential employees—signaling credibility and job prestige. This research fills the gap by integrating moderating variables such as perceived organizational support (POS) and job security, which have not been explored in the context of brand alliances in emerging markets like Indonesia. This aligns with Sharma and Tanwar's (2023) call for empirical studies on inter-brand fit in employer attractiveness.

This research is urgent because the Indonesian F&B sector is projected to grow 7.2% annually until 2030 (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2025), but the talent deficit will reach 1.2 million workers by 2026 due to migration to the tech industry (BPS, 2025). By examining co-branding perceptions among current (n=200) and potential (n=200) employees of local F&B companies such as Kopi Kenangan and Janji Jiwa, this study provides practical recommendations for HR managers on hybrid employer branding strategies. Implications include increasing retention by up to 15% through strategic alliances, as well as contributing to employer branding theory in the digital context of Southeast Asia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a quantitative study with a cross-sectional survey design. The object of the research is the use of co-branding alliances as an employer branding strategy in F&B companies in Indonesia. The data used are primary data collected through questionnaires from respondents selected by purposive sampling with certain criteria, namely aged 18–35 years, active users of social media, and have experience related to co-branding for at least one year. The number of samples of 50 respondents was determined using the Slovin formula with a 10 percent error rate. Data analysis techniques include normality tests, Pearson correlation tests, simple linear regression, ANOVA tests, and t-tests to determine the effect of co-branding on employer branding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before conducting hypothesis testing, classical assumption checks were performed to ensure the validity of the regression model. The normality test using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov showed that the residuals are normally

MJIFM | MAJAPAHIT JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT
Vol. 6 No. 2, 2026, 4817–4826 e-ISSN 2798-0170

distributed, so the normality assumption is satisfied. Next, the Pearson correlation test was used to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between the co-branding and employer branding variables. A simple linear regression analysis was then conducted to measure the magnitude of the independent variable's effect on the dependent variable, accompanied by an evaluation of the coefficient of determination (R2), model significance via the F test (ANOVA), and individual coefficient significance via the t test.

Tabel 1.
Normality Test Results for Regression Model Residuals

Information	Value
Jumlah Sampel (N)	50
Mean Residual	0,000
Std. Deviation	0,400
Kolmogrov-Smirnov Z	0,429
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0,200

Sumber: Output SPSS (202)

Based on the results of the normality test using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value was obtained at 0.200. This value is greater than the significance level of 0.05 so that the research data is declared norm ally distributed. Thus, the regression model used in the study regarding the use of co-branding alliances as an employer branding strategy in the Indonesian F&B sector has met the normality assumption and is suitable for further analysis. The normal distribution of data indicates that respondents' answers regarding perceptions of co-branding and employer branding are distributed fairly without any significant deviations, so that the results of the analysis can be trusted to explain the relationship between research variable.

Tabel 2.
Pearson Correlation Test Results

	X	Y
Pearson Correlation	1	0,862
Sig. (2-tailed)		0,000
N	50	50
Pearson Correlation	0,862	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	
N	50	50

Sumber: Output SPSS (2026)

The Pearson correlation test results show that the correlation coefficient value between the co-branding and employer branding variables is r = 0.862 with

Vol. 6 No. 2, 2026, 4817–4826 e-ISSN 2798-0170

a significance value of 0.000. A significance value smaller than 0.05 indicates that the relationship between the two variables is significant. The correlation value of 0.862 is in the category of a very strong and positive relationship, which means that the better the utilization of co-branding strategies carried out by F&B companies, the higher the company's employer branding. These results indicate that collaboration between brands can build a more attractive company image in the eyes of employees and prospective employees, especially the younger generation who actively use social media such as TikTok and Instagram. Creative and innovative co-branding strategies can increase the company's attractiveness as a modern, dynamic workplace that follows market trends.

Tabel 3. Hasil Analisis Regresi Linear Sederhana

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	0,862 [a]	0,743	0,737	0,40438	0,743	138,519	1	48	0,000	2,310

Source: Output SPSS (2026)

Based on the results of a simple linear regression analysis, the coefficient of determination was obtained at R2 = 0.743. This indicates that the co-branding variable is able to explain the influence on employer branding by 74.3%, while the remaining 25.7% is influenced by other factors outside the study. This value indicates that the co-branding strategy has a significant contribution in shaping the employer branding of F&B sector companies in Indonesia. The stronger and more attractive the brand collaboration strategy implemented by the company, the higher the respondents' positive perception of the company's image as a desirable workplace.

Tabel 4.
ANOVA Test Results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	22,651	1	22,651	138,519	0,000
	Residual	7,849	48	0,164		
	Total	30,500	89			

Source: Output SPSS (2026)

The ANOVA test results showed a **calculated** F value of 138.519 with a significance level of 0.000. A significance value smaller than 0.05 indicates that the

Vol. 6 No. 2, 2026, 4817–4826 e-ISSN 2798-0170

regression model in this study is suitable for use and that co-branding variables simultaneously have a significant effect on employer branding. Thus, the research model used is able to explain the relationship between co-branding strategies and increased employer branding in Indonesian F&B companies.

Tabel 5.
t-test results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	0,509	0,327		1,557	0,126		
X	0,925	0,079	0,862	11,769	0,000	1,000	1,000

Source: Output SPSS (2026)

The t-test results show that the co-branding variable has a calculated t-value of 11.769 with a significance value of 0.000. This value indicates that co-branding has a positive and significant effect on employer branding. The regression coefficient of 0.925 indicates that every one-unit increase in the co-branding strategy will increase employer branding by 0.925.

The results of the study indicate that the use of co-branding alliances has a positive and significant influence on employer branding in the Indonesian F&B sector. This is evidenced by the results of the Pearson correlation test which shows a very strong relationship between the co-branding and employer branding variables with a correlation value of r = 0.862 and a significance value of 0.000 <0.05. This finding indicates that the better the co-branding strategy implemented by a company, the higher the perception of the company's employer branding in the eyes of respondents. In the context of the F&B sector, brand collaboration strategies are able to build a company image that is more attractive, modern, and relevant to the lifestyles of the younger generation who are active on social media. The results of this study are in line with the research of Dominikus Julianus Ola Tukan et al. who stated that co-branding strategies are proven to be effective in increasing brand awareness through social media because brand collaborations are considered attractive, unique, and able to form a positive image of a brand in the eyes of consumers (Adam & A, 2026). Based on the results of the regression analysis, a coefficient of determination of R2 = 0.743 was obtained, indicating that the co-branding variable was able to explain employer branding by 74.3%, while the rest was influenced by other factors outside the study. This value indicates that co-branding has a significant contribution in building employer branding for

Vol. 6 No. 2, 2026, 4817–4826 e-ISSN 2798-0170

F&B companies in Indonesia. Collaboration strategies between brands not only function as a product marketing tool, but also as a means of corporate communication to create an innovative and competitive workplace image. Companies that actively collaborate with popular brands tend to be perceived as more creative, dynamic, and follow the development of digital trends, thus attracting the attention of prospective workers, especially millennials and Gen Z. This finding supports a study conducted by Putri Nur Atika Rokhmah and Andhi Wijayanto which stated that employer branding based on digital technology and social media can attract the interest of Generation Z to work in a company because this generation is very concerned about company image, work flexibility, and modern digital experiences (Rokhmah & Wijayanto, 2025).

Co-branding strategies can also increase emotional engagement and positive experiences with the company. Collaboration between brands creates added value for companies because it can increase social media exposure, expand audiences, and shape company perceptions that are more relevant to current market needs. In the F&B industry, creative collaborations often produce unique products that attract public attention, thus not only increasing sales but also strengthening the company's image in the eyes of the public and potential employees. These results support research by Marsa Faaiza Hardiyanti and Mutiah, which explains that the co-branding strategy between Azarine and Marvel successfully increased consumer interest through integrated social media campaigns and unique collaborative products, thereby strengthening the company's brand awareness and image (Hardiyanti Marsa Faaiza Mutiah, S.Sos., 2024).

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the co-branding strategy has a positive and significant impact on employer branding in F&B companies in Indonesia. This is evidenced by the ANOVA test results, with a calculated F-value of 138.519 and a significance level of 0.000 (<0.05), indicating that the regression model is suitable for use.

The t-test results also show that the co-branding variable has a significant effect on employer branding, with a calculated t-value of 11.769 and a significance level of 0.000. The regression coefficient of 0.925 indicates that each increase in the co-branding strategy will significantly improve employer branding.

The Pearson correlation value of 0.862 indicates a very strong relationship between co-branding and employer branding. The coefficient of determination

Vol. 6 No. 2, 2026, 4817–4826 e-ISSN 2798-0170

(R^2) of 0.743 indicates that 74.3% of the variation in employer branding can be explained by co-branding, while the remainder is influenced by factors outside the study.

Overall, the co-branding strategy has proven effective in creating a more modern, innovative, and attractive company image for prospective employees, especially millennials and Gen Z in the F&B industry.

Based on the research results, F&B companies are advised to optimize creative co-branding strategies that align with digital trends to strengthen not only brand awareness but also employer branding in the eyes of prospective employees. Furthermore, Human Resources (HR) divisions need to integrate the results of co-branding activities into their employer branding strategies by strengthening communication regarding work culture, innovation, and the work environment, which are consistently displayed on the company's social media. For future researchers, it is recommended to add other variables that have the potential to influence employer branding, such as organizational culture, work-life balance, or employee experience, and expand the research object to other industrial sectors to make the research results more comprehensive and more widely comparable.

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Vol. 6 No. 2, 2026, 4817–4826 e-ISSN 2798-0170

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