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DIGITAL BRANDING AND OPERATIONAL PROCESS DESIGN IN A LEARNING FACTORY PROJECT: A CASE STUDY OF NASI KULIT AYAM SAMALA

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Abstract

This article reports a fourth-semester Learning Factory (LEFA) project that integrated digital branding development with operational process design. The project used two complementary objects: a simulated culinary business, Nasi Kulit Ayam Samala, and an observation-based analysis of a real Japanese workforce placement company, referred to in this article as Partner Company A. A descriptive project-based approach was used to document branding decisions, digital content development, process-flow design, and external observation of the partner company's public digital presence. For the simulated business, the project produced a brand name, revised logo, visual identity, Instagram-based communication plan, promotional content, and online and offline purchasing flowcharts. For Partner Company A, the project examined brand identity, brand voice, unique selling proposition, SWOT/TOWS, website and social-media presentation, and search-oriented content. The results show that the LEFA project connected brand decisions with customer-facing processes rather than treating digital branding and operations as separate activities. The operational design translated customer contact, ordering, production, payment, packaging, and delivery into explicit process steps, while the branding work provided a consistent identity for digital communication. The project also identified limitations, particularly the absence of direct interviews with the partner company, limited product photography for the simulation, and the student's limited experience with process mapping. Therefore, the outcomes should be interpreted as learning and design outputs rather than evidence of commercial performance. The study demonstrates the value of Learning Factory activities for developing applied digital-business competencies through structured, practice-oriented work.

Keywords:
Digital Branding; Operational Process; Learning Factory; Social Media; Process Mapping; Vocational Education

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital technologies have changed how businesses communicate with customers, build brand meaning, and coordinate customer-facing activities. Digital marketing is no longer limited to promotional messages; it involves the use of digital media and technology to support integrated marketing objectives and customer interactions across channels (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). In this environment, a brand must be represented consistently through visual identity, content, tone of communication, and the experience created at each customer touchpoint. Research on social-network communication also indicates that brand communication can contribute to consumer-based brand equity, making the quality and consistency of digital communication strategically important (Arya et al., 2022).

Operational design is similarly important because a customer promise must be supported by a process that can deliver the promised product or service. Process analysis provides a structured way to identify activities, decisions, inputs, outputs, and points where delays or errors may occur (Harrington, 1991). In

operations management, process design is also connected to the coordination of resources and activities required to produce and deliver value to customers (Krajewski et al., 2018). Thus, digital branding and operational process should be viewed as complementary: branding communicates what the business promises, while operations determine how that promise is delivered.

Learning Factory provides a useful educational setting for connecting these two dimensions. Learning Factory environments are designed to bring realistic industrial or business problems into learning activities so that students can combine conceptual knowledge with practical problem solving (Abele et al., 2017). In a digital-business program, this approach can be adapted beyond manufacturing by using simulated businesses, real-company observations, process mapping, digital-content production, and reflective evaluation as project outputs.

The present project focused on two objects. The first was Nasi Kulit Ayam Samala, a simulated culinary business developed from the student's own business concept. The second was a real Japanese workforce placement company selected for external analysis; because the source report identifies the company by name, this article anonymizes it as Partner Company A. The project aimed to (1) develop a practical digital-branding concept for the simulated business, (2) analyze the visible digital-branding practices of Partner Company A, and (3) design operational flows for online and direct purchasing. The study does not attempt to measure sales, customer satisfaction, or the effectiveness of the partner company's strategy because the project did not collect primary commercial data.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative, project-based approach. The unit of analysis was one fourth-semester LEFA project conducted during 2025. The source material consisted of the student's LEFA report, project documentation, branding designs, social-media content, operational flowcharts, and observations of publicly available digital materials from Partner Company A. The project schedule recorded digital-branding activities from February to March 2025 for the simulated business and company-analysis activities from May 2025. Operational process design was developed during the project's process-design stage.

The analysis followed four stages. First, project activities and outputs were identified from the LEFA documentation. Second, the outputs were organized into two analytical dimensions: digital branding and operational process. Third, the observed activities were interpreted using established concepts in digital marketing, brand communication, process improvement, and operations management (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019; Harrington, 1991; Krajewski et al., 2018). Fourth, the learning results, supporting factors, constraints, and opportunities for further development were synthesized. The approach is consistent with the experiential orientation of Learning Factory education, in which practical tasks are used to connect theory, problem solving, and reflection (Abele et al., 2017).

A methodological limitation must be emphasized. The analysis of Partner Company A was conducted from an external perspective using publicly observable materials. The report states that no direct interview or discussion with the company's internal team was conducted. Consequently, observations about brand voice, positioning, strengths, and weaknesses are treated as external interpretations rather than statements about the company's internal strategy. Likewise, the simulated business was a design exercise and did not generate validated market-performance data.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Digital Branding Development of Nasi Kulit Ayam Samala

The simulated business began with the selection of a culinary concept and the development of the name Nasi Kulit Ayam Samala. The name "Samala" was retained from the student's family business context, providing a personal narrative for the simulated brand. The visual identity was then revised to strengthen product recognition. The final logo used an illustration of fried chicken skin as the main visual element, supported by dominant yellow and red tones and a bold, slightly curved typeface. The design process illustrates the role of visual consistency in translating a product concept into a recognizable brand identity.

The branding activity was extended from logo design to channel selection and content development. Instagram was selected as the principal platform because the project considered its visual orientation suitable for food communication and its interactive features useful for customer contact. The report proposed the use of Reels, feed posts, Stories, direct messages, interactive features, and links to ordering channels. From a digital-marketing perspective, this channel strategy is consistent with the use of digital media to integrate communication, interaction, and conversion activities (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). However, the project did not conduct a controlled platform comparison or collect engagement and

conversion data; therefore, Instagram should be understood as the selected project channel rather than a proven best-performing channel for the business.

The project also produced promotional content, including a "BUY 1 GET 1 FREE" concept, to demonstrate how the visual identity could be applied in social-media communication. The output is important as a learning artifact because it moves branding from abstract concepts into an observable communication format. This is relevant to research showing that positive and coherent social-media brand communication can influence consumer-based brand equity (Arya et al., 2022). In the context of this project, the contribution is conceptual and educational rather than a measured commercial effect.

3.2 External Analysis of Partner Company A's Digital Branding

The second object was analyzed through an external review of company identity and public digital communication. The project identified visual identity elements such as the company logo, dominant colors, typography, and overall presentation. It also examined brand voice and found communication characteristics that could be interpreted as friendly, optimistic, and motivational. The report further identified a value proposition built around opportunities related to work in Japan, selected outdoor employment sectors, accommodation facilities, and a financing arrangement described in the source material. Because the analysis was external, these elements are presented as observable positioning cues rather than as verified internal brand strategy.

The SWOT and TOWS exercises were used as structured tools to move from observation toward recommendations. The project also reviewed the company website and social-media content, noting that the desktop website appeared relatively organized while the mobile presentation could be improved. In addition, the student developed a branding article around the keyword "LPK Magang Jepang." This activity demonstrates an attempt to connect brand communication with search-oriented content development. Digital marketing strategy increasingly requires coordination between content, channel selection, search visibility, and user interaction rather than treating each activity independently (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

3.3 Operational Process Design

The operational component translated the simulated culinary business into explicit customer and production flows. The report developed two main purchasing scenarios: direct purchasing at the outlet and online ordering through a delivery platform. The online flow begins with customer access to the application, outlet search, product selection, purchase, payment, order processing, and delivery; the direct-purchase flow starts with the customer arriving at the outlet, selecting a menu item, completing the purchase, and receiving the product. Mapping these steps makes the customer-facing process visible and provides a basis for identifying decision points and handoffs.

The production side was organized around menu planning, raw-material procurement, daily requirement calculation, food preparation, cooking, packaging, customer service, and digital order management. The design was intentionally scaled to a small simulated business, including simple tools, manual recording, and flexible operating time. This is consistent with process-analysis principles that emphasize understanding the sequence and characteristics of activities before improvement is attempted (Harrington, 1991). It also follows operations-management logic in which process choices must fit the volume, variety, resources, and service requirements of the operation (Krajewski et al., 2018). The designed stages are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Operational Process Designed for the Nasi Kulit Ayam Samala Simulation

No.	Process stage	Designed activity
1	Menu and product planning	Define menu variants and customer-facing product information.
2	Raw-material procurement	Determine materials and estimate daily requirements.
3	Production	Conduct preparation, marination, frying, and product serving.
4	Packaging	Use packaging intended to maintain product condition and temperature.
5	Customer service and digital orders	Receive orders, confirm transactions, and coordinate fulfillment.
6	Delivery / handover	Complete delivery or direct handover to the customer.
7	Evaluation	Review the flow and identify process improvements.

3.4 Integration of Branding and Operations

A central outcome of the project was the connection between digital communication and operational execution. The simulated brand communicates product identity through the name, logo, color, and promotional content, while the operational flow provides the sequence through which a customer can move from awareness and ordering to fulfillment. This relationship can be interpreted as a customer-

journey issue: touchpoints before, during, and after purchase should form a coherent experience rather than isolated activities (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

The integration is also visible in the choice of digital ordering as part of the operational design. Social-media content can attract attention and initiate inquiry, but the business still requires a clear mechanism for order confirmation, payment, production, packaging, and delivery. Conversely, an efficient process has limited value if customers cannot understand the offer or find a convenient route to purchase. The LEFA project therefore provided an applied exercise in viewing branding and operations as mutually reinforcing business capabilities.

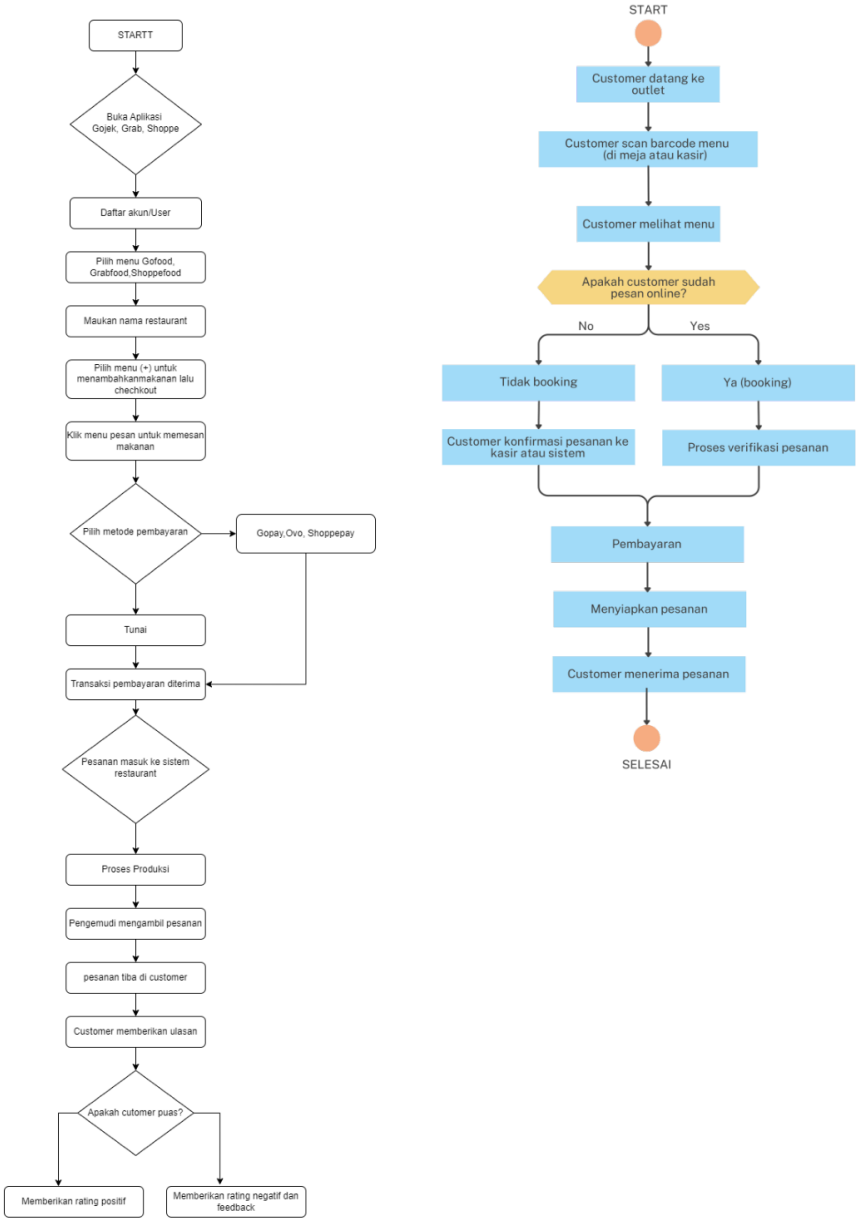


Figure 1. Operational flowcharts for online ordering and direct purchasing in the Nasi Kulit Ayam Samala simulation

3.5 Supporting Factors, Constraints, and Learning Implications

The project was supported by the flexibility of a simulated business environment. Because the student acted as the owner of the simulation, branding and operational decisions could be made without organizational bureaucracy. The student also had direct familiarity with the proposed product, making it easier to explain its intended value and visual direction. For the partner-company analysis, the availability of public website and social-media materials supported external observation.

Several constraints affected the quality of the outputs. For the simulated business, the report identifies limited time, the need for further learning in digital branding, and the absence of direct product

photography. For the partner-company analysis, the most important limitation was the lack of direct access to internal information. Without interviews, the student could not verify the reasons behind visual choices, communication style, or strategic priorities. These limitations are important because experiential projects can generate useful learning without necessarily producing evidence equivalent to a full organizational study.

The project also identified process-mapping difficulties, particularly in determining the correct starting and ending points of a process, finding references appropriate for a small food business, and selecting suitable flowchart symbols. These difficulties are educationally meaningful. Process mapping is not simply a drawing exercise; it requires understanding boundaries, actors, decisions, inputs, outputs, and customer requirements (Harrington, 1991). Repeated practice with realistic cases can therefore strengthen students' ability to translate loosely described activities into structured business processes. A summary of the main project outputs and learning results is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Project Outputs and Learning Results

Project area	Main output	Learning result
Digital branding	Business name, logo revision, visual identity, Instagram strategy, promotional content	Initial brand system for a simulated culinary business
Partner analysis	Brand identity, brand voice, USP, SWOT/TOWS, website/social-media review, SEO-oriented article	External assessment and recommendation material
Operations	Online and offline purchasing flowcharts; production and service sequence	Structured process representation
Learning reflection	Identification of time, design, access, and process-mapping constraints	Basis for further improvement

4. CONCLUSION

The Learning Factory project successfully connected digital-branding development with operational process design through a simulated culinary business and an external analysis of Partner Company A. For Nasi Kulit Ayam Samala, the project produced a basic brand identity, revised logo, Instagram-oriented communication plan, promotional content, and explicit online and offline purchasing flows. For Partner Company A, the project developed an external assessment covering brand identity, brand voice, unique selling proposition, SWOT/TOWS, digital presentation, and search-oriented content.

The main contribution of the project is not evidence of commercial improvement, but the integration of business concepts into concrete artifacts. Branding decisions were linked to customer-facing channels, while operational decisions were translated into process flows that could support ordering and fulfillment. The project also demonstrated the importance of process boundaries, digital touchpoints, and consistent communication in applied digital-business learning.

Future development should include direct interviews with business practitioners, systematic observation of customer behavior, actual product photography and content testing, and quantitative evaluation of digital engagement and operational performance. A future implementation could also develop standard operating procedures and digital transaction records so that process efficiency and customer outcomes can be measured rather than only designed.

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