

PLN MOBILE APPLICATION PROMOTION STRATEGY IN FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS AT PT. PLN (PERSERO) CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT OF MEMPAWAH CITY

Marwaji¹, R. Luki Karunia², Rahayu³

^{1,2,3}Program Pascasarjana, Magister Manajemen

Universitas Prof. Dr. Moestopo (Beragama), Jakarta, Indonesia

E-mail: marwajidoank234@gmail.com

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Abstract

Digital transformation in the electricity sector has encouraged PT. PLN (Persero) to launch the PLN Mobile application as a digital-based customer service platform. However, the implementation at the Customer Service Unit (ULP) in Mempawah City shows low adoption levels and financial transactions through the application. This study aims to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of the promotional strategies used and to formulate appropriate strategies to increase adoption and financial transactions. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach with in-depth interview techniques involving PLN internal informants and customers. The findings reveal that the main strengths lie in the diversity of promotional media and the completeness of the application's features, while weaknesses include low digital literacy, limited outreach, and reliance on conventional promotion. Opportunities exist through social media integration, community events, and loyalty programs, while threats come from limited digital infrastructure and customer resistance to behavioral change. Therefore, the formulation of promotional strategies is directed toward an integrated marketing communication (IMC) approach, combining digital marketing, face-to-face education, and community collaboration to enhance sustainable promotional effectiveness.

Keywords: *Promotional Strategy, PLN Mobile, Financial Transactions, SWOT, IMC*

INTRODUCTION

The digital era demands that public organizations, including PT. PLN (Persero), transform to improve operational efficiency and service quality. This digital transformation is not simply an adaptation to technological developments, but a fundamental need to provide excellent and responsive service to customers. One concrete manifestation of this effort is the development of the PLN Mobile application, a digital-based electricity service platform. The PLN Mobile app is designed as a multifunctional solution that allows customers to easily access a variety of services, from bill payments and prepaid token purchases to new installation requests, power changes, outage reporting, and transaction history monitoring. Conceptually, the app has significant potential to simplify customer interactions with PLN while expanding access to services without time and location constraints.

While PLN Mobile theoretically has significant potential to increase customer satisfaction, the reality on the ground shows suboptimal results. At the Mempawah City Customer Service Unit (ULP), the app's adoption rate remains low. Many customers continue to rely on conventional methods like counters or Payment Point Online Banking (PPOB), which are considered more convenient and have become a habit. This situation indicates a gap between the app's potential and its actual use. This gap not only reflects low levels of technology adoption but also highlights weaknesses in the digital promotion and education strategies implemented. Low digital literacy, limited outreach, and the dominance of conventional promotions are real obstacles. These findings align with previous research, such as studies at the Tomohon ULP (Lengkey, Mandey, & Soepono, 2022) and the Tulung Klaten ULP (Ahzahro, 2023), which emphasized the importance of a balance between promotion, e-service quality, and public digital education. Various studies also show that challenges in implementing PLN Mobile are often related to low digital literacy and limited internet network infrastructure. This emphasizes that promotional strategies that solely emphasize information delivery are insufficiently effective. Instead, a more integrated marketing communications

approach is needed, combining digital promotion, face-to-face education, and community collaboration to reach the public more inclusively. Besides the challenges, there are also significant opportunities to be exploited. Studies in various regions, such as Aceh (Kurnia & Syahwildan, 2022) and Bandung (Ramadanty, 2023), demonstrate the effectiveness of a promotional mix that combines traditional media, social media, community events, and loyalty programs. Innovative models such as Digital Customer Relationship Management (Rewari, Kariza, & Octaviani, 2022) and RFM analysis (Tritamtama & Purwitasari, 2023) also emphasize the need for personalized, innovative, and customer-focused promotional strategies. Based on these conditions, this research is crucial for the Mempawah City ULP. The low level of PLN Mobile utilization, particularly for financial transactions, indicates a gap in the implemented promotional strategy. Therefore, this research focuses on analyzing and formulating a promotional strategy based on integrated marketing communication (IMC), combining direct education, digital marketing, community events, and local partnerships. It is hoped that this strategy will significantly increase the adoption of the PLN Mobile application and customer financial transactions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was developed by Davis (1985) to explain the factors that influence user acceptance of technology. This model focuses on two main constructs: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. These two factors significantly influence individuals' attitudes and intentions toward using new technology. According to Venkatesh & Davis (2000), perceived ease of use increases perceived usefulness because the easier a system is to use, the more likely users are to perceive its benefits. In the context of PLN Mobile, this model helps explain the extent to which customers are willing to adopt an application based on their perceptions of the ease and usefulness of the services offered.

The Concept of Services

According to Kotler & Armstrong (2006), a service is any action or performance offered by one party to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Services have four main characteristics: intangibility, inseparability, variability, and perishability. Lupiyoadi (2013) adds that services require direct interaction between providers and users, making service quality dependent on human performance and supporting systems. In the context of PLN Mobile, this application is a form of digital service oriented towards convenience, speed, and customer satisfaction in accessing online electricity services.

Marketing Mix (7Ps)

The marketing mix concept proposed by Zeithaml & Bitner (2000) encompasses seven main elements: product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process. These seven elements are interconnected and must be managed in an integrated manner to create customer value and satisfaction. Lovelock & Wirtz (2011) emphasize that in the service sector, people and process elements play a crucial role because they directly determine the customer experience. In the context of PLN Mobile's promotion, the 7Ps marketing mix serves as a strategic guideline for companies to align their digital products with the needs, behaviors, and expectations of customers across various segments.

Digital Marketing

According to Kotler & Keller (2016), digital marketing is a promotional activity that utilizes digital technology to reach, influence, and retain customers through various online platforms. Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019) add that digital marketing enables two-way interactions between companies and consumers through social media, websites, and mobile applications. This strategy not only serves to disseminate information but also builds long-term relationships based on user experience. In promoting PLN Mobile, digital marketing is an effective tool for expanding communication reach, strengthening the image of technology-based services, and increasing customer awareness and participation in using the application.

PLN Mobile

The PLN Mobile application is a digital innovation from PT. PLN (Persero) to provide customers with convenient services such as paying electricity bills, purchasing tokens, and reporting outages. According to PLN (2022), this application is designed to support the company's digital transformation and improve the quality of information technology-based services. According to Kotler (2018), digital innovation is a crucial factor in enhancing

the competitive advantage of public service organizations. PLN Mobile is PLN's adaptation to technological developments and customer needs, which demand speed and ease of access to electricity services in the digital era.

Promotion

According to Kotler & Keller (2016), promotion is a crucial element of the marketing mix, serving to inform, persuade, and remind customers about a product or service. The promotional mix includes advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, publicity/public relations, and direct marketing. Belch & Belch (2018) emphasize that promotional effectiveness is largely determined by the consistent integration of marketing communications across various media. In PLN Mobile's promotion, the promotional mix serves as the foundation for combining conventional and digital media to deliver more effective and targeted messages.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is used to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that influence the success of a strategy. According to Rangkuti (2016), this analysis helps organizations formulate realistic strategies based on internal and external conditions. David (2017) adds that SWOT is a strategic tool for identifying competitive positions and the direction of organizational development. In the context of PLN Mobile's promotion, a SWOT analysis is used to understand the potential and obstacles in implementing a marketing communications strategy so that the results can be used as a basis for more effective and measurable decision-making.

Tabel 1. Previous Research

No	Author, Year	Title	Method	Research result	Research Differences
1	Lengkey, Mandey & Soepono (2022)	The Influence of Promotion and Electronic Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction of PLN Mobile Application Users	Multiple Linear Regression	Promotion has no significant effect; electronic service quality has a significant effect on customer satisfaction	Focus on customer satisfaction, while this research emphasizes more on promotional strategies in the context of financial transactions.
2	Mahfiarti et al. (2024)	Analysis of Promotion and Service Quality of PLN Mobile Application on Customer Decisions to Increase Power	Multiple Linear Regression	Promotion and service quality have a significant influence both partially and simultaneously.	Examining the decision to add power, in contrast to this research which focuses on promoting applications for financial transactions.
3	Hidayati (2018, Surabaya)	The Influence of Customer Trust, Electronic Service Quality, and Promotion on the PLN Mobile Application on Customer Satisfaction	Multiple Linear Regression	Promotion is not significant; trust and electronic quality are significant	Focus on trust & satisfaction, while this research emphasizes financial transaction promotion strategies
4	Nasution et al. (2023, Binjai)	Effectiveness of Using the PLN Mobile Application in Customer Service	Qualitative (Interview & Observation)	The application is effective but socialization is still limited.	Discussing the effectiveness of services, while this study highlights promotional strategies for financial transactions.
5	Ahzahro (2023,	Strategy to Increase the Use of PLN	TAM analysis	TAM is effective, but literacy and internet	Using TAM, focusing on digital innovation; this

PLN MOBILE APPLICATION PROMOTION STRATEGY IN FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS AT PT. PLN (PERSERO) CUSTOMER SERVICE UNIT OF MEMPAWAH CITY

Marwaji et al

	Tulung Klaten)	Mobile Digital Innovation		network constraints are significant.	research is specific to promotional strategies in financial transactions.
6	Putri & Azizah (2025, Rungkut)	Implementation of PLN Mobile Application Marketing	Descriptive Quantitative	Efficiency increases, literacy & socialization barriers still exist	Discussing marketing & efficiency, this research is more on financial transaction promotion strategies.
7	Putri & Samsudin (2023, Bojonegoro)	Efforts to Improve Marketing and Service of the PLN Mobile Application	Descriptive	Educational socialization is beneficial and increases public understanding.	Focus on socialization, while this research emphasizes the promotion of financial transactions
8	Ramadanty (2023, Bandung)	Integrated Marketing Communication Strategy of PLN UP3 Bandung	Qualitative (Descriptive)	IMC strategy is implemented effectively	Discussing IMC in Bandung, this study is different from the one that emphasizes the promotion of financial transactions in Mempawah City.
9	Sayuti et al. (2023)	The Use of Strategic Management Systems on the Quality of Prepaid Electricity Customer Service	SWOT / EFAS-IFAS	Effective strategic management system improves service quality	Focus on prepaid service quality management strategies, in contrast to this research which emphasizes financial transaction promotion strategies.
10	Khoirotin & Sylvatri (2023, Pasuruan)	Marketing Strategy for the New PLN Mobile Application to Increase the Number of Downloads	Descriptive Qualitative	Kampoeng Event success 100% downloads in one community	Focusing on event marketing & application downloads, this research focuses on financial transaction promotion strategies at ULP Mempawah City

The conceptual framework in this study is built on previously described theories, which include the concepts of TAM, marketing mix, digital marketing, promotion, and SWOT analysis. These theories form the conceptual basis for assessing the effectiveness of the PLN Mobile application promotion strategy. The relationship between internal factors such as product, promotion, and human resources, with external factors such as digital literacy and network infrastructure, is the focus of the analysis in determining the effectiveness of the promotion. Thus, this conceptual framework guides the study in identifying the extent to which the implemented promotional strategy is able to increase the utilization of the PLN Mobile application at PT. PLN (Persero) ULP Mempawah City.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods to analyze the promotional strategy of the PLN Mobile application at PT. PLN (Persero) ULP Mempawah City. This approach was chosen so that researchers could understand in depth the effectiveness of the promotion and the obstacles faced in increasing application usage. The data used were qualitative data from in-depth interviews with employees and customers, direct observation of promotional activities, and documentation in the form of company reports and documents. Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman interactive model through three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. In addition, a SWOT analysis was also used to identify internal and external factors that influence promotional effectiveness, so that the research results can provide relevant and applicable strategic recommendations for increasing the use of PLN Mobile at ULP Mempawah City.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The promotional strategy implementation at PT. PLN (Persero) ULP Mempawah City includes advertising through banners, banners, and brochures, as well as personal selling by employees who provide direct explanations

to customers. However, sales promotions are still rarely carried out, while publicity is limited to collaboration with local media and communities. Based on the views of Kotler & Keller (2016), the promotion has not optimally implemented integrated marketing communications (IMC). Field results show that the public prefers interactive promotions, while young customers respond well to digital promotions such as social media and WhatsApp blasts. Therefore, PLN needs to balance the use of conventional and digital media to make promotional strategies more effective and reach all customer segments.

The main obstacles to PLN Mobile promotion in Mempawah City include low digital literacy among the public, especially among elderly customers who have difficulty operating the application, and limited internet connectivity in remote areas. According to Kotler & Keller (2016), the low perception of ease and usefulness due to these factors hinders technology adoption. Furthermore, limited human resources and promotional budgets also slow down the implementation of promotional activities. Customers still tend to choose traditional payment methods such as PPOB or BRILink because they are considered more practical. These barriers are multidimensional—technical, cognitive, structural, and cultural—which are interrelated and overall reduce the effectiveness of promotions and the level of utilization of the PLN Mobile application in Mempawah City.

Despite facing various obstacles, the promotion of PLN Mobile in Mempawah City was supported by several positive factors. The app boasts comprehensive features such as payments, token purchases, and outage reporting, which are a major draw for customers because they offer fast and convenient service. According to Tjiptono (2019), product or service excellence is a crucial factor in successful promotions, ensuring PLN Mobile has strong product capital. Furthermore, PLN employees actively conducting on-site education helped foster public trust, while word-of-mouth promotion expanded user reach. Support from PLN's central digital transformation policy and the increasing trend of smartphone use also strengthened the effectiveness of the promotion, providing PLN Mobile with a solid foundation for further development.

The main weakness of the PLN Mobile promotional strategy at the Mempawah City ULP is its reliance on conventional media such as banners and brochures, which are less effective in reaching the younger generation. According to Belch & Belch (2018), modern marketing communications require digital media integration, yet PLN's use of social media remains limited. Other obstacles include limited internet access, low data quotas, and customer concerns about app misuse. Public awareness of the app has not been matched by adequate understanding, while promotional strategies have not yet adapted to the differing needs of different segments. Promotions are also not inclusive of groups such as the elderly or micro-SMEs. Therefore, a community-based approach through direct education and strengthening digital infrastructure is needed to make promotional strategies more adaptive, inclusive, and effective in reaching all levels of society.

Based on the analysis, an effective promotional strategy for PLN Mobile is the implementation of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) with a segmentative approach. For younger customers, promotions need to be strengthened through social media, short video content, and creative digital campaigns. While for older customers or rural communities, a face-to-face approach through outreach in villages, markets, or community events is more appropriate. According to Kotler & Keller (2016), IMC allows for consistent messaging across multiple channels, effectively reaching different segments. Furthermore, providing incentives such as sweepstakes or bonuses for new customers can increase interest in using the app. This combination of digital, face-to-face promotions, and incentives is expected to expand the adoption of PLN Mobile and support PLN's ongoing digital transformation.

CONCLUSION

The PLN Mobile promotional strategy at the Mempawah City ULP still faces weaknesses such as low digital literacy, limited outreach, and the dominance of conventional promotions. However, significant opportunities through social media, community events, and loyalty programs can be utilized to increase promotional effectiveness. The right strategy formulation is the implementation of integrated marketing communications (IMC) that combines digital marketing, face-to-face promotions, direct education, and collaboration with the community. This strategy is expected to increase adoption of the PLN Mobile application, encourage digital financial transactions, and support the sustainable transformation of PLN services. It is hoped that in the future, PLN ULP Mempawah City will combine face-to-face and digital promotions in a targeted manner, with direct education and follow-up through video tutorials. Create engaging and simple content on social media, involve community leaders as promotional agents, provide incentives for initial transactions, and conduct direct training on application usage.

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