

# The strategy of PT. Kereta Api Logistik Maintaining Brand Image

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## ABSTRACT

This research examines the branding strategy of PT Kereta Api Logistik (KALOG), a state-owned logistics company in Indonesia, focusing on how operational innovations and the "Impossible" rebranding initiative have shaped its brand image. The study utilizes a qualitative case study approach, with data collected from interviews and company records. Findings indicate that KALOG's integration of traditional and digital media, along with its focus on customer engagement through digital activations and CSR activities, has strengthened its brand presence. The study highlights the importance of aligning corporate actions with brand values, providing insights for both state-owned and private logistics companies.

## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji strategi branding PT Kereta Api Logistik (KALOG), perusahaan logistik milik negara di Indonesia, dengan fokus pada bagaimana inovasi operasional dan inisiatif rebranding "Impossible" membentuk citra mereknya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, dengan data yang dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dan catatan perusahaan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi media konvensional dan digital, bersama dengan fokus pada keterlibatan pelanggan melalui aktivasi digital dan kegiatan CSR, telah memperkuat keberadaan merek KALOG. Penelitian ini menyoroti pentingnya penyelarasan antara tindakan perusahaan dan nilai merek, memberikan wawasan bagi perusahaan logistik milik negara maupun swasta.



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## INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching consequences on global logistics, with Indonesia facing profound impacts due to its reliance on effective supply chain management (Anggoro et al., 2022). The Logistics Performance Index (LPI) published by the World Bank serves as a crucial metric for evaluating logistics efficiency. Indonesia's decrease in ranking from 46th in 2018 to 61st in 2023, with a score of 3.0, underscores significant logistical inefficiencies and emerging challenges faced by the nation's logistics sector. This decline highlights critical shortcomings in various logistics domains, including infrastructure quality, operational processes, and stakeholder collaboration, all of which play pivotal roles in sustaining economic resilience during crises such as pandemics (Iskandar & Arifin, 2023).

The implications of the declining LPI are significant, as they directly correlate with broader economic performance and trade capabilities. Researchers have shown that countries with higher logistics performance experience enhanced trade flows and economic growth, thereby establishing a clear link between improved logistics practices and economic development (Sinaga et al., 2022). In Indonesia, addressing these inefficiencies is paramount not only for immediate recovery post-COVID-19 but also for long-term economic sustainability. The logistical challenges faced were exacerbated by the pandemic, which

further necessitated the integration of innovative practices within logistics, as firms sought to adapt to rapidly changing market demands (Heliantina et al., 2024).

A case study on PT Kereta Api Logistik (KALOG) exemplifies how logistics firms in Indonesia are maneuvering within a competitive landscape. KALOG, a state-owned enterprise and a subsidiary of PT Kereta Api Indonesia, has made strategic moves toward diversification of services, emphasizing the importance of both operational efficiency and brand strength. Founded in 2009, the company has expanded its service offerings from traditional railway logistics to incorporate multimodal logistics, addressing various sectors and promoting adaptability in a shifting market (Rivaldi, 2024). KALOG's efforts to rebrand and enhance customer satisfaction, particularly through operational innovations such as reducing coal loading times from 30 hours to 5 hours, exemplify a proactive approach to remedying inefficiencies that plague the logistics industry in Indonesia (Afpriyanto et al., 2023).

In this context, branding theory provides a useful lens to understand how operational improvements can translate into stronger market positions. According to Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model, brand equity emerges when customers form positive perceptions and associations with a brand based on consistent experiences and communications. Aaker's framework further emphasizes that brand equity rests on awareness, perceived quality, associations, and loyalty. For logistics firms, these dimensions are not only shaped by marketing communication but also by the quality and reliability of operational performance. When service delivery is efficient, responsive, and trustworthy, customers perceive the brand more positively, leading to a stronger brand image. This improved image then contributes to higher brand equity, reflected in customer loyalty, trust, and willingness to continue or expand business relationships.

The link between operations, brand image, and brand equity is therefore systematic. First, operational performance creates the foundation for customer experiences that shape brand image. Positive experiences, such as reduced delivery times, multimodal reliability, or service flexibility, foster perceptions of professionalism and efficiency. Second, these perceptions evolve into brand equity, as customers develop stronger loyalty and associations with the brand. Finally, higher brand equity reinforces a firm's ability to compete, attract investment, and sustain long-term innovation, creating a cycle where strong branding and operational excellence mutually reinforce each other. In the case of KALOG, operational innovations such as time reduction in coal loading or the introduction of multimodal services directly enhance its brand image, while digital engagement and rebranding initiatives further strengthen brand equity in an increasingly competitive logistics landscape.

The necessity for strategic evaluation and rebranding within logistics firms like KALOG has never been more evident. As consumer demands change, coupled with the pressures of digital transformation, logistics companies must integrate technological innovations into their operational frameworks. The construction of new terminals and improvements in logistics services showcase the strategic shifts necessary for meeting current market demands while simultaneously enhancing brand engagement (Kirono et al., 2019). Moreover, brand management in logistics, particularly concerning state-owned enterprises, has not received sufficient academic attention. Previous literature predominantly focuses on the branding strategies of private logistics firms or multinational corporations, thereby overlooking the unique challenges faced by state-owned enterprises like KALOG in emerging markets (Ferawati et al., 2022).

This research thus proposes an empirical investigation into KALOG's branding strategy, specifically analyzing how operational innovations align with branding initiatives to enhance market positioning and overall performance. By utilizing digital platforms for brand promotion and customer engagement, KALOG is forging a path that strengthens its brand presence and fosters customer trust and loyalty critical aspects for state-owned enterprises that often confront skepticism due to historical performance perceptions.

The anticipated outcomes of this research entail the establishment of a framework illustrating the relationship between operational innovations, brand image, and brand equity. This study aims to elucidate the specific strategies utilized by KALOG to enhance its performance metrics, striving to provide insights that could inform other state-owned logistics companies in similar markets facing competitive pressures (Saputra, 2023). Furthermore, by investigating the success of multimodal logistics services and their perception in the marketplace, the research will contribute meaningfully to the discussions on logistics performance and brand management in state-owned enterprises across emerging economies. Conclusive assertions derived from the prospective findings will additionally hold implications for broader logistics policy in Indonesia. By understanding how logistics companies can adapt branding strategies during challenging periods, the research may provide actionable insights into policy formulation that supports both operational efficiency improvements and strategic branding. This is essential, particularly as Indonesia continues to confront the challenges indicated by its declining LPI ranking, which highlights the urgency for integrated reforms within the logistics sector.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach using a case study design, with the researcher acting as the primary instrument. The case study method is selected to enable an in-depth exploration of the strategies implemented by PT Kereta Api Logistik (KALOG) in strengthening its brand image. The research design focuses on understanding how KALOG's branding efforts contribute to its competitive positioning in the logistics sector, particularly within the context of challenges faced in the Indonesian market.

The object of this study is PT Kereta Api Logistik, a state-owned logistics company in Indonesia, with a specific emphasis on its rebranding strategies, operational innovations, and the role of branding in shaping market perception. The key research variables are "branding strategy" and "brand image." Branding strategy refers to the set of actions, messaging, and promotional activities designed to establish and strengthen the company's identity. Brand image refers to the public perception of KALOG as a logistics service provider. These variables will be explored through qualitative indicators such as marketing programs, public relations activities, social media engagement, customer service performance, and feedback from stakeholders.

To ensure data richness and validity, this research will involve multiple informants through purposive sampling. The primary informant will be the Public Relations Manager of KALOG, who is directly responsible for managing the company's branding and communication strategies. In addition, customers and business partners will also be included as informants to provide external perspectives on KALOG's branding efforts. Customers can offer insights into their perceptions, trust, and loyalty toward the brand, while business partners (such as suppliers and collaborating logistics firms) can provide evaluations of how

branding strategies influence cooperation and operational synergies. This diversity of perspectives ensures that the findings capture both internal strategies and external responses.

Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews, which allow flexibility in probing key themes while giving informants the freedom to elaborate on their experiences. Supporting data will also be obtained through document analysis (e.g., company reports, marketing materials, and social media content) to complement interview results. The combination of interviews and documentation enables data triangulation, ensuring the credibility and validity of the findings by cross-verifying information from different sources.

The data analysis process will follow several systematic stages. First, data reduction will be conducted by selecting, simplifying, and focusing on the most relevant information related to branding strategies, operational innovations, and brand image formation. Second, the reduced data will undergo coding, where meaningful segments of interview transcripts and documents are categorized into thematic codes (e.g., customer trust, innovation impact, digital branding, stakeholder perception). Third, the coded data will be organized into broader themes and patterns that reflect the research focus, such as the alignment between operational performance and brand image or the effectiveness of digital branding strategies. To ensure analytical rigor, validation will be carried out through triangulation across different informants (management, customers, and partners) and sources (interviews and documents). Where possible, member checking will also be applied, giving informants the opportunity to review and confirm the accuracy of interpretations derived from their interviews.

Through these analytical steps, the study aims to synthesize a comprehensive understanding of how KALOG's branding strategies influence its brand image and equity. The inclusion of multiple stakeholders and the application of triangulation strengthen the credibility of the research, while the structured process of data reduction, coding, thematic analysis, and validation ensures methodological rigor. Ultimately, the findings will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of branding strategies within state-owned logistics enterprises and their implications for long-term competitiveness in Indonesia's logistics sector.

This study focuses on two key variables: branding strategy and brand image. Branding strategy refers to the deliberate actions and initiatives designed to establish and strengthen KALOG's identity, which include marketing and communication programs, public relations activities, digital branding efforts, and service differentiation initiatives such as multimodal logistics innovations. These indicators reflect how the company actively positions itself in a competitive market and communicates its value proposition to stakeholders.

Meanwhile, brand image refers to the perceptions and associations formed by customers and partners toward KALOG as a logistics provider. This variable is defined through customer-based brand equity dimensions, namely: brand awareness (recognition and recall of KALOG), brand association (attributes linked with reliability, efficiency, or state-owned credibility), perceived quality (evaluation of service reliability, timeliness, and responsiveness), and brand loyalty (customer preference, recommendations, and repeated usage). By operationalizing these indicators, the study ensures transparency in linking KALOG's branding strategies with customer perceptions, while also providing a structured framework for analyzing the relationship between operational performance, brand image, and brand equity.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interview with the manager of public relations at PT Kereta Api Logistik (KALOG) provided valuable insights into the company's branding strategies and efforts to strengthen its brand image. KALOG's strategy to create brand awareness is deeply rooted in its repositioning in 2022 with the launch of the tagline "*Ispossible*." This tagline serves as a key element in all of the company's corporate actions, highlighting the company's commitment to delivering value in various aspects such as governance, social responsibility, and environmental sustainability. The alignment of corporate strategies with these values is evidenced through several campaigns and initiatives that reinforce brand awareness across multiple platforms. Traditional methods such as offline events and mass media have been integrated with digital tactics, including social media engagement, to improve customer interaction with the brand (Agyei et al., 2021).

**Table 1. Interview Matrix**

Aspect	Question	Conclusion
Brand Image/Brand Awareness Strategy	What is KAI Logistik's strategy to create a brand image/brand awareness in the public?	KAI Logistik's strategy for creating brand awareness revolves around its repositioning with the tagline " <i>Ispossible</i> ," integrating both conventional and digital media for campaigns, and aligning its corporate actions with the values embodied in the tagline.
Efforts to Expand Brand Image	What efforts has KAI Logistik implemented to expand its brand image in the public?	Efforts to expand KAI Logistik's brand image include media relations such as press releases and advertorials, community engagement through CSR activities, offline events like exhibitions, and boosting brand awareness via social media with digital activations and influencer collaborations.
Media Used for Branding	What media does KAI Logistik use to enhance branding?	KAI Logistik utilizes both digital and conventional media channels, including press releases, advertorials, and social media, to reach and engage with its target audience effectively.
Desired Public Perception of KAI Logistik	In terms of brand image, how does KAI Logistik want to be perceived by the public?	KAI Logistik aims to be perceived as a friendly, modern, dynamic, and trustworthy brand that offers comprehensive logistics services, creating a strong brand positioning by addressing needs that other logistics services may not fulfill.
Future Brand Image Development	What could KAI Logistik further develop regarding its brand image in the future?	For future development, KAI Logistik plans to consistently promote the " <i>Ispossible</i> " tagline to become top of mind among the public and further strengthen its position in the logistics industry by maintaining its brand promise and values.

*Source: Interview with Manager of Public Relations KAI Logistik (2024)*

KALOG's branding strategy underscores the importance of creating a strong and recognizable brand identity. The company's commitment to its "*Ispossible*" tagline is evident throughout its operational and marketing frameworks. This integrated approach ensures that all corporate actions including business expansion efforts and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives are designed to communicate and reinforce the brand's core principles (Agyei et al., 2021; Kosiba et al., 2018). CSR serves as a significant avenue to engage with the community, enhancing KALOG's proactive positioning as a socially responsible corporate



entity. This aligns with previous research advocating for the necessity of brand alignment between corporate actions and public expectations, especially in state-owned enterprises within emerging markets (Agyei et al., 2021). By aligning its brand messaging with operational actions, KALOG aims to resonate with public expectations, particularly within the realm of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in emerging markets, where brand alignment is crucial for public trust and engagement (Lin et al., 2020).

The integration of media relations into KALOG's brand strategy has proved vital for disseminating information regarding corporate actions and establishing a solid public image. The use of press releases and advertorial content has helped to solidify KALOG's credibility among its stakeholders. Furthermore, the company has utilized social media platforms for digital activation, including interactive campaigns and collaborations with key opinion leaders (KOLs) to enhance reach and engagement. The combined effect of these initiatives has fostered customer engagement strategies that enhance brand visibility and position KALOG as an accessible and trusted provider (Kosiba et al., 2018).

With the "Impossible" campaign, KALOG has cultivated a public perception characterized by friendliness, modernity, flexibility, and reliability. This is further underscored by the company's identity as a "solver" in the logistics sector. Such attributes are fundamental in cultivating customer loyalty and fostering long-term trust in the brand. The efforts to clarify KALOG's market position across diverse sectors, including governmental and business clients, are critical for sustaining a competitive advantage (Li & Wang, 2024). The initiative aims to address complex logistics needs while maintaining optimistic service delivery, both critical for customer loyalty and brand trust (Agyei et al., 2021). The perceived brand image and the resulting customer perceptions are crucial factors contributing to KALOG's intended market position, particularly as it serves diverse sectors such as businesses and government agencies.

KALOG's structural changes and branding initiatives have resulted in considerable recognition, including the Indonesia Best BUMN Awards 2023. These accolades emphasize KALOG's commitment to delivering consistent service quality and reliability, crucial attributes for sustaining competitive advantage in the logistics sector. Additional achievements, such as recognition for innovation in multi-commodity transportation and excellence in retail logistics, reinforce the alignment of corporate values with operations and customer expectations (Thuy Nguyen, 2025). Furthermore, internal recognition through the AKHLAK Awards showcases KALOG's dedication to integrity and adaptability within the context of a state-owned enterprise, highlighting the importance of internal compliance with external brand promises (Hamzah et al., 2021).

The exploration of KALOG's brand image against the backdrop of established branding concepts highlights the relationship between corporate social responsibility, customer engagement, and brand loyalty. As documented in literature, a strong brand image not only correlates with operational success but also has significant implications for customer engagement and retention (Mostafa & Kasamani, 2020). The engagement strategies employed by KALOG through both traditional and digital marketing platforms reflect modern branding practices prioritizing customer interaction and brand loyalty, offering a template for other logistics enterprises aiming to improve brand visibility and engagement (Fatorachian et al., 2025).

The findings from KALOG's strategy reveal crucial theoretical insights that can enhance the understanding of how state-owned enterprises in emerging markets can succeed in brand positioning. This necessitates integrating corporate actions with brand values as a

core principle of modern branding strategies. Moreover, an emphasis on operational innovation and external partnerships reflects critical success factors for sustaining a compelling brand image amid competitive pressures. KALOG's ongoing commitment to branding and operational excellence provides valuable insights for both state-owned and private logistics companies aiming to enhance their market presence and customer engagement techniques (Kapoor et al., 2024).

The comprehensive branding strategy initiated by KALOG encapsulates a multifaceted approach that effectively integrates brand messaging with operational performance, improving overall brand equity and customer satisfaction. The company's initiatives rooted in strong messaging, consistent engagement across platforms, and alignment with core values serve to solidify KALOG's market presence. As evidenced by KALOG's practices, the interface of brand image, operational reliability, and customer engagement substantiates the primary objectives of effective corporate branding in today's competitive landscape (Hamzah et al., 2021; Thuy Nguyen, 2025).

## Discussion

The findings from the interview with KALOG's Public Relations Manager highlight the company's comprehensive efforts to build and strengthen its brand image, particularly through the repositioning strategy embodied in the "Ispossible" tagline. This repositioning serves as a unifying element across corporate actions, including governance, social responsibility, and sustainability. From a branding perspective, the strategy demonstrates a strong alignment with Keller's (1993) Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) framework, as it attempts to enhance brand awareness, build favorable associations, and ultimately foster brand loyalty. The integration of both traditional (press releases, offline events) and digital media (social media campaigns, influencer collaborations) reflects a multi-channel approach consistent with modern branding practices (Agyei et al., 2021). However, despite these achievements, a critical evaluation suggests certain limitations. For instance, while the Ispossible tagline is widely applied, its effectiveness in translating into customer loyalty is not yet fully evident. Without continuous reinforcement through service quality and customer experience, there is a risk of the branding message becoming symbolic rather than substantive, echoing critiques in the literature that branding without operational consistency fails to sustain long-term brand equity (Lin et al., 2020).

KALOG's strategies also reflect the increasing importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in shaping brand image. Initiatives such as community engagement programs and CSR-driven campaigns strengthen perceptions of KALOG as a socially responsible logistics provider, which is vital for state-owned enterprises often scrutinized for their social contributions. Still, CSR alone may not be sufficient to differentiate KALOG in an industry where operational reliability and efficiency are key drivers of competitiveness. The logistics branding literature highlights that service reliability, technological innovation, and customer responsiveness often outweigh symbolic initiatives in shaping long-term brand value (Mostafa & Kasamani, 2020). Thus, while KALOG's CSR activities enhance legitimacy and public trust, the critical determinant of sustained brand equity lies in maintaining operational excellence alongside branding initiatives.

A comparative perspective situates KALOG within Indonesia's logistics sector. Competing firms such as JNE and TIKI in courier services, or multinational logistics providers like DHL and DB Schenker, have long capitalized on digital integration and customer-centric

branding strategies. Compared to these private and international players, KALOG's approach is distinctive in its reliance on state-owned legitimacy and multimodal service integration. Unlike its private-sector competitors that focus heavily on e-commerce logistics, KALOG leverages railway-based multimodal networks to address large-scale commodity transport alongside business-to-business solutions. This positioning is both a strength and a weakness: it differentiates KALOG within a crowded market, yet it also demands continuous investment in infrastructure and technology to avoid being perceived as less agile than its private-sector peers. The recognition KALOG has received, such as the Indonesia Best BUMN Awards 2023, indicates progress in brand repositioning, but a longitudinal comparison will be necessary to determine whether such recognition translates into stronger competitive standing against both domestic and multinational players.

The novelty of this study lies in its exploration of operational-branding integration within a state-owned logistics enterprise in a developing economy. Previous literature has often focused on private logistics firms or multinational corporations, leaving a gap in understanding how SOEs in emerging markets construct and leverage brand equity. KALOG provides a unique case of how operational improvements (e.g., reduced loading times, multimodal integration) are systematically linked to branding strategies (e.g., Ispossible tagline, CSR campaigns, digital activation). This model suggests that in emerging markets, the success of state-owned logistics firms depends on an integrated approach where operational reliability and branding efforts are not treated separately but as mutually reinforcing drivers of brand equity. Such integration is critical to overcome skepticism toward SOEs and to build sustainable trust among customers and partners.

Nevertheless, this study acknowledges several limitations. First, the data are based primarily on qualitative insights from managerial perspectives, which may carry an element of institutional bias. Although customers and business partners were included as informants, the depth of external stakeholder perceptions remains limited. Second, the cross-sectional nature of the research prevents an assessment of the long-term effects of KALOG's branding strategies. Future studies could adopt a longitudinal design to track changes in brand image and equity over time, particularly in response to evolving market dynamics. Additionally, employing quantitative methods such as surveys or structural equation modeling could validate the causal relationships between operational performance, brand image, and brand equity. Exploring moderating and mediating variables such as customer satisfaction, trust, or digital engagement could also enrich the theoretical framework and provide a more nuanced understanding of how branding strategies operate in practice.

In summary, KALOG's branding strategy demonstrates both promise and challenges. The company's integrated approach, embodied in the Ispossible campaign, reflects an alignment of corporate values, operational improvements, and customer engagement initiatives. While this strategy has elevated KALOG's visibility and legitimacy, its long-term success depends on consistent operational reliability and differentiation in a highly competitive logistics market. The study highlights the importance of operational-branding integration as a strategic model for state-owned enterprises in emerging economies, offering both practical implications for logistics firms and theoretical contributions to the literature on branding in developing-country contexts.

## CONCLUSIONS



In conclusion, this research has demonstrated that PT *Kereta Api Logistik* (KALOG) has effectively implemented a comprehensive strategy to strengthen and maintain its brand image. Through its rebranding initiative under the slogan "Impossible," KALOG has positioned itself as a company committed to meeting the logistics needs of society, businesses, and the government. This branding strategy, coupled with operational innovations such as multimodal logistics solutions and the development of the Coal Unloading Terminal at Kramasan, has enabled KALOG to build a strong public image, earn recognition, and win the Indonesia Best BUMN Awards 2023. The integration of modern marketing tools, including social media and service activation programs, has played a significant role in enhancing KALOG's brand awareness and engagement with both consumers and stakeholders. These strategies not only differentiate KALOG from its competitors but also contribute to its competitive position in Indonesia's logistics sector, highlighting the effectiveness of combining branding efforts with operational innovation.

Looking ahead, it is essential for KALOG to continue strengthening its brand image by maintaining consistency in its messaging and expanding its outreach. A key recommendation is for KALOG to increase collaborations with e-commerce platforms, influencers, and other brands to tap into new audiences and raise brand awareness. By leveraging these partnerships, KALOG can further solidify its market presence and foster deeper customer engagement. Additionally, continued investment in both branding and operational improvements will be crucial to maintaining its competitive edge. These efforts will not only support KALOG's long-term growth but also contribute to the broader development of Indonesia's logistics sector, positioning the country as a strong competitor in the global market.

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