

Oreo x Blackpink: Creative Strategy and the Dynamics of the Cultural Industry

(Oreo x Blackpink: *Strategi Kreatif dan Dinamika Industri Budaya*)

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze creative economy strategies and cultural industry dynamics through a case study of the Oreo x Blackpink collaboration. The research method used is qualitative with a case study. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation and literature review. As a global brand that has become part of contemporary popular culture, Oreo leverages the nostalgic value and the consumption ritual of "twist, lick, dip" to maintain its market position. The collaboration with K-pop icon Blackpink is a creative marketing strategy that uses limited-edition packaging design, new flavor variants, and the inclusion of exclusive photocards to attract the interest of the younger generation and create collective demand. Economically, this strategy has proven effective, achieving a market share of 28.31% and becoming the most popular cookie brand in 2022. However, this analysis also highlights the sustainability challenges of the strategy, which risks being perceived as a seasonal gimmick if not accompanied by substantial product innovation. The study concludes that while popular culture integration can provide a significant short-term sales boost, companies need continuous innovation to build deeper consumer relationships at the macro business scale.

Keywords: Creative Economy, Cultural Industry, Oreo, Blackpink, Marketing Strategy

Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi ekonomi kreatif dan dinamika industri budaya melalui studi kasus kolaborasi Oreo x Blackpink. Metode penelitian menggunakan kualitatif dengan studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi dan studi literatur. Sebagai merek global yang telah menjadi bagian dari budaya populer kontemporer, Oreo memanfaatkan nilai nostalgia dan ritual konsumsi "putar, jilat, celup" untuk mempertahankan posisi pasarnya. Kolaborasi dengan ikon K-pop Blackpink merupakan strategi pemasaran kreatif yang menggunakan desain kemasan edisi terbatas, varian rasa baru, serta penyertaan photocard eksklusif untuk menarik minat generasi muda dan menciptakan permintaan kolektif. Secara ekonomi, strategi ini terbukti efektif dengan pencapaian market share sebesar 28,31% dan menjadi merek kue kering terpopuler pada tahun 2022. Namun, analisis ini juga menyoroti tantangan keberlanjutan strategi yang berisiko dianggap sebagai gimmick musiman jika tidak dibarengi dengan inovasi produk yang substansial. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa meskipun integrasi budaya populer mampu memberikan dorongan penjualan jangka pendek yang signifikan, perusahaan memerlukan inovasi berkelanjutan untuk membangun hubungan konsumen yang lebih mendalam di skala bisnis makro.

Kata Kunci: Ekonomi Kreatif, Industri Budaya, Oreo, Blackpink, Strategi Pemasaran

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Introduction

In the global cultural industry landscape, many major brands face significant challenges in maintaining relevance among a dynamic, young audience. Often, products produced in macromarkets offer little substantial innovation beyond changes in packaging design and associations with famous figures. This has led to criticism that many current marketing strategies are merely "seasonal gimmicks" that lack long-term impact for consumers or companies. For Adorno (2020), culture is no longer a vehicle for enlightenment or social critique, but rather a commodity mass-produced by giant "factories" for profit. From the perspective of the cultural industry, there is concern that consumers are purchasing products not for their real added value, but rather for the manipulation of visual identity and popularity alone.

In response to these challenges, Oreo implemented a creative economy strategy through a strategic collaboration with global pop culture icon Blackpink (Malihah & Meilania, 2023). The solution offered included the launch of limited-edition products with packaging designs closely aligned with the artists' visual identities, unique flavors to enhance the sense of exclusivity, and the inclusion of collectible merchandise such as photocards and stickers. This strategy was designed to build an emotional bond between the brand, artist, and fans through creative promotional content that integrates contemporary pop songs and identities (Christiansen & Utami, 2023). Collaborations between well-known brands and pop culture icons have become an increasingly popular marketing strategy.

Oreo, a global biscuit brand known for its two-layer chocolate and cream biscuit design, sought to expand its market share through a collaboration with Blackpink. Blackpink is a South Korean girl group with millions of fans worldwide. The primary goal of this collaboration was to increase brand awareness among the younger generation, particularly teenagers and young adults who are fans of K-pop culture (Hartadi & Ardia, 2023). Amidst the fierce competition in the food industry, Oreo leverages its status as part of contemporary popular culture to stay relevant to current trends.

Various other industries have implemented similar strategies in creative collaboration. For example, McDonald's launched a menu package with special purple packaging (BTS's identity color) and two new sauces (Cajun and Sweet Chili). Its main products (nuggets and potatoes) remained the same as standard mass production. However, by adding BTS's visual touch, McDonald's succeeded in creating commodity fanaticism (Khoiriah & Rahmawan, 2022). Fans no longer buy food to fill their stomachs (use value), but rather to own the packaging as a cultural artifact (Nurcholis & Hakimah,

2022). Then, Indomie partnered with the girl group NewJeans as Global Brand Ambassadors to launch a "Korean Ramyeon" flavor variant (A'izza & Salisah, 2025). Although marketed as "new and different" due to the association with NewJeans, it is technically still an automated mass-produced instant noodle. The difference in flavor is simply a slight variation within the same production system to give consumers the illusion of choice.

Analyzing this phenomenon is crucial considering whether Oreo's strategy is achieving its objectives. It's crucial to consider the strategy's effectiveness to ensure collaboration-based marketing strategies deliver sustainable added value. Without tangible product innovation and deeper consumer engagement, these collaborations risk losing traction after the initial surge of interest subsides (Hidayatullah & Anisah, 2024). Therefore, a critical understanding of the dynamics of the cultural industry is essential to maintaining product longevity in the market.

Based on the background of the problem outlined, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the creative economy strategy in the Oreo x Blackpink collaboration in attracting the attention of a younger audience and increasing brand awareness. This research is expected to contribute to the implementation of Adorno's perspective in modern marketing practices, where the boundaries between art (pop culture) and commodities are increasingly blurred.

Methods

This analysis uses a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach in the food and beverage creative economy sector. Data were collected through observations of product visual elements, macro distribution strategies, and a review of secondary data from 2022 market reports. The analysis focuses on aspects of visual art packaging, packaging technology, and the economic impact of limited-edition strategies.

This research utilizes Theodor Adorno's Cultural Industry theory. This approach is used to examine how Oreo, as part of the global macro food industry, standardizes its product through large-scale automated production processes. The analysis focuses on the phenomenon of pseudo-individualization, where changes in the visual aesthetics of packaging and associations with pop icon Blackpink create the illusion of uniqueness for a product that remains substantially uniform with other biscuit variants. Furthermore, this approach evaluates the creation of "false needs" through exclusive merchandise collectibility strategies that manipulate fan loyalty for the sake of capital accumulation.

Result And Discussion

Oreo x Blackpink Marketing Strategy

Oreo is a well-known biscuit brand consisting of two chocolate biscuits sandwiched between a sweet white cream layer. These biscuits have a rich, slightly bitter

chocolate flavor, which, combined with the sweet cream, creates a very distinctive flavor contrast. The two-layer chocolate biscuit design with a cream layer in the middle, along with the distinctive embossed motif on the surface of the biscuit, makes Oreos instantly recognizable and appealing. Oreos are designed to be eaten in a variety of fun ways. One of the most popular is the "twist, lick, and dunk," where people separate the two layers of the biscuit, lick the cream layer, and then dip the biscuit in milk (Kurniawan & Rojabi, 2025). Oreo uses packaging with a convenient seal, making it easy for consumers to open and close the package while keeping the biscuits fresh. This packaging minimizes air entry, extending shelf life without compromising quality. In terms of visuals/appearance of Oreo products, Oreo packaging design has iconic colors and easily recognizable graphic elements, followed by a biscuit design with an embossing pattern that adds artistic value, and playful advertising visuals. Oreo packaging has a strong aesthetic value with a dominant fresh blue color, an iconic bold logo, and a tempting visual of a biscuit floating on milk. The design combines modern and dynamic elements, creating an energetic and attention-grabbing impression, while reflecting universal appeal for all ages.

Oreo has become a part of popular culture due to its unique characteristics as a globally recognized product, representing today's shopping lifestyle. Oreos also hold nostalgic significance, as many people recall eating these biscuits as children, especially with the ritual of dipping them in milk. Oreo products themselves have entered contemporary popular culture because they consistently follow trends by releasing new, eye-catching flavors. Oreos are considered a macro business because they are part of the global food and beverage industry, encompassing extensive production, distribution, and marketing. This places Oreo in a large-scale economy influenced by factors such as international trade policies.

Oreos reflect the dynamics of a macro business that involves many countries and impacts the food industry as a whole. Furthermore, Oreo collaborated with Blackpink and implemented a creative and visual economy strategy (Rante, 2023). Oreo implemented several key elements of the creative economy to attract consumers. The strategy implemented by Oreo x Blackpink is as follows:

Table 1. Oreo x BlackPink Creative Strategy

| Creative Strategy | Description |
|--|---|
| Limited Editions & Packaging Design | The product is a limited-edition product using Blackpink's signature black and pink color scheme, creating an exclusive feel. |

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|---|--|
| Aesthetic Value and Identity | The product has a strong pink aesthetic. The packaging is pink, and the biscuits are pink, reinforcing Blackpink's identity. |
| Exclusive Merchandise | Includes photocards and collectible stickers to encourage repeat purchases by Blackpink fans. |
| Emotional Connection and Popular Culture | Leverage popularity to engage fans through creative promotional content that incorporates Blackpink's songs and identity. |

The Oreo x Blackpink collaboration strategy is a highly effective marketing move in the cultural industry, combining the power of a global brand with a global pop culture icon. Oreo uses a packaging design with Blackpink's signature colors (pink and black) and a unique biscuit embossing pattern to attract fans. As seen in each advertisement, this packaging comes in several color variants and includes the members' signatures for an exclusive feel.



Fig. 1 Oreo x Blackpink advertisement on Oreo's official Instagram

The advertisement featured a dominant pink color, representing Blackpink's identity. Another strategy was to capitalize on fan loyalty through merchandise. This

strategy included bonus photocards and collectible stickers inside the packaging. This created added value that encouraged collection interest and repeat purchases among loyal fans (Blinks). Capitalizing on emotional connections and popular culture, Oreo built a bond between the brand, artist, and fans through creative promotional content that utilized Blackpink's songs and identity, leveraged its position as part of contemporary popular culture to stay relevant to current trends. In addition to offering new flavors to provide an exclusive sensation, Oreo maintained its iconic "twist, lick, and dunk" ritual, which has been widely recognized for a long time.

The Oreo x Blackpink strategy demonstrated that in the cultural industry, the power of branding and celebrity association can provide a tremendous economic boost in a short time. However, the biggest challenge remains creating added value beyond mere packaging design to maintain long-term consumer loyalty. As stated in research conducted by Malihah & Meilania (2023), brand ambassadors have a big role in increasing purchasing interest so that sales volume will also increase.

Oreo x Blackpink: from a Cultural Industry Perspective

Collaborations between well-known brands and pop culture icons have become an increasingly popular marketing strategy in recent years. One notable example is the collaboration between Oreo, a global biscuit brand, and Blackpink, a South Korean girl group with millions of fans worldwide. Through this collaboration, they launched limited-edition products with unique packaging designs and various promotional activities designed to attract the attention of the younger generation.

The Oreo x Blackpink collaboration represents a concrete example of the commodification of the entertainment industry, where a music group's visual identity is transformed into economic currency. The use of black and pink design elements and the inclusion of exclusive photocards create an "artificial need" among fans to collect the product. Critically, this strategy exploits fans' emotional bonds to ensure repeat purchases, which in cultural industry theory is often viewed as an attempt to exploit consumer loyalty for short-term financial gain (Hidayatullah & Anisah, 2024).

Generally, the goal of such collaborations is to expand market share and increase brand awareness among a wider audience (Periti, 2020). By partnering with Blackpink, Oreo hopes to attract K-pop fans, particularly teenagers and young adults. However, the question remains whether this strategy will be effective long-term or simply a seasonal gimmick with a temporary impact.

One criticism that emerged was that the resulting product offered no significant innovation, beyond a change in packaging design and association with Blackpink. In terms of taste and quality, the product was essentially similar to other Oreo variants, raising questions about whether consumers were purchasing the product for its real added value or simply being lured by Blackpink's popularity. Furthermore, relying on celebrity popularity in a marketing strategy risk losing traction after the initial surge of interest subsides (Hidayatullah & Anisah, 2024). Without continued product innovation or efforts to build deeper relationships with consumers, such collaborations may only provide a temporary sales boost without significant long-term impact.

Oreo, as part of a global macro business, uses its distribution power to dominate the cookie market. Although packaged as an "exclusive" product, it is essentially mass-produced using high-speed automated machines. Critically, there is no significant innovation in taste or quality; consumers often pay more for Blackpink's "image" than for improved nutritional value or ingredient quality. This suggests that product standardization is merely an aesthetic overlay on the same commodity (Adorno, 2020). The iconic packaging design and use of fresh blue, combined with Blackpink's identity, aim to create an energetic impression that appeals to all ages. However, from a critical perspective, this visual aesthetic serves as a "distraction" that masks the industry's rigid and mechanical nature (Christiansen & Utami, 2023). The "twist, lick, dip" ritual promoted as contemporary popular culture is actually a branding effort designed to build nostalgia and early behavioral engagement.

From an economic perspective, the substantial investment made in collaborations with renowned artists must be commensurate with the profits earned (Arianty, 2024). Otherwise, this strategy could be considered inefficient and provide no significant added value to the company. Therefore, it's important to consider the balance between costs and benefits when designing a collaboration-based marketing strategy.

The collaboration resulted in a packaging design that is highly synonymous with Blackpink and offers additional benefits in the form of photocards and personalized videos from the group. The limited edition made Oreo X Blackpink highly sought after and created a sense of exclusivity. According to a survey by Compas (2023), this collaboration not only went viral but also became the most popular cookie brand in 2022, with revenue reaching around 724-million-rupiah, sales volume of 40.2%, and a market share of around 28.31%. However, there is a perception that such collaborations are seasonal and lack long-term impact. Interested consumers may simply be carried away by the hype, and without sustainable added value, the product may not have staying power in the market. In the cultural industry, such trends risk becoming seasonal gimmicks that quickly fade once the collaborator's popularity wanes.

The main criticism is the lack of integration of more substantial cultural elements, such as deeper artist involvement in the creative process or the development of Korean-inspired flavors. Without sustainable added value, this strategy only reinforces the fast-discarding consumption cycle typical of modern society. From Adorno's perspective, Oreo x Blackpink is not simply a marketing innovation, but rather a manifestation of the cultural industry that reduces the value of art (Blackpink) to a marketing tool for mass-selling a standardized commodity (Oreo). Its economic success, reaching hundreds of millions of rupiah in revenue and a large market share, demonstrates how effective this industry is in guiding mass tastes (Rizqita & Nurhaqiqi, 2024).

To increase the effectiveness of their marketing strategies, companies can consider integrating more substantial elements into their collaborations. For example, Oreo could develop new flavors inspired by Korean culture or involve Blackpink in the creative process of product development. Additionally, companies could leverage these collaborations to support social or environmental campaigns that align with the values held by both parties. The collaboration between Oreo and Blackpink has successfully

captured public attention and boosted sales in the short term. However, to create a more sustainable impact, companies need to deliver real product innovation and build deeper relationships with consumers (Fauzi & Mandala, 2019). Without these steps, such collaborations could potentially be perceived as seasonal gimmicks that offer no added value in the long term.

Conclusion

The Oreo and Blackpink collaboration was a brilliant short-term strategy that successfully built an emotional bond between the brand, artist, and fans. This strategy demonstrated that integrating popular culture into a macro product can generate a significant surge in sales. However, to create a long-term impact, companies are advised to develop more substantial innovations, such as local culture-based flavors or deeper creative engagement with the cultural icons they collaborate with. Without these steps, the collaboration would have been a fleeting phenomenon in the cultural industry. However, when viewed through Theodor Adorno's critical lens, this collaboration demonstrates patterns of standardization and pseudo-individualization. Beneath the exclusive packaging and the allure of pop icons, the product offered remains a mass commodity that lacks substantial innovation in its use value. In this case, the cultural industry successfully created a "false need" through collectibility mechanisms that transform fan loyalty into repetitive consumption behavior (Octaviany & Utami, 2024).

As a final reflection, while this collaboration represents a "genius strategy" for generating short-term profits and boosting brand awareness, it still risks becoming a seasonal gimmick. For a brand to survive in a sustainable macro-economy, it cannot rely solely on image manipulation and celebrity popularity. A deeper integration of cultural values and authentic product innovation are needed so that the relationship between producers and consumers is not based solely on trending distractions but on real and sustainable added value. Future research is expected to explore how consumer resistance to this culture industry pattern is emerging, and the extent to which global brands' reliance on K-pop talent impacts the long-term authenticity of their brand identities.

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