

## Community Building, Original Event Programming, Convenience, and Connectivity for SMEs in Digital Branding Moderated by Digital Literacy

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of community development, the organization of original events, convenience, and connectivity on digital branding for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Blitar, with an emphasis on the moderating role of digital literacy. The method used in this research is a quantitative approach with a Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA). The results show that community development and the organization of original events have a significant positive impact on digital branding, while convenience also plays a role in enhancing the effectiveness of digital branding. On the other hand, connectivity does not significantly influence digital branding. Digital literacy is proven to act as a moderator that strengthens the relationships between community development, event organization, and convenience with digital branding, highlighting the importance of digital skills in achieving successful branding. This study suggests that MSMEs in Blitar should pay greater attention to community development, creative events, and ease of digital services. Additionally, improving digital literacy among MSME owners and staff is crucial to optimize their digital branding efforts.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The number of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the food and beverage sector is rapidly increasing, particularly in the café business, where more than 80% of their customers discover these cafés through digital platform-based social media. Digital branding is crucial for café MSMEs in Blitar because it helps them improve competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market. With the development of technology and broader internet access, consumers now tend to search for information about dining places or cafés through digital platforms such as social media and search engines. Therefore, implementing an effective digital branding strategy can increase a café's visibility, making it easier for potential customers to find.

Furthermore, digital branding enables café MSMEs to reach a wider market, not only limited to Blitar but also extending to other regions or even outside the city. This is essential for expanding market reach and increasing sales potential. Digital branding greatly benefits café entrepreneurs as it allows them to interact more easily with customers through social media and other digital platforms, which in turn can strengthen customer relationships and loyalty. This interaction process also provides opportunities for cafés to receive direct feedback, which can be used to improve their services and products. In addition, digital branding offers cost-effective and efficient marketing solutions compared to traditional marketing methods such as print or television advertisements. Café MSMEs with limited resources can leverage digital branding to promote their businesses effectively without incurring significant costs.

Digital literacy also plays a crucial role in the development of digital branding. By improving digital literacy, café owners in Blitar can better understand the best ways to utilize various digital platforms to strengthen their branding. This knowledge will also help them adapt more easily to changing consumer trends, which increasingly prioritize convenience and ease of online transactions. Thus, research on digital branding for café MSMEs in Blitar provides essential insights to help them survive and thrive in the challenging digital era. In the context of rapid technological advancements, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia face challenges in adapting to digital marketing. Digitalization enables MSMEs to reach broader markets, improve operational efficiency, and strengthen their brand image through digital branding. Digital branding is crucial to enhancing competitiveness and attracting consumer attention.

The successful implementation of digital branding strategies is not only determined by the use of technology but also by various supporting factors such as community building, original event programming, convenience, and connectivity. Community building refers to efforts to build a strong community between MSMEs and their customers. This is important for creating trust-based relationships that can enhance customer loyalty. On the other hand, original event programming provides opportunities for MSMEs to create unique experiences that differentiate them from competitors. This strategy helps strengthen positive impressions of the brand in consumers' minds. Moreover, convenience or ease of access plays a crucial role in ensuring that customers can

easily interact with MSMEs through digital platforms. Connectivity, which involves the ability of MSMEs to maintain effective communication with customers, is also a key factor in building long-term relationships.

All of these aspects must be supported by adequate digital literacy so that MSME actors can utilize technology effectively. Digital literacy includes the ability to use, understand, and leverage digital technology effectively. Low digital literacy can be an obstacle in maximizing the potential of digital branding strategies. Research shows that adopting digital marketing can improve MSME performance and help them survive in increasingly tight competition (Moloeng, 2021; Shalsabila & Respati, 2023). This article will discuss how community building, original event programming, convenience, and connectivity contribute to MSME digital branding, with digital literacy as the moderating factor. This study is expected to provide new insights useful for MSMEs in developing more effective digital branding strategies. The research aims to understand the relationship between community building, original event programming, convenience, and connectivity on digital branding, with digital literacy as a moderating variable.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Community building plays a critical role in enhancing digital branding by fostering close relationships between brands and customers. Interactions within a community help businesses understand customer needs, increase loyalty, and expand brand awareness. According to Wahyuni et al. (2023), building a strong community enhances customer loyalty and provides essential social support for business sustainability. Positive interactions between MSME players and customers within a community strengthen brand image and improve product recognition in the market. By cultivating a community, MSMEs can create meaningful experiences that support their digital branding. Hypothesis H1: Community building influences digital branding. However, digital literacy significantly optimizes this process. Digital literacy enables MSME actors to leverage technology effectively for community development and enhance online customer interactions. As Nugroho and Andarini (2020) highlight, a high level of digital literacy among MSMEs ensures that they can build robust communities and maximize their impact on digital branding. Thus, digital literacy acts as a key factor that strengthens the relationship between community building and digital branding. Hypothesis H5: Digital literacy moderates the relationship between community building and digital branding.

Original event programming plays a significant role in enhancing MSME digital branding by creating unique and memorable experiences that increase customer engagement and strengthen brand identity. Specially designed events, such as product launches, workshops, or interactive sessions, help MSMEs attract consumer attention, build closer relationships, and foster brand loyalty. Research by Nafasari et al. (2023) highlights that events can enhance brand visibility, encourage positive social media interactions, and broaden market reach, ultimately improving brand recognition among a wider audience. Leveraging digital platforms to promote these events further allows MSMEs to reach a

broader audience and build supportive communities that contribute to sustainable business growth. Original event programming provides MSMEs with an opportunity to differentiate themselves from competitors and create strong emotional connections with customers. As Sari et al. (2020) state, well-designed events strengthen positive brand perceptions, thereby enhancing digital branding. Hypothesis H2: Original event programming influences digital branding. At the same time, digital literacy plays a crucial role in amplifying the effectiveness of original event programming. MSME players with high levels of digital literacy are better equipped to design engaging events, utilize digital tools effectively, and promote their events across various digital platforms. This increases event visibility and ensures stronger customer engagement, ultimately strengthening the brand's image. Research by Roblek et al. (2020) emphasizes that digital literacy enables MSMEs to optimize event planning and promotion, which enhances the impact of events on digital branding. Hypothesis H6: Digital literacy moderates the relationship between original event programming and digital branding.

Convenience has a significant influence on MSME digital branding by improving accessibility and ease of transactions for consumers. By leveraging digital technology, MSMEs can offer customers the ability to access products and services seamlessly without visiting physical locations. Research by Setiawati et al. (2021) highlights that digital marketing through social media and e-commerce platforms simplifies purchasing processes, leading to increased customer satisfaction and enhanced brand loyalty. Moreover, convenience in digital branding includes providing clear, accessible, and accurate product information, enabling customers to make purchasing decisions quickly and efficiently. Basry and Sari (2018) further emphasize that digital platforms allow consumers to easily purchase products, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction and strengthening the brand image. Simplified and accessible transactions play a critical role in increasing customer loyalty and improving the overall digital branding of MSMEs. Hypothesis H3: Convenience influences digital branding. At the same time, digital literacy plays an important role in optimizing the convenience offered through digital platforms. MSME players with high levels of digital literacy can leverage technology effectively to provide smoother and more efficient transaction experiences for customers. Mirfaqo et al. (2024) explain that MSMEs with strong digital literacy skills are better equipped to optimize online platforms, enhancing convenience in transactions and improving brand perception. Digital literacy enables MSME players to utilize tools such as automated payment systems, clear product displays, and user-friendly interfaces, which positively impact customer satisfaction and strengthen brand loyalty. Hypothesis H7: Digital literacy moderates the relationship between convenience and digital branding.

Connectivity plays a significant role in MSME digital branding by facilitating seamless interactions between brands and consumers. Through various digital platforms, such as social media, websites, and messaging applications, MSMEs can improve brand visibility and awareness. Research by Huda and Munandar (2021) highlights that active engagement on social media

can strengthen relationships with customers, increase interaction, and foster brand loyalty. By leveraging connectivity, MSMEs can reach broader audiences and deliver more personalized customer experiences, ultimately driving sales and business growth. Connectivity refers to an MSME's ability to maintain effective, continuous communication with customers through digital channels. Gupta and Singh (2020) emphasize that strong connectivity enables MSMEs to provide responsive and personalized services, enhancing customer satisfaction and fostering long-term relationships with their customers. Hypothesis H4: Connectivity influences digital branding. At the same time, digital literacy plays a critical role in maintaining and optimizing connectivity between MSME players and their customers. MSME actors with high levels of digital literacy are better equipped to utilize digital tools and communication platforms effectively, ensuring smooth and responsive interactions with customers. According to Alavi et al. (2023), business players with strong digital literacy can leverage social media, email marketing, and other communication tools to build and sustain relationships with customers, thereby enhancing brand loyalty. Digital literacy enables MSMEs to maximize connectivity, improving customer engagement and strengthening their digital branding efforts. Hypothesis H8: Digital literacy moderates the relationship between connectivity and digital branding.

In the context of digital marketing, various factors such as community building, original event programming, convenience, and connectivity collectively influence the strengthening of MSME digital branding. Research by Fauziyyah (2024) shows that digital marketing strategies that incorporate elements like community building and event programming significantly contribute to increasing brand awareness and influencing consumers' purchasing decisions. All these elements interact and strengthen one another, ultimately expanding market reach and enhancing brand positioning in the digital world. Additionally, digital literacy plays a moderating role in the relationships between the independent variables and digital branding. Research by Wandra (2023) emphasizes that MSMEs with high digital literacy are better able to utilize technology to build effective communication with customers and strengthen their communities, which in turn enhances the implementation of digital marketing strategies.

Other findings also indicate that factors such as product quality, website design, and digital interactions affect MSME sales, which often directly correlate with a strong brand image, as shown by Lailla et al. (2022). This research supports the idea that elements such as community building, event programming, convenience, and connectivity have significant impacts on digital branding, as they can increase customer engagement and encourage purchasing decisions. Overall, these findings reaffirm the importance of all these factors in developing MSME digital branding, with digital literacy as a key moderating factor that ensures marketing strategies are implemented effectively and optimally, resulting in a strong and sustainable brand image. Hypothesis H9: All independent variables collectively influence MSME digital branding, with digital literacy as a moderator.

## METHODOLOGY

This type of research is quantitative with primary data. Primary data is needed to determine community building, original event programming, convenience, and connectivity for SME's in Blitar City in digital branding moderated by digital literacy. The object of SME's research is a café business actor, purposive sampling is used because in this SME's who have done digital branding, namely a total of 66 café entrepreneurs, a systematically designed questionnaire using closed questions, of all returned questionnaires that were filled in completely were 56 respondents. Sample withdrawal with simple random sampling. Sample measurement using a Likert scale between 1 to 5. (Sugiyono, 2017). Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) data analysis is an analysis that is divided into regression equations and can determine moderator variables, this analysis is able to control the influence of moderator variables in maintaining sample integrity because it has a subgroup analysis. The equation model is as follows:

$$Y = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta M + \beta X_1 M (X_1 \cdot M) + \beta X_2 M (X_2 \cdot M) + \beta X_3 M (X_3 \cdot M) + \beta X_4 M (X_4 \cdot M) + \varepsilon$$

Independent variables community building (x1), original event programming (x2), convenience (x3), and connectivity (x4) dependent variable digital branding (y), moderating variable digital literacy (z).  $\beta$  is the variable coefficient and  $\varepsilon$  is the error. Pure moderators occur when there are equations or not different in two equations, namely in equations one and two but in other equations, namely equations four, five, six and seven, thus only referred to as independent variables (predictors) only and not as moderator variables (Ghozali, 2013). The moderation model has the following conceptual framework.

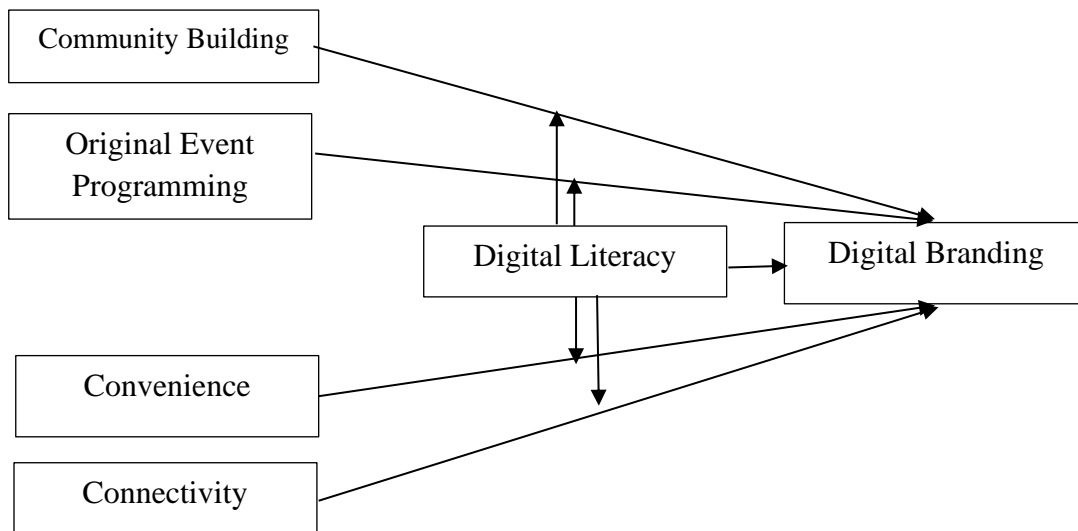


Figure 1. Concept Model

## RESEARCH RESULT

The results of data analysis on 56 café business people in Blitar show that the data is normally distributed as evidenced by the normality of the data with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test above 0.05, the following are the results:

Table 1. Data Normality  
 One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Predicted Value
N		56
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	15.7857143
	Std. Deviation	3.36859121
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.070
	Positive	.047
	Negative	-.072
Test Statistic		1.166
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.246 <sup>c</sup>

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

Data analysis for validity and reliability tests is shown from the results of the Corrected Item-Total Correlation for validity and Cronbach's Alpha for reliability. The research can be seen in table 2.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability

Variable	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	R- table	Cronbach's Alpha	Validity/ Reliability
X11	0,643	0.254		Valid
X12	0,639	0.254		Valid
X13	0,613	0.254		Valid
X14	0,544	0.254		Valid
Community Building			0.819	Reliable
X21	0,520	0.254		Valid
X22	0,394	0.254		Valid
X23	0,436	0.254		Valid
X24	0,571	0.254		Valid
Original Event Programming			0.795	Reliable
X31	0,384	0.254		Valid
X32	0,308	0.254		Valid
X33	0,351	0.254		Valid
Convenience			0.745	Reliable
X41	0,453	0.254		Valid
X42	0,669	0.254		Valid
X43	0,479	0.254		Valid
X44	0,338	0.254		Valid
Connectivity			0.794	Reliable
M11	0,306	0.254		Valid
M12	0,264	0.254		Valid

Variable	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	R-table	Cronbach's Alpha	Validity/Reliability
M13	0,361	0.254		Valid
M14	0,288	0.254		Valid
Digital Literacy			0.751	Reliable
Y11	0,819	0.254		Valid
Y12	0,759	0.254		Valid
Y13	0,469	0.254		Valid
Y14	0,474	0.254		Valid
Y15	0,731	0.254		Valid
Digital Branding			0.839	Reliable

Multicollinearity test is intended to determine the relationship between independent variables, while testing can be done by looking at VIF and tolerance numbers. The results can be concluded that for the Original Event Programming, Convenience, and Connectivity variables there is no multicollinearity between the independent variables in the model, indicated by the VIF value smaller than 10 and close to 1.

Table 3. Multicollinearity Test Value Inflation Factor (VIF)

Variable	VIF Value	Description
Community Building	1,823	No multicollinearity among independent variables in the regression model.
Original Event Programming	2,312	No multicollinearity among independent variables in the regression model.
Convenience	1,754	No multicollinearity among independent variables in the regression model.
Connectivity	2,916	No multicollinearity among independent variables in the regression model.

The autocorrelation test is used to determine the correlation between the dependent variable is not related to the value of the variable itself, either the value of the previous or subsequent periods. To detect autocorrelation, it can be done using the Durbin-Watson (DW) test. A good regression model if there is no autocorrelation. The existence of an autocorrelation contradicts one of the basic assumptions of multiple regression. This means that if there is autocorrelation, it can be said that the correlation coefficient obtained is less accurate. To determine the presence of autocorrelation, the Durbin-Watson test is used which can be seen from the multiple regression test results. Conventionally it can be said that a regression equation is said to have fulfilled the autocorrelation assumption if the value of the Durbin Watson test is close to two or more. The results show that there is no serial correlation between community building, original event



programming, convenience, connectivity, digital literacy and digital branding so that these variables are independent (no autocorrelation occurs) as indicated by  $du < dw < 4-du$  ( $1.724 < 1.973 < 2.276$ ).

The following are the results of the DW calculation:

Table 4. Durbin-Watson

Dl	du	4-du	4-dl	DW	Interpretation
1,414	1,724	2,276	2, 586	1,973	No autocorrelation

Table 5. Community Building on Digital Branding Moderated by Digital Literacy  
**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardize	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	d Coefficients Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.556	8.817		.630	.531
	Community Building	1.811	.685	.944	2.917	.036
	Digital Literacy	1.411	.678	.840	2.080	.042
	Moderasi_1	-.035	.063	-.430	-.558	.579

a. Dependent Variable: Digital Branding

The results show that H1 is accepted, it is evident that community building is significant to digital branding by 0.036. In the next hypothesis, H5 is rejected because it is not significant. These results indicate that pure moderation occurs where the direct effect is significant and the interaction of moderating variables is insignificant 0.579. Community building has a significant positive influence on digital branding. This study found that increasing community building efforts among MSME owners can strengthen their digital branding strategy, thereby increasing online presence and customer engagement.

Table 6. Online Event Programming on Digital Branding Moderated by Digital Literacy  
**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardize	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	d Coefficients Beta		
1	(Constant)	9.276	9.054		1.025	.310
	Original Event Programming	2.576	.477	.411	2.851	.040
	Digital Literacy	2.321	.438	.419	2.435	.036
	Moderasi_2	.059	.052	.887	1.122	.267

a. Dependent Variable: Digital Branding

The results show that H2 is accepted, it is evident that original event programming is significant to digital branding by 0.040. In the next hypothesis, H6 is rejected because it is not significant, namely 0.267. These results indicate that pure moderation occurs where the direct effect is significant and the interaction of moderating variables is not significant. Original event programs also play an important role in influencing digital branding. Research shows that hosting unique and original events can positively impact the way MSMEs are perceived digitally, increasing their branding effectiveness.

Table 7. Convenience on Digital Branding Moderated by Digital Literacy  
**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.653	9.006		.628	.533
	Convenience	2.421	.894	.407	2.219	.048
	Digital Literacy	2.691	.988	.709	2.931	.039
	Moderasi_3	.012	.066	.122	.181	.857

a. Dependent Variable: Digital Branding

The results show that H3 is accepted, it is evident that convenience is significant to digital branding at 0.048. In the next hypothesis, H7 is rejected because it is not significant, namely 0.857. These results indicate that pure moderation occurs where the direct effect is significant and the interaction of moderating variables is insignificant 0.267. The ease of digital marketing and online services contributes significantly to improving digital branding. MSMEs that prioritize user convenience in their digital interactions, either through ease of access or simplified online processes, will see better results in their branding strategy.

Table 8. Connectivity to Digital Branding Moderated by Digital Literacy  
**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	10.740	10.412		1.031	.307
	Connectivity	.727	.751	.513	.968	.338
	Digital Literacy	.282	.878	.168	.321	.749
	Moderasi_4	.064	.060	.985	1.062	.293

a. Dependent Variable: Digital Branding

The results show that H4 is rejected, it is evident that connectivity is not significant to digital branding at 0.339. In the next hypothesis, H8 is rejected because it is not significant, namely 0.749. This result shows that potential

moderation occurs where the direct effect is insignificant and the interaction of moderating variables is insignificant 0.293. However, connectivity was not found to have a significant impact on digital branding in this study. This may indicate that although connectivity is important for business operations, it does not necessarily have a direct impact on branding efforts like the other factors studied. When all variables in the regression analysis are not significant, the term used is Potential Moderation or Homologizer Moderator. This indicates that the variable may have the potential to be a moderating variable, although it does not currently show a significant effect on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, in this context, the moderating variable does not strengthen or weaken the relationship being analyzed.

Table 9. Digital Literacy on Digital Branding  
**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.093	2.031		.046	.964
	Digital Literacy	1.227	.156	.731	7.872	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Digital Branding

The results showed that H9 was accepted, which means that digital literacy has a significant effect on digital branding, the significance value is 0.000 below 0.05, the results of this study are in line with the research of Laila et.al.(2022).

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that community building has a significant influence on the development of digital branding in MSMEs. A solid community not only increases customer loyalty, but also expands brand reach in the digital world. However, the success of this strategy is greatly influenced by the level of digital literacy of MSME owners and employees. As found in previous studies, mastering digital skills allows MSMEs to more effectively manage online interactions with customers, strengthen relationships, and increase brand visibility across various digital platforms.

Previous research underlines the importance of original events in enhancing digital branding appeal. Unique and distinctive events can create buzz on social media and attract a wider audience. However, these events can only be successful if they are supported by adequate digital skills. Digital literacy acts as a key factor in ensuring that the promotion of the event is done well, whether through social media, websites, or other digital platforms. Without adequate digital skills, even an attractive event can lose its potential impact in strengthening digital branding.

This fast-growing digital era shows that user convenience is a very important factor in building digital branding. Research supports the finding that easy access to online services, such as purchasing or customer service through

digital platforms, plays an important role in creating a positive customer experience. However, the success of this digital convenience is highly dependent on the digital literacy level of MSME owners. With good digital skills, MSMEs can design a more efficient and responsive user experience, which in turn can improve their brand image in the digital world.

Connectivity plays a role in supporting overall business operations, including digital branding. However, according to some studies, good connectivity alone is not enough to strengthen digital branding without adequate digital skills. MSME owners who are skilled in using various digital tools can leverage existing connectivity to increase their brand presence, conduct more effective interactions with customers, and analyze data in greater depth to refine their branding strategies. Thus, digital literacy becomes a very important element in maximizing the potential of connectivity to strengthen digital branding.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Conclusions***

Digital literacy was found to be a moderator factor affecting the relationship between community building, event programming, convenience and digital branding. The presence of digital literacy significantly strengthens the relationship between these factors and MSMEs' digital branding efforts. This highlights the importance of equipping MSME owners and employees with adequate digital skills to effectively utilize digital tools and platforms for branding purposes.

The analysis showed that while the direct effect of some variables (community building, original event programming, and convenience) was significant, the moderating effect of digital literacy on the interaction between these variables and digital branding was not always significant, suggesting a pure moderating effect in some cases.

### ***Recommendations***

1. MSMEs should invest in community building activities and focus on organizing unique and memorable events to strengthen their digital branding.
2. Convenience should be a top priority in digital marketing strategies, ensuring a smooth online experience for customers.
3. While connectivity does not directly affect branding efforts, upgrading digital infrastructure can still improve overall business operations.
4. Continued development of digital literacy is essential to ensure that MSMEs can make optimal use of digital branding opportunities.

## **ADVANCED RESEARCH**

Advanced research on the moderating role of digital literacy in the relationship between community building, event programming, convenience, and digital branding demands a granular exploration of its mechanisms and boundary conditions. Future studies could employ multi-level modelling and structural equation analysis to distinguish between pure moderation and interaction effects, identifying the specific contexts where digital literacy

amplifies or fails to influence digital branding outcomes. Experimental designs could further isolate the causal pathways, examining how varying levels of digital literacy impact MSMEs' ability to leverage digital tools for community engagement, innovative event programming, and convenience-driven marketing. Moreover, integrating psychometric assessments of digital literacy with behavioral analytics from digital platforms could provide actionable insights into the skill gaps that hinder optimal branding efforts. By deepening the understanding of this moderating dynamic, researchers can inform targeted interventions, such as tailored training programs and adaptive technology solutions, to enhance the digital branding capabilities of MSMEs in diverse socio-economic contexts.

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