

Proposed Marketing Strategy for Independent Music Project: A Case Study of Dua Mata Pisau

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ABSTRACT

Dua Mata Pisau is a new independent music project from Jakarta, Indonesia, currently preparing for its first music release. The rapid growth of the music industry in the digital era presents both opportunities and challenges for independent musicians. Digitalization enables easier distribution of music through digital streaming platforms (DSPs) such as Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube Music. However, this also increases competition, making it difficult for new musicians to gain visibility and effectively monetize their work. This study aims to assist Dua Mata Pisau in determining an appropriate marketing strategy by exploring audience-based market segmentation, identifying the most attractive target segment, and developing a positioning strategy aligned with its resources and competencies. The research utilized data and insights from key industry stakeholders—such as music producers, artist managers, and label representatives—supported by secondary data, including music consumption trends, streaming platform reports, and industry analyses. Through segmentation analysis, three primary segments were identified: Diehard Fans, Functional Users, and Aspirational Learners. By applying frameworks such as segment attractiveness assessment, market access evaluation, and value proposition analysis, the study concludes that Dua Mata Pisau should adopt a multi-segment targeting strategy. This strategy involves tailored offerings for each segment, leveraging the project's unique resources and capabilities. The strategic implementation culminates in the planned release of Dua Mata Pisau's debut single in June 2026. The findings provide actionable insights for independent musicians seeking to professionalize their marketing approach while contributing to the academic discourse on strategic marketing in the creative industry.

KEYWORDS

Indonesian Music Industry, Marketing Mix, Marketing Strategy, Music Band, Needs-Based Segmentation, Segmentation Process



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INTRODUCTION

The music industry has undergone a radical transformation over the past two decades due to technological advancements and shifts in consumer behavior. Digital platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube have disrupted traditional models of music distribution by allowing artists to distribute their works directly to a global audience, bypassing conventional intermediaries such as major record labels (Baym, 2018). While this disintermediation has democratized access, it has also created new challenges, particularly for independent and niche musicians who must now compete for visibility within a saturated digital ecosystem dominated by algorithmic recommendations and mass-market appeal (Hesmondhalgh, 2019).

In the context of Indonesia, the rise of digital music consumption has significantly reshaped the local music scene. Independent musicians are leveraging digital service providers (DSPs) to reach audiences both domestically and internationally (Akil, Rasyidin, & Dwihadiah, 2024; Ikhsano, Stellarosa, & Ramonita, 2024). However, despite the increased accessibility, sustaining a career as an independent artist remains difficult due to limited financial resources, lack of strategic marketing capabilities, and the high competitiveness of the global music environment (Muligan, 2025). Moreover, language remains a critical barrier; while English-language music dominates international charts, many Indonesian artists, particularly those using Bahasa Indonesia face limitations in gaining global traction.

One such artist is Dua Mata Pisau, an alternative music project founded by Atarrahim Iqbal Putra Riyadi. This project blends elements of alternative rock, progressive metal, electronic music, and traditional Indonesian sounds to produce a culturally rich yet experimental musical identity. Dua Mata Pisau embodies a strong sense of artistic independence, drawing influence from socially critical musicians such as Iwan Fals and Sawung Jabu, while maintaining lyrical and stylistic authenticity (Darmawan, 2020). However, the project's musical uniqueness presents a double-edged sword: while it stands out in terms of content, its hybrid genre and local-language orientation make it difficult to access wider markets, especially within the algorithm driven, trend sensitive DSP landscape (Okonkwo, Mujinga, Namkousse, & Francisco, 2023).

From a business perspective, Dua Mata Pisau faces multifaceted challenges. First, the Indonesian music market is shifting from physical and label dominated models to a fragmented digital environment that emphasizes discoverability through playlists, social media virality, and fan engagement (Baym, 2018). Second, although DSPs have opened doors to publication and distribution, revenue per stream remains low, forcing artists to rely on supplementary income streams such as merchandise sales, crowdfunding, and live performances to remain financially sustainable (Ramesh, 2024). Third, branding and audience targeting are critical aspects that many independent musicians struggle to execute effectively, which hinders their ability to build loyal communities and sustainable careers (Porto, Borges, & Dubois, 2024).

In addition to external industry challenges, Dua Mata Pisau must address internal strategic gaps particularly in developing a cohesive and data driven marketing plan (Cahya, Isthika, Pramitasari, & Ingsih, 2025). While the artist's creative identity is clear, the lack of a structured segmentation and targeting strategy has made it difficult to position the project effectively within the broader Indonesian music landscape. Current research emphasizes the importance of audience-centric marketing in cultural and creative industries, especially for niche products, where resonance with specific communities is often more valuable than mass appeal (Hesmondhalgh, 2019).

Therefore, a tailored marketing strategy that aligns the artist's creative vision with well-defined audience segments and effective digital engagement mechanisms is necessary (Maguire, 2024). Such a strategy must be built on a deep understanding of consumer needs, music consumption behavior, and the dynamics of niche music markets in Indonesia. Marketing strategy must be viewed not merely as a promotional tool, but as an integrated decision-making framework that guides product development, brand communication, and resource allocation in line with consumer demand (Finoti, Toaldo, Schwarzbach, & Marchetti, 2019).

However, existing literature on independent music marketing in Indonesia remains fragmented and lacks empirical grounding, particularly in understanding how emerging artists can leverage limited resources to build sustainable audience engagement. Furthermore, while global studies have explored digital music marketing broadly, there is a notable gap in research addressing the intersection of culturally specific artistic positioning, audience segmentation behaviors unique to Southeast Asian markets, and resource-based strategic frameworks tailored for micro-scale independent music projects. This gap is especially critical given the rapid expansion of Indonesia's creative economy and the increasing role of digital platforms in shaping cultural consumption patterns among urban youth.

The urgency of this research is underscored by Indonesia's position as one of the largest and fastest-growing digital music markets in Southeast Asia, contributing significantly to the national creative economy (Fehér, 2017). According to recent reports, the creative economy sector accounts for over 7% of Indonesia's GDP, with the music industry playing a pivotal role in this growth (Muligan 2025). Yet, despite this potential, independent musicians remain underserved by existing marketing frameworks, which are predominantly designed for mainstream or Western-centric contexts. The lack of strategic marketing guidance hinders not only individual artists like Dua Mata Pisau but also the broader ecosystem of emerging creative professionals who seek to professionalize their craft while maintaining artistic authenticity. In an era where digital visibility can determine career viability, the absence of actionable, evidence-based marketing strategies poses a critical barrier to the sustainability and scalability of independent music ventures in Indonesia (Hicks, 2023).

This study addresses a central issue in the contemporary independent music scene: How can independent music projects with niche artistic direction develop an effective marketing strategy to achieve visibility and sustainability in the digital era? By examining the strategic challenges and opportunities faced by Dua Mata Pisau through the lens of segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) frameworks combined with resource-based theory, this research seeks to bridge the theoretical-practical divide in independent music marketing within the Indonesian context.

The purpose of this study is to formulate a comprehensive marketing strategy for Dua Mata Pisau, enabling the project to effectively reach and engage its target audience, enhance brand visibility, and develop sustainable revenue streams within Indonesia's digital music ecosystem. This research aims to contribute practical insights for independent musicians and strategic guidance for stakeholders within the creative industries by focusing on segmentation, branding, and digital strategy in niche markets.

This research contributes both theoretical and practical value. Theoretically, it extends the application of STP and resource-based view (RBV) frameworks into the under-researched domain of micro-scale independent music marketing in non-Western contexts, offering new insights into how cultural specificity and artistic authenticity can be strategically leveraged. Practically, it provides actionable guidance for independent musicians, artist managers, and creative industry stakeholders in Indonesia by demonstrating how limited resources can be transformed into strategic advantages through targeted audience engagement and narrative-driven branding. Furthermore, the findings offer a replicable model for other emerging artists navigating similar challenges in digitally mediated, culturally diverse markets.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore how independent musicians developed and implemented marketing strategies in the digital music era. The subject of the study was *Dua Mata Pisau*, an independent music project based in Jakarta, Indonesia, preparing for its debut release.

A descriptive-exploratory case study design was used to gain an in-depth understanding of strategic marketing formulation within an independent creative context. The research focused on meaning-making, interpretation, and real-life dynamics (Abdussamad 2021).

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in the Indonesian music industry, including independent musicians and producers, artist managers, representatives of digital music platforms, and owners of independent music labels. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their experience and involvement in music marketing. In total, six informants were interviewed, each in sessions lasting between 45 and 60 minutes. Interview guides were developed based on themes identified in the literature, such as segmentation, positioning, resource-based advantage, and audience engagement.

Secondary data were gathered to complement the findings, including music streaming trend reports, social media engagement data, and reports from industry bodies.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2021). Interview transcripts were coded inductively and deductively to identify recurring patterns related to marketing strategy development. The coding process involved familiarization, initial coding, theme identification, review, definition, and reporting.

Themes were developed around key strategic aspects such as audience identification and segmentation, resource and capability utilization, positioning and differentiation, and strategic adaptation.

To ensure validity and reliability, the study employed triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. Triangulation compared data from multiple sources, member checking allowed participants to validate interpretations, and peer debriefing involved consulting independent researchers.

The qualitative approach, supported by these validation techniques, provided credible insights into strategic marketing practices among independent musicians in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to identify and analyze marketing strategies suitable for independent musicians in the digital era through a case study of the music project *Dua Mata Pisau*. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with six informants actively involved in Indonesia's independent music industry. The informants included two music producers, one digital label owner, one artist manager, one representative from a music streaming platform, and one creative marketing consultant.

The interview results were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, which led to the emergence of five key themes: (1) audience segmentation, (2) positioning strategies, (3) internal capabilities and resources, (4) challenges in digital distribution, and (5) recommended implementation strategies. Each theme is supported by consistently recurring subthemes across the responses.

Audience Segmentation

Audience segmentation was the most prominent initial theme. All informants emphasized that understanding the characteristics and motivations of listeners is a crucial first step in designing effective marketing strategies. The coding process identified three main audience groups that are potentially relevant for *Dua Mata Pisau*:

1. Diehard Fans:
Listeners who feel a strong emotional connection with the artist. They tend to follow the artist's updates, purchase merchandise, and attend offline events. They value authenticity and the creative process.
2. Functional Users:
A segment that consumes music passively, often as background for daily activities. These listeners rarely seek information about the artist and typically access music through algorithmic playlists.
3. Aspirational Learners:
A group drawn to the lyrical meaning, depth of message, and artistic aesthetics of the music. For them, musical preferences are part of self-identity and personal expression.

Positioning Strategies

Positioning emerged as a critical element in developing effective marketing for independent musicians. All informants stated that *Dua Mata Pisau* needs to assert an artistic image that differentiates it from mainstream musicians.

Three key positioning approaches were repeatedly mentioned:

1. Authenticity:
Listeners place high value on honesty, originality, and alignment with the artist's personal values.
2. Storytelling:
A narrative-driven strategy that communicates the story behind the music, the creative process, or the artist's personal journey—often fostering emotional connection.
3. Urban Identity:
A positioning that reflects *Dua Mata Pisau*'s lyrical and visual themes, resonating with urban youth seeking social representation through music and art.

Internal Capabilities and Resources

Informants pointed out that the primary strength of independent musicians lies not in financial capital or networks, but in creative capabilities and emotional proximity to their audience.

The key internal assets of *Dua Mata Pisau*, as identified by informants, include:

1. Lyrical Strength:
Thematic depth with social and existential relevance rarely explored by mainstream artists.
2. Consistent Visual Branding:
From digital artwork and social media identity to stage presence.
3. Emotional Connection:
The ability to maintain two-way interaction with fans via social media and exclusive content.

Challenges in Digital Distribution

Although digital music distribution offers great opportunity, informants also highlighted several challenges commonly faced by independent musicians:

1. DSP Algorithms:
Independent music often lacks visibility on platforms like Spotify and YouTube due to misalignment with mainstream consumption patterns.
2. Limited Promotional Budgets:
Paid advertising, distribution services, and PR are often financially out of reach for new artists.
3. Content Consistency:
Creative output is often irregular due to resource limitations, making it difficult to sustain public momentum.

Recommended Implementation Strategies

To conclude the findings, informants proposed several concrete strategies that could be applied by *Dua Mata Pisau*, including:

1. Adopting a multi-segment approach, especially focusing on diehard fans and aspirational learners.
2. Developing cross-platform narratives, such as behind-the-scenes storytelling on Instagram, creative process content on YouTube, and emotional teasers on TikTok.
3. Building a community-based fan ecosystem, including online discussion spaces, live streaming interactions, and direct responses to fans.
4. Leveraging organic content, not only paid promotion, to create lasting emotional engagement and sustainable visibility.

Table 1. Summary of Themes and Subthemes from Interviews

Main Theme	Subthemes	Key Findings
Audience Segmentation	Diehard Fans, Functional Users, Aspirational Learners	Three key listener types requiring different engagement strategies
Positioning Strategy	Authenticity, Storytelling, Urban Identity	Differentiation through personal values, narrative content, and urban appeal
Internal Capabilities	Strong Lyrics, Consistent Visuals, Fan Connection	Creative assets are more valuable than financial capital
Digital Distribution Issues	Algorithms, Promotional Budget, Content Consistency	Common limitations faced by independent artists
Recommended Strategies	Multi-segment Targeting, Visual Narrative, Community Building	Actionable directions for <i>Dua Mata Pisau</i> 's strategic marketing plan

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal important insights into how independent musicians, particularly in the context of *Dua Mata Pisau*, can develop effective marketing strategies in a highly competitive digital music ecosystem. The discussion connects the empirical results with existing theoretical frameworks, particularly the STP (Segmentation Targeting Positioning)

model and the Resource-Based View (RBV), to interpret how these concepts operate in the independent music context in Indonesia.

Segmentation and Audience Understanding

The identification of three core audience types diehard fans, functional users, and aspirational learners strongly aligns with the needs-based segmentation model proposed by Anesbury (2025). Unlike demographic or geographic segmentation, this approach categorizes listeners by their motivations and patterns of engagement with music. As confirmed by Sanseverino (2023), emotional and aspirational connections with music are increasingly relevant in defining audience behavior.

This study supports the argument that independent artists must tailor their marketing approach to these segmented needs. For example, diehard fans may respond positively to personalized and behind-the-scenes content, while aspirational learners require deeper narrative framing and artistic context. Functional users, though harder to retain, may be targeted through curated playlists or collaborative content with influencers. Additionally, Bandyopadhyay et al. (2025) demonstrated that cultural dimensions significantly influence music consumption patterns, particularly in diverse markets like Indonesia, where localized content and vernacular expression can serve as powerful segmentation criteria.

Positioning Through Authenticity and Storytelling

Positioning is a key factor for differentiation in saturated digital platforms. The emphasis on authenticity and storytelling in the findings reflects theories by Baym (Baym, 2018), which highlight the shift from mass branding to personalized engagement in the music industry. *Dua Mata Pisau*, with its lyrical depth and visual consistency, demonstrates the capacity to develop a unique brand identity that resonates with urban youth culture.

Furthermore, the informants' emphasis on urban identity and subcultural alignment supports the idea that independent musicians can position themselves not by competing in scale, but by appealing to niche audiences with strong emotional values and cultural representation. Porto et al. (2024) reinforced this perspective by showing that impression management through social media—when aligned with authentic artistic values—positively impacts market performance for human brands in the music industry. Moreover, Morris (2020) argued that storytelling enables artists to create "format-resistant" content that maintains value across multiple distribution channels and consumption contexts.

Resource-Based View in Independent Music Strategy

The application of the Resource-Based View (RBV) (Wu, Nambisan, Xiao, & Xie, 2022) in this context reveals that *Dua Mata Pisau*'s strengths such as creative content, branding consistency, and emotional proximity to listeners can serve as strategic resources. In line with RBV, these resources are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN), making them critical for long-term differentiation and sustainability.

This finding is consistent with Friedman (2025), who noted that independent creators leveraging internal competencies are more likely to create a resilient brand presence in the digital domain, even with limited financial capital. Furthermore, Wu et al. (2022) demonstrated that consumer resource integration—particularly through social media influencers and community-driven content—can amplify the value of internal capabilities, suggesting that *Dua Mata Pisau*'s fan engagement strategies could serve as multiplicative assets rather than merely supplementary activities.

Overcoming Platform and Resource Challenges

The challenges identified algorithmic visibility, budget limitations, and content inconsistency reflect a common pattern across independent music globally. However, the recommendations proposed by informants suggest that these barriers can be mitigated through multi-segment targeting and narrative continuity across platforms.

This finding resonates with Kleinberg et al (2022), who criticized the limitations of demographic targeting and advocated for solutions rooted in user behavior and content alignment. In *Dua Mata Pisau*'s case, success lies not in beating the algorithm but in building consistent emotional engagement across listener journeys. Ramesh (2024) further contextualized this challenge by documenting how streaming economics disadvantage independent artists, arguing that diversified revenue streams—including merchandise, crowdfunding, and live performances—are essential complements to streaming income. Additionally, Kowald et al. (2021) found that beyond-mainstream music listeners actively seek discovery mechanisms outside algorithmic recommendations, suggesting that community-driven promotion and peer-to-peer sharing may be more effective than platform-dependent strategies for niche artists.

CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes that independent musicians, such as Dua Mata Pisau, can achieve sustainable visibility in the digital era by applying strategic marketing approaches based on clear audience segmentation—diehard fans, functional users, and aspirational learners—while leveraging internal strengths such as authenticity, storytelling, and emotional connection. A multi-segment targeting strategy combined with narrative-driven content and resource-based capabilities is key to standing out in a competitive streaming market. For music project managers and marketing practitioners, this research highlights the need for differentiated engagement through exclusive content, fan interaction, and thematic campaigns, prioritizing emotionally invested segments like diehard fans and aspirational learners. Leveraging originality, lyrical depth, and cross-channel marketing that integrates social media and DSPs is crucial, especially when operating with limited budgets. Organic engagement, community building, and a consistent brand voice are recommended as sustainable tactics for long-term fan retention and growth. Although this research offers valuable insights, its scope is limited to a single case study within the Indonesian music industry and qualitative data, suggesting that future studies should expand across genres and regions, adopt mixed methods, and analyze external factors such as platform algorithms and technological disruptions. Longitudinal research is also encouraged to explore how independent musicians adapt their marketing strategies over time in response to evolving audience behavior and digital market dynamics.

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