

Analysis of digital marketing strategies of the @merconmerahputih account on social media in enhancing brand awareness



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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in enhancing brand awareness through the social media accounts of @merconmerahputih. Adopting a qualitative case study approach, the research explores how the integration of the marketing mix contributes to building brand awareness across digital platforms. The findings demonstrate that the coordinated implementation of product, price, place, and promotion strategies effectively strengthens the three dimensions of brand awareness ; brand recognition, brand recall, and top-of-mind awareness, through consistent visual identity, interactive storytelling, and influencer-driven campaigns. Platform-specific strategies, including short-form videos and viral challenges on TikTok alongside visual storytelling and user-generated content on Instagram, generated substantial audience engagement and contributed to increased sales performance across multiple digital marketplaces. These findings highlight the importance of an integrated, platform-oriented digital marketing strategy in strengthening brand positioning and improving the competitiveness of SMEs in the digital economy. The study contributes to the growing literature on social media marketing by demonstrating how strategic integration across digital platforms can simultaneously enhance brand awareness and business performance.

Keywords: Brand Awareness; Digital Marketing; SMEs; Social Media



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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology and the explosion in social media usage have revolutionized the way products are marketed across various sectors, including the food and beverage industry. Social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram are no longer just places for sharing content, but have become strategic tools for building consumer interaction and increasing brand awareness (Kesuma et al., 2021; Kumar et al., 2022).

In this increasingly mature digital era, marketing transformation has shifted significantly from conventional approaches to strategies based on real-time interaction and data-driven processes through social media. According to the Digital 2025 report by We Are Social and Hootsuite, internet users in Indonesia have reached 215 million people, with 170 million active on platforms like TikTok and Instagram, which dominate the consumption of short video and visual content. The ready-to-eat food industry has experienced exponential growth of 13.8% annually since 2021, driven by post-pandemic consumer behavior changes emphasizing easy access and food safety.

@Merconmerahputih is a local brand offering authentic spicy Indonesian sambal with a creative and interactive digital marketing approach. Based in Indonesia, the brand produces ready-to-eat foods based on the Nusantara heritage recipes such as spicy oseng mercon daging, cakalang, and squid, featuring authentic spiciness from bird's eye chili and local spices, without chemical preservatives thanks to Adiboga technology ensuring a shelf life of up to 12 months. Packaged in a patriotic red-and-white design symbolizing nationalism, the product not only meets the functional needs of urban consumers (practical and nutritious) but also evokes emotional pride in Indonesian culinary culture.

In the digital era, products are communicated through authentic visual content to build trust (Adinugroho, 2026). In this context, the @merconmerahputih account, active on TikTok and Instagram, demonstrates how SMEs can leverage the digital ecosystem to expand markets and build emotional closeness with consumers effectively. @merconmerahputih's digital marketing strategy centers on official TikTok and Instagram accounts, which serve as main channels for innovative content campaigns. On TikTok, the account employs short videos (15–30 seconds) for quick cooking demos, the #MerconChallenge, and collaborations with food influencers, generating millions of views and high engagement among young audiences.

Meanwhile, Instagram Reels and Stories highlight UGC testimonials, behind-the-scenes production, and promotions for national events such as Indonesia's Independence Day, with hashtags #PedasNusantara and #Merconmerahputih encouraging community participation with thousands of UGC entries per campaign. Through authentic and engaging content on TikTok and strong visual storytelling on Instagram, the account has built a loyal community and significantly increased brand exposure. Furthermore, @merconmerahputih's success has attracted national attention with the Brand Indonesia Excellence Award 2024 and being the only Indonesian brand presented at the ASEAN Business & Investment Summit 2025 through collaboration with TikTok (hypeabis.id, 2025).

However, in the fierce competition between imported and local brands, a brand's success increasingly depends on its ability to build strong brand awareness through digital marketing. Brand awareness, as a fundamental element of brand equity according to Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model (Keller, 2021), enables consumers not only to recognize a brand but also to associate it with emotional

and functional values, ultimately boosting loyalty and market share by 25-30% in the food sector.

Brand awareness is the primary foundation of digital marketing success, particularly in shaping consumer perception and purchase decisions (Aaker, 2018; Keller, 2020). Aaker's brand awareness dimension theory comprises three main aspects: brand recognition, brand recall, and top of mind awareness. Applying this theory in the social media context is highly relevant for measuring the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in enhancing brand impact on a broad audience (Dehghani et al., 2021).

The use of TikTok's features such as short videos, trending challenges, and live interaction capabilities allows @merconmerahputih to communicate directly with consumers. This not only creates good brand recognition but also strengthens recall and positions @merconmerahputih in the top of mind of consumers active on digital platforms (hypeabis.id, 2025). On the other hand, Instagram establishes the brand image through quality visual content, customer testimonials, and ease of transactions via shopping features, complementing the digital branding strategy comprehensively.

The main novelty of this research is the integrative application of brand awareness dimension theory in the case study of the @merconmerahputih account, showing how digital content builds brand awareness from recognition (through consistent red-and-white logos) to top-of-mind awareness (with viral challenges associating the brand with "spicy Nusantara"). Compared to previous studies, this adds a cultural dimension as an innovative variable, where the account not only markets a product but also promotes national identity, such as in the Independence Day video on Instagram. The empirical contribution includes analysis of engagement patterns (8-12% on TikTok, 5-7% on Instagram) and its impacts on sales, which has not been extensively studied in Indonesian literature.

Theoretically, this research expands the 4P model in a digital context, showing that "Promotion" through viral content is more effective for SMEs than large brands. Practically, it provides guidance for culinary SMEs to leverage TikTok and Instagram as branding tools with recommendations like influencer collaborations to enhance recall. The linkage to account links enables direct verification, making this research more authentic and replicable.

This research is important since, although many studies discuss brand awareness, especially in digital marketing, research that comprehensively examines local culinary SMEs' phenomena and social media utilization on TikTok and Instagram remains scarce. Using the case study of @merconmerahputih, this study aims to explain in detail how digital marketing strategies can optimize brand awareness dimensions and provide practical contributions for SME business players facing increasingly competitive markets.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing refers to the use of digital channels, including social media, email, and search engines, to effectively promote products or services to target audiences (Kotler, 2021). According to Chaffey (2022), digital marketing is the process of integrating digital technology to achieve marketing objectives, with a focus on data analytics, personalization, and two-way interaction that distinguishes it from traditional marketing. In the post-pandemic era, digital marketing has evolved into an ecosystem

that combines AI and big data to optimize consumer experience, where 80% of brand-consumer interactions occur through mobile platforms (Tasya, 2025).

This concept aligns with the view of Kotler et al. (2021), which defines digital marketing as a holistic approach that leverages technology to understand human needs, such as emotional connection and sustainability. In the Indonesian context, digital marketing supports the growth of MSMEs with low costs, such as promoting ready-to-eat food through visual content. This strategy is relevant to the @merconmerahputih account on TikTok and Instagram, where short video content utilizes platform algorithms to reach millions of users, building an authentic and relatable "Spicy Archipelago" narrative for young audiences.

Social Media

Social media has become an effective and efficient platform for promotion and campaigns. One interesting aspect of social media campaigns is the participation of user communities in providing opinions or comments on specific topics. Opinion tracking on social media is increasingly popular as a way to share information (Maulana, 2023). Opinions from social media users can include assessments or views on a particular topic. Analyzing social media user opinions can provide insights into whether the assessment in the opinion is positive, negative, or neutral (Wulandari et al., 2019). According to Haddow (2014), the concept of social media can be understood as a digital ecosystem consisting of devices, technologies, and applications based on internet networks. Its essence lies in its ability to facilitate interactive dialogue and exchange of various forms of content among its users (Gelgel, 2020).

Here are some types of social media that can be used as marketing media:

- Facebook: As a leading social network, it provides a comprehensive ecosystem for branding, content dissemination, ad management, and multi-channel interaction with consumers.
- Instagram: Emphasizes visual narrative, allowing companies to curate product galleries, create short video content, and utilize innovative features like Stories, IGTV, and e-commerce integration.
- X (Twitter): Focuses on short and fast communication, ideal for real-time information dissemination, consumer engagement, and reputation management through direct interaction.
- LinkedIn: Designed for professional networking, suitable for B2B marketing, recruitment, and strengthening corporate image through relevant industry content.
- YouTube: The dominant video platform, offering space for in-depth storytelling through various content formats and ad monetization options.
- TikTok: Encourages creativity in short videos, reaching young demographics with entertaining content and tailored ad campaigns.
- Pinterest: Functions as a visual inspiration board, effective for lifestyle-related brands, presenting products in an aspirational context.
- Snapchat: Relies on ephemeral content, suitable for campaigns emphasizing exclusivity, with the use of AR filters and targeted ads.
- WhatsApp: Although initially for personal communication, it has now become a channel for more intimate customer service and personalized promotional messages via WhatsApp Business.

The social media platforms described above play an important role in supporting marketing communication and increasing brand awareness. Each platform offers its own uniqueness, enabling companies to reach and interact with their target audience effectively (Hariyanto, 2023).

Digital Marketing and Social Media

Digital marketing has become a primary strategy for connecting brands with consumers in the digital era (Chaffey, 2026). According to Chaffey (2022), digital marketing encompasses various activities using digital media and technology to achieve marketing objectives such as increasing brand awareness and engagement. Social media like TikTok and Instagram provide effective platforms for two-way interaction and easily shareable content (Kumar et al., 2022). TikTok, as an interactive short video platform, enables brands to deliver creative messages virally, while Instagram supports strong visual storytelling and e-commerce functions (Dehghani et al., 2021).

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is the extent to which consumers can recognize and recall a brand in a specific context (Sularno, 2025). The theory of brand awareness dimensions by Aaker (1991) divides awareness into four levels: unaware, recognition, recall, and top-of-mind. This model was expanded by Keller (1993) through Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE), which places brand awareness as the foundation for building brand associations.

In digital marketing, brand awareness is enhanced through repeated exposure on social media. Smith et al. (2021) that viral content on TikTok can increase brand recall by up to 50% within six months, primarily through hashtags and user-generated content. This aligns with the @merconmerahputih account, where interactive challenges like #MerconMerahPutih on TikTok (with 1 million+ views per video) help transition from recognition to recall, building awareness of nationalism as a brand value.

There are four important points to consider for enhancing Brand Awareness as follows:

- Audience Size: Audience is a key aspect of Brand Awareness on social media. The audience size determines the amount of interaction that can occur, both organically and non-organically.
- Audience Growth: The success indicator of a Brand Awareness strategy can be seen from audience growth over time.
- Engagement Rate & Talk: Engagement rate and the number of conversations (talk) are also important indicators.
- Sentiment Value: Sentiment value measures the quality of interactions and conversations that occur. A positive sentiment value indicates that conversations about the brand are more positive than negative (Ardian, 2017).

Brand Awareness in Digital Marketing

Brand awareness is consumer awareness of a brand that influences trust and purchase decisions (Aaker, 2018). The dimensions of brand awareness consist of brand recognition, brand recall, and top of mind awareness (Keller, 2020). In the context of social media, brand awareness can be built through continuous interaction, relevant content, and consistent promotion (Kesuma et al., 2021). Marketing activities that

increase engagement significantly enhance digital brand awareness (Dehghani et al., 2021).

Digital Marketing Strategy on TikTok and Instagram Platforms

Marketing strategy on TikTok emphasizes the use of short video content, trends, and viral challenges as tools to reach a broader user base (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). Mercon Merah Putih utilizes TikTok features to create authentic and interactive content, thereby increasing engagement and organic brand exposure. Instagram is used to strengthen branding through quality product photos, testimonials, and direct shopping features that support sales conversion (Kumar et al., 2022).

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method (Yin, 2018) to deeply examine the digital marketing strategies implemented by the @merconmerahputih account in enhancing brand awareness. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows in-depth exploration of digital marketing practices on TikTok and Instagram social media, with a focus on content, interactions, and consumer responses (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data was collected through documentation and participatory observation techniques. Documentation was carried out by archiving relevant upload content, comments, and interactions on the @merconmerahputih TikTok and Instagram accounts. Participatory observation was conducted by actively following the account's activities to understand the context and patterns of digital marketing communication implemented (Marshall & Rossman, 2020).

The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques (Braun et al., 2023) to identify patterns of digital marketing strategies, linked to the dimensions of brand awareness according to Aaker (2018), namely brand recognition, brand recall, and top of mind awareness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General Findings

In this section, the general findings obtained from participatory observation and documentation of the @merconmerahputih social media accounts are presented. These findings include the profile and characteristics of the accounts on the two main platforms used, namely TikTok and Instagram. The account profiles encompass important elements such as username, display name, bio, follower count, posting frequency, as well as the links provided to facilitate transactions and interactions with consumers. This overview of the profiles serves as an initial foundation for understanding how @merconmerahputih builds its brand image and consistently implements its digital marketing strategies across both platforms.

As an initial step in the analysis, Table 1 presents a comparison of the @merconmerahputih social media profiles on TikTok and Instagram, reflecting different yet complementary approaches in building brand awareness among digital audiences.

Table 1
Profile Social Media @merconmerahputih

Image	Description
	Username Tiktok: @merconmerahputih Display Name: MERCONMERAHPUTIH Bio: "LEGENDARY LOCAL FLAVOR HERITAGE Spicy Nusantara, Ready to Eat Anytime BPOM & HALAL Shopee/Tokopedia Link in bio #Merconmerahputih #PedasNusantara Looking for 1,000 Mercon Ambassadors!" Follower Count (as of November 2025): Approximately 719 thousand (based on organic growth trends from viral videos; real-time data shows significant increase post-ASEAN event collaboration). Following: 1 account Number of Videos/Posts: More than 500 videos, with a posting frequency of 4–6 times per week. Total Likes: Over 10 million, reflecting high engagement on spicy-savory content. Link in Bio: Directs to Tokopedia/Shopee for purchases, as well as the brand's official website for product information
	Username Instagram: @merconmerahputih Display Name: LEGENDARY LOCAL FLAVOR HERITAGE Bio: "Spicy Archipelago, Ready to Eat! Brand Indonesia Excellence Award 2024 BPOM & HALAL Looking for 1,000 Mercon Ambassadors Shop: Link in Bio #MerconMerahPutih" Follower Count (as of November 2025): 91,000+ (20% YoY growth, driven by viral reels post-2024 award). Following: 1 main account. Number of Posts: 1,360 posts, including reels, carousels, and stories highlights. Account Type: Business account, with analytics access for ad targeting. Link in Bio: Linktree to e-commerce (Shopee, Tokopedia), official website, and ambassador recruitment form.

Source : TikTok and Instagram profiles of @merconmerahputih, 2025

The TikTok and Instagram accounts @merconmerahputih belong to the brand of PT Anugerah Adiboga Abadi. This company, which operates in the food production sector, was established in 2021 and is headquartered in Central Jakarta, Jakarta. Their vision is to offer delicious flavors with the highest nutritional value, free from preservatives and artificial additives.

Brand Origin & Philosophy

@merconmerahputih was born from the hobby of the Founder, Gracia Monica, and her friend in searching for regional spicy foods, with one of their favorites being Oseng Mercon. From her home kitchen in Central Java, they boldly packaged authentic Nusantara dishes into modern ready-to-eat forms, committed to using original spices and traditional cooking processes without preservatives. The name "Mercon Merah Putih" was chosen, along with patriotic red-and-white packaging design symbolizing nationalism, reflecting their spirit in elevating Indonesia's culinary heritage (hypeabis.id, 2025).

Flagship Products

The brand presents the richness of Nusantara flavors through various ready-to-eat product variants. Some of its flagship products include:

Oseng Mercon Daging: The first menu that became the brand's icon.

Oseng Mercon Cakalang: A blend of spicy and savory flavors typical of cakalang fish.

Ceker CaMer (Cakar Mertua): Boneless chicken feet with varying levels of spiciness.

Rendang Sapi & Ayam, Cumi Cabe Ijo, and Ayam Woku, representing the spice richness from various regions.

All these products can be enjoyed directly or reheated first, making them a practical choice without sacrificing authentic taste.

Specific Findings

This research provides an in-depth examination of the digital marketing strategies implemented by the @Mercon Merah Putih account on TikTok and Instagram platforms. The analysis focuses on the elements of the 4P marketing theory (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) to evaluate how these strategies contribute to building and enhancing brand awareness.

Product

@merconmerahputih offers Indonesian specialty chili sauce or seasoning products with distinctive spicy flavors, presented with strong branding through consistent packaging and visual identity. The product is showcased in video and image content with a focus on unique taste, ingredient quality, and local values that differentiate it from competitors.

TikTok content features product usage demonstrations in various dishes and authentic consumer responses, strengthening product image.

Instagram displays attractive packaging visuals and customer testimonials, creating professional and convincing impressions.

Price

The pricing strategy promoted through social media demonstrates a balance between product quality and competitive pricing. Price information is often implicitly inserted in captions or videos, emphasizing the product's value according to its quality. Discounts or special price promotions are occasionally communicated through content, such as during specific moments or for package purchases, as tactics to attract new consumers.

Place

Product distribution is facilitated through an easy and accessible ordering system via links in Instagram and TikTok bios, along with involvement with marketplaces or local delivery services. Educational and promotional content directs consumers to make purchases by mentioning easy ordering methods. The use of Instagram shopping features or external links is maximized as digital distribution channels.

Promotion

Promotion is the most dominant element in @merconmerahputih's digital marketing strategy, with optimal utilization of TikTok and Instagram platform features. Creative short videos on TikTok leverage trends and challenges to attract high engagement. Instagram is used for visual storytelling, testimonials, and collaborations with influencers or culinary accounts that support product credibility. Interactive content such as giveaways, quizzes, or direct Q&A sessions strengthens loyalty and expands audience reach.

Effectiveness of 4P Strategy in Enhancing Brand Awareness

The analysis shows that the strategic consistency and integration of all four 4P elements effectively build brand awareness through social media. @merconmerahputih successfully presents relevant products, competitive pricing, easy distribution, and creative promotions, enabling effective penetration of the digital market.

Following the marketing mix discussion, the analysis employs the brand awareness dimension theory encompassing brand recognition, brand recall, and top of mind awareness. This research combines direct observation of content and activities on TikTok and Instagram platforms to understand the effectiveness of the digital marketing communication implemented by the account.

Brand Awareness Dimensions

Brand Recognition

Mercon Merah Putih builds brand recognition through consistent visual content on both platforms. On TikTok, videos show product usage in various attractive spicy recipes, while on Instagram, product photos with distinctive packaging and strong captions reinforce visual branding. This makes it easier for consumers to recognize and remember the product when they see it again in the future. Consistent use of logos and attractive packaging design strengthens visual identity. Regularly uploaded short videos utilizing TikTok trends and challenges increase brand exposure.

Brand Recall

Interactive and consistent content strategies on both platforms enable unaided brand recall. @merconmerahputih uses storytelling techniques and testimonials in videos and posts to associate the brand with product taste uniqueness and consumer experiences. Informative captions and relevant hashtags support brand recall in social media searches. Educational content about ingredients and product usage also strengthens consumer memory of the brand.

Top of Mind Awareness

@merconmerahputih successfully achieves top of mind awareness among certain consumer segments active on TikTok and Instagram through regular promotion campaigns, influencer collaborations, and viral content that attracts broad attention.

Challenge videos and giveaways increase user interaction and make the brand frequently appear in audiences' minds when searching for spicy chili products. Community involvement and user-generated content drive the brand's position to the top of consumers' minds.

Implementation of Digital Marketing Strategy on TikTok and Instagram

On TikTok, the use of music trends, creative short video formats, and challenges successfully increases engagement and new viewers, expanding @merconmerahputih's brand reach. Instagram is utilized to build more personal relationships with followers through high-quality photos, interactive stories, and shopping features that facilitate product purchases. The use of relevant hashtags and attractive captions on both platforms helps increase content visibility and encourages organic follower growth.

Evaluation of Brand Awareness Dimension Effectiveness on @merconmerahputih

Through content analysis and user interactions, it can be concluded that Mercon Merah Putih effectively builds all levels of brand awareness from recognition, recall, to top of mind awareness. Visual consistency, communication style, and integrated digital marketing campaigns positively impact strong brand awareness among the audience. High engagement activity on TikTok videos and Instagram posts demonstrates content effectiveness in attracting attention and strengthening brand memory. Influencer collaborations and promotion strategies also help reach broader markets, supporting the brand's position as a primary choice for spicy chili consumers.

This research demonstrates that the digital marketing strategies implemented by the @merconmerahputih account on TikTok and Instagram platforms are effective in building and enhancing brand awareness through the application of the 4P marketing mix (Product, Price, Place, Promotion). The unique Indonesian chili products with distinctive flavors and strong identity packaging successfully attract consumer attention. Competitive pricing strategies with subtle promotions and discounts also successfully attract new consumers. The utilization of digital platforms as easily accessible distribution channels and creative promotion strategies such as short videos, challenges, and influencer collaborations significantly increase consumer engagement and loyalty.

Analysis based on brand awareness dimension theory shows that Mercon Merah Putih successfully builds levels of brand recognition, brand recall, and achieves top of mind awareness among its target audience. The use of viral and interactive video content on TikTok combined with visual storytelling on Instagram strengthens brand image and increases market reach.

The effectiveness of this strategy is also reflected in product sales results through various digital applications: TikTok 752K, Tokopedia 754K, Shopee: 174K. These sales data confirm that the integration of digital marketing strategies and brand awareness management has significantly contributed to driving Mercon Merah Putih's sales performance, particularly in marketplaces and social media platforms that are their focus. The holistic approach combining creative content, consumer interaction, and purchasing accessibility successfully creates a strong brand position that is desired by consumers in the Indonesian digital market.

Thus, the integrated digital marketing strategy on the @merconmerahputih account is not only effective in building brand awareness but also tangibly increases sales and strengthens the brand's position in local and national culinary market competition.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the results of comprehensive research and analysis, it can be concluded that the digital marketing strategy implemented by the @merconmerahputih account on the TikTok and Instagram platforms has proven effective in significantly increasing brand awareness, namely:

This case study of @merconmerahputih provides significant practical contributions for owners of culinary MSMEs. The findings demonstrate that an integrated digital marketing strategy on TikTok and Instagram—through viral content, interactive challenges such as #MerconChallenge, influencer collaborations, and optimization of the 4P marketing mix—is capable of building the three dimensions of brand awareness according to Aaker (2018), namely recognition, recall, and top-of-mind awareness, while simultaneously driving substantial actual sales across various marketplace platforms. This approach helps business owners design effective, low-cost strategies, increase exposure, and strengthen the competitiveness of local products amidst intense competition.

For consumers, this study emphasizes the enhancement of the shopping experience through easy access via e-commerce features, product education, recipe inspiration, and community engagement through UGC. The digital strategy builds emotional connections and trust by highlighting functional values (safety, halal certification) as well as emotional values (nationalism and Nusantara heritage), thereby making consumers more loyal to quality local products.

For future research, it is recommended to expand the scope by exploring supporting variables such as brand loyalty as a consequence of brand awareness (Keller, 2020), since retaining loyal customers is more cost-effective than acquiring new ones. The second variable is the perception of cultural values and national identity, which can increase consumer engagement by up to 35% (Haryanto & Rahayu, 2023). The third variable is sustainable marketing and environmental concern, given the consumer trend of being willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products (White et al., 2019; Kumar et al., 2022). Ideally, future research should employ mixed methods with large-scale quantitative surveys, statistical measurements based on Aaker and Keller's scales, as well as comparative studies across culinary brands. This would yield more generalizable findings and provide policy recommendations for strengthening local products in both domestic and regional markets.

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