

Research Article

Marketing Strategy Through Instagram and TikTok Promotion Based on the SOAR Analysis (A Case Study of Gocah Coffee in Medan)

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Abstract: The rapid expansion of the food and beverage (F&B) industry in Indonesia particularly the growth of local coffee shops illustrates a shifting consumer landscape in which coffee has evolved from a basic beverage into a lifestyle product. Gocah Coffee, established in 2024 in Medan, adopts Instagram and TikTok as its primary digital marketing channels to strengthen brand visibility and attract younger consumers. However, the performance of its digital promotion has been inconsistent, especially regarding content reach, engagement, and conversion into offline customer visits. This study aims to formulate an effective digital marketing strategy for Gocah Coffee using the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) framework. A descriptive qualitative case study approach was employed, involving 13 informants consisting of owners, employees, and customers, supplemented by direct observation of social media activities and documentation of content insights. The findings indicate that Gocah Coffee possesses strong visual identity, appealing store ambience, and increasing content quality. Opportunities include leveraging TikTok's algorithmic trends, encouraging user-generated content, and optimizing insight-based content planning. The aspirations of the business emphasize stronger brand awareness, consistent posting behavior, and the development of a loyal community. The targeted results involve boosting engagement rates, follower growth, and in-store foot traffic. This study proposes a SOAR based digital marketing strategy that is actionable, scalable, and relevant for F&B MSMEs seeking to compete in a digitally driven market environment.

Keywords: digital marketing; social media; SOAR; Instagram; TikTok.

1. Introduction

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The rapid growth of the food and beverage (F&B) industry in Indonesia, particularly in urban centers such as Medan, has intensified business competition and accelerated the expansion of coffee shops as a dominant subsector. Coffee shops today serve not only as commercial spaces but also as social and cultural hubs that support interaction, creativity, and informal productivity among young consumers Amalia (2025). Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) continue to play a vital role in supporting Indonesia's economic structure, contributing 61% of the national GDP and absorbing more than 97% of the labor force (Kholifah & Andini, 2024) Within this dynamic landscape, MSMEs in the F&B sector must continually innovate to sustain competitiveness, particularly through digital transformation.

Social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok have become essential tools for digital marketing due to their capacity to influence consumer behavior, shape perceptions, and support decision-making processes through visual storytelling, interactivity, and algorithm-driven content distribution (S. F. Rahman et al., 2025). TikTok, especially, has shown rapid user growth and provides short form, trend driven content formats that are highly effective for promoting F&B products (Bratadiredja, 2023).

However, despite the widespread use of these platforms, not all MSMEs are able to convert social media exposure into sustainable customer engagement or long-term revenue growth. Gocah Coffee, a local coffee shop established in 2024 in Medan, exemplifies this challenge. The business actively utilizes Instagram and TikTok to promote its products and brand identity, resulting in periods of increased visibility and viral content. Nevertheless, the performance of its promotional efforts remains inconsistent, with fluctuations in engagement, reach, and offline customer visits. Collaborations with local influencers generated short-lived spikes in interest but failed to produce sustained engagement or repeat purchases (Owner Interview, 2025).

This indicates a strategic gap between tactical promotional activities and a holistic, data-driven digital marketing strategy. Previous studies have explored various methods for formulating marketing strategies in MSMEs, including SWOT analysis, influencer marketing, and digital branding approaches. While these methods offer useful insights, they tend to emphasize corrective measures and problem-driven perspectives (Stavros G., 2009).

In contrast, the SOAR framework Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results provides a more appreciative, future-oriented, and collaborative strategic model that emphasizes organizational potential rather than shortcomings (Hitchcock, 2014). Studies applying SOAR in sectors such as tourism (Khavarian-Garmsir H., 2015), smart parking systems (Diyasa et al., 2023), and F&B product marketing (Kauri, 2023) demonstrate its effectiveness in identifying strategic directions based on internal strengths and external opportunities. However, few studies have applied SOAR to evaluate digital marketing performance in MSMEs F&B, especially in contexts where social media campaigns fail to produce lasting engagement or sales.

This gap forms the foundation of the present research. Although Gocah Coffee maintains a strong online presence, its promotional outcomes do not translate into consistent customer engagement, loyalty, or revenue stability. Prior literature has rarely examined this phenomenon from an appreciative strategic lens, leaving a need for research that analyzes digital marketing shortcomings while simultaneously proposing strength based future strategies.

To address this gap, this study employs the SOAR framework to formulate a strategic digital marketing development plan for Gocah Coffee using Instagram and TikTok. By identifying the business's core strengths such as authentic shop ambience, strong visual identity, and active customer participation alongside external opportunities including viral trends, increasing digital communities, and user-generated content (UGC), this research proposes a comprehensive promotional strategy that is future-oriented, data-driven, and aligned with the aspirations of the business.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the theoretical foundations and related studies that form the conceptual basis of the research on Gocah Coffee's digital promotion strategy through Instagram and TikTok using the SOAR Analysis framework. The reviewed literature includes the F&B industry theory, marketing concepts, digital marketing, social media, and the SOAR approach, which serves as the primary framework for this study.

The Food and Beverage (F&B) Industry and MSMEs

The food and beverage (F&B) industry represents one of the fastest-growing business sectors in Indonesia, including in Medan, where shifting urban lifestyles have significantly shaped patterns of consumption and social interaction. The sector has experienced consistent growth in its contribution to the national economy, supported by changing consumer behavior particularly among younger generations who increasingly view food and beverage consumption not merely as fulfilling basic needs but also as part of a modern lifestyle and social expression.

Coffee has emerged as one of the most popular commodities among urban communities. According to (Indonesia, 2021), coffee shop growth in Indonesia has reached 15–20% annually, indicating strong market enthusiasm for high-quality and creatively packaged coffee products. Coffee shops today function not only as places

to enjoy beverages, but also as socio-cultural spaces that facilitate interaction, discussion, and informal productivity within urban communities (Manusia et al., 2023). This cultural transformation positions coffee shops as important public spaces supporting communication and the exchange of ideas.

At the same time, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) play a vital role in Indonesia's economic structure. MSMEs contribute 61% of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP), equivalent to approximately Rp 9,580 trillion, and absorb up to 97% of the national workforce. Indonesia has more than 65.5 million MSME units, accounting for over 99% of all business entities. Despite their substantial contributions, MSMEs still face challenges related to limited access to capital, technology, market reach, and managerial capabilities (Kholifah & Andini, 2024). Nevertheless, MSMEs remain crucial for driving inclusive and sustainable economic development.

Within the F&B sector, digital platforms particularly social media have become essential tools in shaping consumer decision-making, building brand awareness, and fostering interactive communication between businesses and customers. Creative content, visual storytelling, and two-way engagement have significant influence on consumer attitudes and purchasing behavior, especially among digitally active younger audiences (A. Rahman et al., 2025). Social media channels such as Instagram and Tik Tok therefore play a strategic role for F&B MSMEs, enabling them to increase visibility, differentiate their brands, and cultivate stronger emotional connections with their customers.

Concepts and Theories of Marketing

Marketing strategy represents a systematic framework used by organizations to achieve long-term objectives through effective planning, positioning, and resource allocation (Chandler, 1962) conceptualizes strategy through five perspectives plan, pattern, position, perspective, and ploy which emphasize that strategy is not merely a predetermined plan, but also a pattern of actions and a competitive approach. In the marketing context, this concept evolves into a social and managerial process through which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want by creating and exchanging value with others (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Marketing therefore extends beyond buying and selling activities to include distribution, promotion, and the creation of utility based on place, time, and ownership (Converse et al., 1958).

Marketing strategy functions as the logic that connects an organization with its market through target selection, positioning decisions, and the development of an appropriate marketing mix (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008). Its evolution is reflected in five historical orientations of marketing management production, product, selling, marketing, and societal marketing each of which mirrors shifting consumer needs and market dynamics over time. Modern perspectives emphasize Customer Relationship Management (CRM), a comprehensive approach to building long-term, profitable relationships with customers. Within the broader framework of strategic planning, marketing strategy plays a critical role in shaping decisions at the corporate, business unit, and functional levels, serving as a central bridge that links the organization with its external market environment (McDonald, 1992). Thus, marketing strategy is a key element in creating sustainable competitive advantage.

Digital Marketing and Social Media Strategy

Digital marketing represents a modern form of marketing that integrates technology and digital platforms to enhance customer reach, interaction, and conversion. The use of social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok provides opportunities for MSMEs to build brand identity consistently and efficiently. Research by (S. F. Rahman et al., 2025) shows that digital interaction, content quality, and ease of access to product information significantly influence purchasing decisions in the culinary sector.

TikTok, as the fastest-growing platform, offers a short-video-based promotional model that is highly effective in generating viral content and high engagement. (Bratadiredja, 2023) emphasizes that TikTok has a substantial impact on culinary marketing, particularly through creative content, storytelling, and the use of popular music to strengthen visual appeal.

However, the rise of TikTok also comes with challenges such as data security and privacy concerns. Several countries, including the United States and India, have questioned the safety of user data. Nevertheless, features such as TikTok for Business, e-commerce integration, and live streaming continue to reinforce its position as a relevant modern marketing platform for F&B MSMEs like Gocah Coffee.

Instagram and TikTok as Digital Marketing Platforms

Instagram and TikTok represent two of the most influential social media platforms for digital marketing, particularly for MSMEs operating in the food and beverage (F&B) sector. Instagram, which has evolved from a simple photo-sharing application into a multifaceted visual ecosystem, enables businesses to build brand identity through photos, videos, Stories, and Reels. Features such as personalized feeds, interactive tools, and algorithm-driven content distribution support brand visibility, community engagement, and consumer interaction. According to (Gunelius, 2011), successful Instagram marketing relies on four key indicators: content creation, content sharing, connection, and community building each contributing to stronger brand audience relationships.

TikTok, on the other hand, offers a dynamic short-video format supported by an advanced recommendation system (For You Page) powered by artificial intelligence. This system analyzes user behavior such as watch time, likes, and shares—to deliver highly relevant content and maximize engagement. TikTok's creative tools, music integration, and viral trends allow even small businesses to gain rapid exposure without requiring professional production skills. Despite concerns regarding privacy and data security, TikTok continues to strengthen its marketing ecosystem through features such as TikTok for Business, live streaming, and e-commerce integration, making it an increasingly essential platform for digital promotion.

For F&B MSMEs such as Gocah Coffee, Instagram and TikTok provide complementary advantages: Instagram supports aesthetic branding and community-building, while TikTok drives viral reach and rapid engagement through short-form creative content. The combination of these platforms offers strategic opportunities to enhance brand visibility, attract new audiences, and cultivate stronger emotional connections with consumers.

The SOAR Strategic Framework

The SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) framework is a strategic approach grounded in an organization's positive potential and core strengths. Unlike the traditional SWOT analysis, which emphasizes weaknesses and threats, SOAR adopts an appreciative and future-oriented perspective that prioritizes collaboration, vision building, and strategic alignment. (Stavros & Hinrichs, 2009) define SOAR as a framework that enables organizations to identify internal strengths, leverage external opportunities, and align collective aspirations to generate measurable and meaningful results. This makes SOAR a proactive and visionary model rather than a corrective or risk-mitigation tool.

Previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of the SOAR approach across various organizational contexts. (Swafford, 2013) found that SOAR enhances collaboration and strategic thinking in nonprofit organizations. (Hitchcock, 2014) reported that SOAR fosters collective motivation and strengthens organizational direction through appreciative inquiry. Khavarian-Garmsir H., (2015) showed the framework's usefulness in designing sustainable tourism strategies. Similarly, (Diyasa et al., 2023) applied SOAR to develop marketing strategies for smart parking technologies, achieving positive outcomes. In the food and beverage context, (Kauri, 2023) successfully applied SOAR to formulate marketing strategies for black tea products.

Collectively, these findings indicate that the SOAR framework is highly suitable for F&B MSMEs such as Gocah Coffee, which require strategies that are collaborative, creative, and growth-oriented. By focusing on organizational strengths and future aspirations, SOAR supports the development of strategic directions that are both innovative and achievable.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive qualitative methodology with a single case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of Gocah Coffee's digital promotion strategies through the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) framework. A qualitative approach is appropriate because it enables the exploration of contextualized and complex marketing dynamics that cannot be fully captured through quantitative generalization Creswell, (2016). The case study design allows the researcher to investigate real-life promotional activities on Instagram and TikTok and to interpret stakeholder perspectives regarding strategy effectiveness.

The research was conducted at Gocah Coffee, located on Jalan Sei Sikambing B, Medan Sunggal District, Medan City. The site was selected purposively due to its active use of social media for marketing and its characteristics as a developing F&B MSME in Medan. Participants were selected using purposive sampling (Sugiyono, 2018), resulting in 13 informants consisting of internal stakeholders the owner, operational manager, finance and purchasing staff, and two baristas and external stakeholders, including four regular and four non-regular customers aged 21–31 years. This demographic aligns with digitally active consumers who frequently engage with Instagram and TikTok content.

Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources (Sugiyono, 2019). Primary data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, non-participant observation of social media activities and customer behavior, and documentation from Instagram Insights, TikTok Analytics, and sales records February 2024–May 2025. Secondary data were drawn from academic literature on digital marketing, MSME development, SOAR analysis, and previous research on social media promotional effectiveness. These multiple data sources ensured triangulation and strengthened the credibility of the findings.

Three techniques were used for data collection, interviews to capture perceptions, experiences, and expectations of internal and external stakeholders, observation to examine content themes, engagement levels, posting consistency, and on-site customer behavior and documentation analysis of digital analytics and brand identity materials. The analytical process followed the interactive model of Miles, Miles et al., (2014), consisting of data reduction through coding, data display in thematic categories, and conclusion drawing with iterative verification against raw data and literature.

The SOAR analytical procedure was implemented in four structured stages identifying internal strengths such as visual identity, content quality, and customer experience mapping opportunities including TikTok virality patterns, user generated content (UGC), and digital consumer trends exploring aspirations from managerial and customer perspectives related to brand development, community building, and content consistency and formulating measurable results involving engagement rates, follower growth, store visit conversions, and performance improvement through analytics based evaluation. These combined processes form a comprehensive methodological foundation for assessing and developing digital marketing strategies for Gocah Coffee.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section summarizes the key findings regarding Gocah Coffee's digital promotion performance and its strategic direction based on the SOAR framework. Gocah Coffee, established in 2024 in Medan Sunggal, targets young adults and students through a minimalist, comfortable, and affordable café concept. Its digital presence relies primarily on Instagram as a curated visual storefront and TikTok as a high reach platform driven by viral short-form content.

The insights of 13 informants comprising internal management and baristas, as well as regular and non-regular customers provide a comprehensive view of the business's current promotional effectiveness. Instagram (@gocah.coffee), with 792 followers, successfully builds visual identity through aesthetic photos and consistent color tones but suffers from irregular posting and minimal interactivity, reducing

engagement and limiting audience growth. Meanwhile, TikTok (@gocah_coffee18) demonstrates stronger performance, generating 9,377 followers and multiple viral videos exceeding 20,000 views. Although Gocah Coffee selectively avoids certain trends to maintain brand authenticity, TikTok remains the most impactful platform for reach and offline conversions.

Through SOAR analysis, several key strengths were identified, including strong visual branding, authentic in-store ambiance, appealing content, and cost-efficient organic promotion. External opportunities include increasing TikTok usage among young consumers, demand for interactive and narrative-based content, and potential product diversification aligned with F&B industry trends. Stakeholder aspirations highlight the desire to strengthen digital brand recognition, build an active online community, and improve content consistency. The intended results focus on increasing engagement, follower growth, offline visits, and sales conversions through data-driven digital strategies.

The synthesis of SOAR elements shows strong alignment: internal strengths effectively support future aspirations, while external opportunities reinforce the goal of building an active and engaged digital community. Together, these strengths and opportunities contribute to measurable improvements in marketing performance. Based on this integration, several strategic directions are recommended. The first is strengthening visual storytelling across all platforms to maintain consistent branding and enhance audience connection. Another strategic direction involves improving customer engagement through the use of interactive features and encouraging user-generated content that reflects authentic customer experiences. Collaboration and product innovation also become essential, particularly through partnerships with micro-influencers, community involvement, and the introduction of limited-edition or seasonal menu items. Additionally, applying data-based evaluation is crucial for optimizing content scheduling, managing advertising efforts, and monitoring the effectiveness of digital to offline conversions. Overall, Gocah Coffee possesses strong potential to enhance digital marketing performance. Leveraging SOAR-based strategies enables the business to align internal capabilities with external opportunities, ensuring adaptive, cost-effective, and growth-oriented digital promotion within the competitive F&B sector.

5. CONCLUSION

This study explored the formulation of a digital marketing strategy for Gocah Coffee using the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) framework. The findings obtained through interviews, observations, and analysis of Instagram and TikTok content indicate that Gocah Coffee possesses notable internal strengths, particularly in its strong visual identity, authentic and comfortable shop atmosphere, and creative content production capabilities. When aligned with external opportunities such as increasing digital consumption, the rapid rise of short-video platforms, and the active engagement of youth communities these strengths create substantial potential for enhancing the brand's digital visibility and competitiveness.

The results also show that Gocah Coffee has achieved early positive traction on both Instagram and TikTok. However, its digital promotional performance remains unstable due to irregular content scheduling, limited optimization of interactive features, and the absence of consistent, data-driven evaluation. The temporary effects of influencer-based promotions further suggest the need for a more structured, sustainable, and long-term strategic approach.

Through the SOAR based analysis, several strategic directions were identified, including the strengthening of visual storytelling to reinforce brand identity, the enhancement of customer engagement to build an active digital community, the development of collaborative and innovative promotional initiatives suited to local audience characteristics, and the improvement of promotional efficiency through data-driven evaluation. Together, these directions demonstrate the usefulness of the SOAR framework as an integrated, forward-looking tool for developing adaptive and sustainable digital marketing strategies for MSMEs in the F&B sector.

In conclusion, the integration of internal capabilities with external opportunities supported by clear aspirations and measurable results positions Gocah Coffee to enhance its competitive advantage, expand digital reach, and foster greater customer loyalty. The SOAR-based strategic model thus offers not only analytical insight but also practical managerial implications for MSMEs seeking to navigate digital transformation and achieve sustainable growth.

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