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Analysing digital marketing strategies to enhance brand awareness: A case study of Ichyo Crepes - micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME)

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Abstract—This study aims to analyse the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in enhancing the brand awareness of Ichyo Crepes, a Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME). The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study design. Data were collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews with the business owner, and documentation study, including social media content, digital promotional materials, and other supporting records. The data were analysed using the interactive model of qualitative data analysis, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings indicate that the implementation of digital marketing strategies through social media platforms, engaging visual content, interactive promotional activities, and the utilization of customer reviews has significantly increased brand exposure and expanded the business's market reach. Furthermore, consistent content publication and active engagement with customers have strengthened brand recognition and enhanced consumer trust in Ichyo Crepes' products. However, the effectiveness of these strategies remains constrained by limited human resources, inconsistent digital media management, and intense competition within the same industry. The study concludes that a well-planned, consistent, and customer-oriented digital marketing strategy contributes positively to strengthening brand awareness and improving the competitive advantage of Ichyo Crepes in the increasingly competitive digital marketplace. The findings also provide practical insights for MSMEs seeking to optimize digital marketing initiatives to improve brand visibility and sustain business growth.

Keywords: digital marketing, brand awareness; micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), digital marketing strategy

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology has fundamentally transformed the way businesses conduct marketing activities. The emergence of the internet and social media has shifted marketing practices from conventional approaches toward digital platforms that enable businesses to communicate with consumers more efficiently, interactively, and at relatively low cost. In Indonesia, digital technology adoption has grown substantially. As of 2025, approximately 230 million Indonesians use the internet, while around 180 million people, representing 62.9% of the total population, actively engage with social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok (Kemp, 2025; WeAreSocial, 2025). These platforms have become important channels for disseminating product information, strengthening customer engagement, and enhancing business competitiveness.

For Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), digital marketing has become an essential strategy for expanding market reach, improving promotional efficiency, and strengthening customer relationships. Unlike traditional marketing, digital marketing enables businesses to interact directly with consumers, personalize promotional content, and evaluate marketing performance through measurable indicators (Kotler et al., 2021). Consequently, digital marketing has become one of the most effective approaches for increasing brand awareness and sustaining business growth in the digital economy.

Despite the increasing accessibility of digital platforms, many Indonesian MSMEs have not yet fully optimized their digital marketing activities. Previous studies indicate that digital marketing positively influences brand awareness and business performance (Cindy & Zai, 2025; Yanto & Aprilian, 2023; Baihaqi & Widodo, 2025; Christine, 2025). However, MSMEs continue to encounter challenges such as inconsistent content management, limited digital marketing competencies, inadequate strategic planning, and insufficient human resources (Kamal et al., 2024). These limitations prevent businesses from maximizing the potential of digital platforms as effective branding tools.

Ichioy Crepes represents one such MSME experiencing these challenges. Although the business utilizes several digital platforms—including Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp Business, GoFood, and ShopeeFood—the implementation of its digital marketing strategy remains suboptimal. Social media engagement is relatively low, promotional content is published inconsistently, and the uploaded content has not effectively highlighted the uniqueness of the products. Nevertheless, positive customer reviews and recommendations across multiple digital platforms indicate significant opportunities to strengthen brand awareness through a more systematic digital marketing strategy. Therefore, evaluating and improving the current marketing strategy is both practically and academically important.

This study is grounded in the concepts of digital marketing, brand awareness, and SWOT analysis. Digital marketing refers to the utilization of digital technologies and online communication channels to promote products, build customer relationships, and create business value (Kotler et al., 2021; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). Effective digital marketing encompasses social media marketing, content marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), online advertising, influencer marketing, and customer engagement strategies.

Brand awareness represents consumers' ability to recognize and recall a particular brand within a product category (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2013). High levels of brand awareness increase the likelihood that consumers will consider a brand during purchasing decisions and contribute to long-term customer loyalty.

To formulate strategic recommendations, this study employs SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, which facilitates the identification of internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats influencing organizational performance (Gürel & Tat, 2017). SWOT provides a systematic framework for developing strategic alternatives that align organizational capabilities with environmental conditions.

Numerous studies have examined the relationship between digital marketing and brand awareness among MSMEs. Cindy and Zai (2025) found that digital marketing significantly contributes to increasing public recognition of MSME products through social media promotion. Similarly, Yanto and Aprilian (2023) reported that digital marketing strategies positively affect brand awareness by improving customer engagement and expanding promotional reach. Baihaqi and Widodo (2025) further demonstrated that consistent digital marketing activities improve business visibility and customer trust, while Christine (2025) emphasized the importance of integrating social media marketing with interactive digital content to strengthen brand recognition. Pangaribuan et al. (2024) also argued that consistent digital marketing practices facilitate broader dissemination of product information and reinforce long-term relationships with consumers.

The literature demonstrates that digital marketing has become a crucial factor in improving the competitiveness and market performance of MSMEs. The rapid growth of internet

users and social media adoption in Indonesia has created broader opportunities for small businesses to strengthen their online presence, engage with customers, and expand market reach through digital platforms (Simon, 2025).

Previous studies have shown that marketing communication strategies significantly contribute to increasing consumer awareness and purchasing decisions. Effective utilization of social media, promotional content, customer interaction, and integrated communication channels enables food-based MSMEs to build stronger relationships with consumers. However, many MSMEs still face challenges related to content consistency, limited marketing resources, and the lack of strategic planning, indicating that digital marketing effectiveness depends not only on platform utilization but also on implementation quality (Fazrin et al., 2023).

Research focusing on crepe-based MSMEs also emphasizes that sustainable business performance requires an appropriate combination of marketing strategy and operational management. Competitive advantage is influenced not only by promotional activities but also by inventory management, production planning, and market feasibility analysis. Businesses that successfully integrate marketing with operational efficiency tend to achieve better competitiveness and long-term sustainability (Salih & Rahayuningsih, 2024; Sholeha et al., 2026; Pratama & Yuliawati, 2025).

Studies on Instagram marketing further indicate that attractive marketing content and customer satisfaction positively influence brand image. This finding suggests that content quality alone is insufficient without maintaining customer experience and satisfaction, highlighting the importance of combining promotional strategies with service excellence (Nurbaiska et al., 2024). Several references retrieved using the keyword *crepe* are unrelated to the context of food MSMEs because they discuss artificial intelligence, computer vision, document parsing, speech processing, batteries, rubber processing, textile printing, and other engineering applications. Although these studies contribute to their respective scientific disciplines, they provide no theoretical or empirical support for marketing communication, consumer behaviour, or MSME development. Therefore, they should not be included in the literature review of a study examining digital marketing strategies for crepe-based MSMEs to maintain conceptual relevance and strengthen the theoretical foundation (Kim et al., 2018; Hsieh et al., 2023; Ma et al., 2023; Yu et al., 2022; Okamoto et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2020; Ray et al., 2023).

Likewise, studies discussing crepe rubber, natural rubber processing, tissue paper production, and industrial machinery focus on manufacturing processes, materials engineering, and agricultural supply chains rather than marketing communication or consumer markets. Although these studies contain the word *crepe*, the term refers to industrial or technical products instead of food products, making them irrelevant as references for research on digital marketing strategies in culinary MSMEs (Madushika & Sooriyakumar, 2020; Noraniah et al., 2021; Jain et al., 2022; Noinart et al., 2022; Dunuwila et al., 2023).

Among the collected references, only a limited number directly examine marketing communication, digital marketing, or business management in food-based MSMEs. This indicates that empirical studies specifically investigating digital marketing strategies for crepe-based culinary MSMEs remain scarce. Consequently, further research is needed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how digital marketing strategies contribute to brand awareness, customer engagement, and business growth within the culinary MSME sector (Fazrin et al., 2023; Salih & Rahayuningsih, 2024; Sholeha et al., 2026; Nurbaiska et al., 2024; Simon, 2025).

Although these studies confirm the effectiveness of digital marketing in enhancing brand awareness, most employ quantitative methods emphasizing statistical relationships among variables. Consequently, limited attention has been devoted to understanding how digital marketing strategies are practically implemented within MSMEs and how internal and external business conditions influence strategic decision-making. This methodological gap highlights the need for qualitative investigations that provide richer insights into digital marketing implementation.

Based on the identified research gap, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) What digital marketing strategies are currently implemented by Ichiyo Crepes? (2)

What are the internal strengths and weaknesses as well as the external opportunities and threats affecting the digital marketing performance of Ichiyo Crepes based on SWOT analysis? (3) What strategic recommendations can be formulated to improve digital marketing effectiveness and strengthen brand awareness?

This study aims to (1) identify the digital marketing strategies currently implemented by Ichiyo Crepes. (2) Analyse the internal and external business environment of Ichiyo Crepes using SWOT analysis. (3) Formulate appropriate digital marketing strategies to enhance brand awareness and improve the competitiveness of Ichiyo Crepes in the digital marketplace.

2. Method

2.1 Data Collection

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to obtain an in-depth understanding of the digital marketing strategies implemented by Ichiyo Crepes to enhance its brand awareness. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables researchers to explore marketing practices, business experiences, and strategic decision-making within their natural context.

The study was conducted at Ichiyo Crepes, located on Jl. Stadion, Karangsari, Maguwoharjo, Ngemplak District, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The research focused on the implementation of digital marketing strategies across the business's digital communication channels.

Research participants were selected using purposive sampling, whereby informants were chosen based on their relevance to the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2023). The participants consisted of the business owner, one operational employee responsible for daily business activities, and three customers who had direct experience interacting with Ichiyo Crepes through its digital marketing platforms.

The study utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore participants' perspectives regarding the planning, implementation, and effectiveness of digital marketing activities. Observations focused on the business's utilization of digital platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp Business, GoFood, and ShopeeFood, to identify patterns of content management, promotional activities, and customer engagement. Documentation included social media content, platform insights, customer reviews, promotional materials, and other relevant business records. Secondary data were obtained from books, scholarly journals, previous studies, and other academic publications related to digital marketing, brand awareness, and SWOT analysis.

To ensure the credibility of the findings, data triangulation was applied through both source triangulation and technique triangulation (Sugiyono, 2023). Source triangulation involved comparing information obtained from the business owner, employee, and customers, while technique triangulation was conducted by comparing data derived from interviews, observations, and documentation.

2.2 Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using the interactive data analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three interconnected stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During the first stage, interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentation were organized, coded, and reduced to identify information relevant to the research objectives. In the second stage, the categorized data were systematically displayed in descriptive narratives and analytical tables to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn through continuous verification by comparing findings across multiple data sources and collection techniques.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

3.1.1 Social Media Marketing Implementation

The findings indicate that Ichiyo Crepes has adopted social media marketing as one of its primary digital marketing strategies. The business actively utilizes Instagram and TikTok to introduce its products, promote special offers, and increase customer reach. In addition, WhatsApp Business functions as a communication channel for customer inquiries and orders, while Google Maps helps customers locate the business more easily.

Observational data reveal that content publication across Instagram and TikTok remains inconsistent. Posting schedules are irregular because all social media activities are managed directly by the business owner, who is also responsible for daily operational tasks. Interview findings further suggest that limited time and human resources constitute the primary obstacles to maintaining consistent social media management. Consequently, digital marketing has not yet become a strategic priority despite its recognized importance for increasing business visibility. This condition limits the effectiveness of social media in strengthening customer engagement and improving brand awareness.

3.1.2 Content Marketing Implementation

The study found that Ichiyo Crepes employs content marketing through product photographs, short-form videos, menu information, promotional announcements, and documentation of daily business activities. These contents are intended to introduce products, communicate promotional campaigns, and provide customers with updated information regarding available menu items.

However, observations and document analysis indicate that the published content remains largely informational rather than persuasive. Several competitive advantages of Ichiyo Crepes—including more than forty flavour variants, generous portion sizes, customizable flavour combinations, and affordable prices—are not communicated comprehensively through digital content. Furthermore, the visual presentation and storytelling techniques remain relatively simple and have not consistently followed current social media trends. As a result, audience engagement, measured through likes, comments, shares, and other interactions, remains relatively limited. These findings suggest that the existing content marketing strategy has not fully optimized the business's unique selling propositions to strengthen brand recognition.

3.1.3 Online Reviews and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)

The findings demonstrate that Ichiyo Crepes has received numerous positive customer reviews across several digital platforms, including Google Maps, GoFood, ShopeeFood, and Instagram. In addition to written reviews, customers frequently recommend the business to friends and family, reflecting the presence of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) that contributes positively to the business's online reputation.

The study also identified various forms of user-generated content (UGC), including Instagram Stories posted by customers, product review videos created by food vloggers, and recommendations shared by local culinary content creators. Several interview participants acknowledged that they first became aware of Ichiyo Crepes after encountering these online reviews and recommendations. Despite these valuable promotional assets, observational findings indicate that customer testimonials, online reviews, and UGC have not been systematically incorporated into the company's official social media strategy. Consequently, opportunities to strengthen brand credibility and expand organic digital exposure remain underutilized.

3.1.4 Marketplace and Food Delivery Platform Utilization

The research findings show that Ichiyo Crepes has expanded its digital marketing activities by utilizing GoFood and ShopeeFood as both sales channels and promotional platforms. These food delivery applications enable customers to purchase products conveniently without visiting the physical store while simultaneously allowing customers to provide ratings and reviews after each transaction.

Although the business has successfully established its presence on these platforms, the utilization of promotional features remains limited. The findings indicate that Ichiyo Crepes has not maximized various promotional facilities provided by the platforms, including sponsored campaigns, discount vouchers, flash promotions, and paid advertising programs. Consequently,

opportunities to increase product visibility, improve marketplace rankings, and attract new customers have not been fully exploited.

Overall, the results indicate that Ichiyo Crepes has implemented multiple digital marketing strategies encompassing social media marketing, content marketing, online reviews and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and food delivery platforms. Nevertheless, several limitations continue to reduce the effectiveness of these strategies. These include inconsistent content publication, insufficient communication of product uniqueness, relatively low audience engagement, underutilization of customer-generated content and testimonials, and limited adoption of digital promotional features available across online platforms. These findings provide an important foundation for developing more comprehensive digital marketing strategies aimed at enhancing brand awareness and improving the long-term competitiveness of Ichiyo Crepes.

3.2 Discussion

The findings demonstrate that Ichiyo Crepes has adopted several digital marketing strategies, including social media marketing, content marketing, online reviews and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and food delivery platforms. The business has utilized Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp Business, Google Maps, GoFood, and ShopeeFood as communication and promotional channels. This reflects an awareness of the importance of digital platforms in reaching contemporary consumers, particularly younger customers who actively seek culinary information through social media and online applications.

However, the implementation of these strategies remains less than optimal. Content publication is inconsistent, promotional content primarily delivers basic information rather than persuasive brand messages, audience engagement is relatively low, and the business has not fully utilized the promotional features available on digital platforms. Furthermore, the same social media accounts are used to promote other business activities, reducing the consistency and clarity of the Ichiyo Crepes brand identity. These findings suggest that digital marketing activities are still operational rather than strategic, as they lack systematic planning, scheduling, performance evaluation, and long-term branding objectives. This observation supports the argument of Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2022), who emphasize that effective digital marketing requires integrated planning, implementation, monitoring, and continuous optimization rather than merely maintaining an online presence. Likewise, the findings are consistent with Kamal et al. (2024), who reported that limited human resources, inconsistent content management, and inadequate digital competencies remain common barriers preventing MSMEs from maximizing digital marketing performance.

The analysis also indicates that the current level of brand awareness achieved by Ichiyo Crepes corresponds to the stages of brand recognition and brand recall. Interview participants were generally able to recognize the business through Instagram, TikTok, Google Maps, GoFood, ShopeeFood, and recommendations from other customers. Many respondents also recalled distinctive product characteristics, including more than forty flavour options, relatively large product sizes, affordable prices, and customizable flavour combinations. These attributes demonstrate that the business has successfully established a recognizable brand identity among existing customers.

Nevertheless, the findings reveal that Ichiyo Crepes has not yet reached the **top-of-mind** stage of brand awareness. When respondents were asked to mention the first crepes brand that came to mind, most initially identified competing brands before recalling Ichiyo Crepes. This finding indicates that although consumers are familiar with the brand, it has not yet become the dominant brand association within its product category. According to Aaker (1996), brand awareness develops progressively from brand recognition to brand recall and ultimately to top-of-mind awareness, which represents the strongest level of consumer memory. Similarly, Keller (2013) argues that continuous and consistent marketing communication strengthens consumers' memory structures, making a brand more likely to be recalled during purchasing decisions. Therefore, Ichiyo Crepes requires more consistent digital marketing efforts to increase brand exposure and strengthen long-term consumer memory.

Following the qualitative analysis, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis was conducted to evaluate both the internal and external conditions affecting the digital marketing performance of Ichiyo Crepes. Internal factors were categorized into strengths and weaknesses, whereas external factors were classified as opportunities and threats. These factors were subsequently organized into a SWOT matrix to formulate strategic alternatives, including SO (Strength-Opportunity), WO (Weakness-Opportunity), ST (Strength-Threat), and WT (Weakness-Threat) strategies. The resulting strategic recommendations served as the basis for identifying appropriate digital marketing initiatives to improve brand awareness and strengthen the competitive position of Ichiyo Crepes in the digital marketplace.

Table 1. SWOT Matrix of Ichiyo Crepes

Internal Factors	
Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
S1. Utilizes multiple digital platforms (Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp Business, Google Maps, GoFood, and ShopeeFood).	W1. Social media content is published inconsistently.
S2. Offers strong product differentiation, including more than 40 flavour variants, customizable flavour combinations, large portions, and affordable prices.	W2. Social media management depends solely on the business owner.
S3. Receives positive customer reviews and testimonials across digital platforms.	W3. Limited time and human resources for digital marketing activities.
S4. Has accumulated user-generated content (UGC) from customers, food vloggers, and culinary content creators.	W4. Low audience engagement on social media.
S5. Customers voluntarily recommend the business through electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM).	W5. Content does not sufficiently communicate product uniqueness.
S6. Strategic location near universities and young consumers.	W6. Content presentation lacks creativity and visual appeal.
	W7. Social media accounts are also used to promote other businesses, reducing brand focus.
	W8. Paid advertisements, influencers, and promotional features on food delivery platforms have not been utilized effectively.
	W9. Customer participation in sharing digital experiences remains limited.
	W10. Customer reviews, testimonials, and UGC have not been systematically integrated into content marketing.
External Factors	
Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
O1. High social media usage, particularly Instagram and TikTok.	T1. Increasing competition among culinary businesses in Maguwoharjo.
O2. Consumers increasingly search for culinary information through digital platforms.	T2. Many competing businesses actively utilize digital marketing.
O3. Strong influence of food vloggers and culinary influencers on purchasing decisions.	T3. Rapid changes in digital marketing and social media trends.
O4. Availability of various promotional features on social media and food delivery applications.	T4. Competitors implement more systematic and intensive digital marketing strategies.
O5. Customer reviews, testimonials, and UGC provide cost-effective promotional opportunities.	T5. Consumers have numerous alternative culinary choices.
O6. Opportunities to collaborate with influencers, food vloggers, and local culinary communities.	T6. Increasing competition for audience attention across digital platforms.

O7. Large student and young adult population actively using digital media.	
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Table 2. SWOT Strategic Matrix of Ichiyo Crepes

	Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
Strengths (S)	SO Strategies	ST Strategies
	SO1. Maximize existing digital platforms to highlight product differentiation, including extensive flavor options, customizable menus, large portions, and affordable prices, targeting digitally active consumers.	ST1. Differentiate the brand by consistently emphasizing unique product characteristics that distinguish Ichiyo Crepes from competitors.
	SO2. Encourage satisfied customers to generate electronic word-of-mouth through reviews, testimonials, and user-generated content.	ST2. Utilize positive reviews, testimonials, and user-generated content to strengthen consumer trust amid intense competition.
	SO3. Leverage the strategic location near universities to create location-based digital campaigns targeting students and young consumers.	ST3. Strengthen visibility across multiple digital platforms to maintain accessibility and competitiveness.
Weaknesses (W)	WO Strategies (Recommended Strategy)	WT Strategies
	WO1. Develop a structured and consistent content publication schedule.	WT1. Improve content consistency while adapting to emerging digital trends.
	WO2. Produce more creative and engaging content emphasizing the business's unique selling propositions.	WT2. Enhance content quality and creativity to compete effectively for audience attention.
	WO3. Encourage customers to share their experiences online to increase organic digital exposure.	WT3. Focus all social media accounts exclusively on Ichiyo Crepes to strengthen brand identity.
	WO4. Integrate customer reviews, testimonials, and UGC into regular social media content to reduce content creation workload.	WT4. Increase customer participation in digital engagement activities to reinforce brand presence in a highly competitive market.
	WO5. Separate Ichiyo Crepes' social media accounts from other business promotions to improve brand consistency.	
	WO6. Utilize paid advertising, promotional vouchers, and food delivery platform campaigns to expand customer reach.	
	WO7. Establish gradual collaborations with food vloggers, influencers, and local culinary content creators to improve brand visibility.	

The SWOT analysis indicates that Ichiyo Crepes is positioned in the Weakness-Opportunity (WO) quadrant, suggesting that the business possesses significant external opportunities but still faces several internal limitations in managing digital marketing activities. Therefore, the most appropriate strategic direction is a WO strategy, focusing on improving internal digital marketing capabilities while leveraging favorable market opportunities. Implementing these strategies is expected to strengthen content management, increase customer engagement, improve brand visibility, and gradually elevate Ichiyo Crepes from brand recognition and brand recall toward top-of-mind brand awareness.

To further evaluate the company's strategic position, this study employed SWOT analysis, which identified both internal and external factors influencing digital marketing performance. The business possesses several important strengths, including the utilization of multiple digital platforms, unique product differentiation through more than forty flavour variants, generous portion sizes, affordable pricing, positive customer reviews, and user-generated content (UGC). Moreover, the strategic location near universities provides access to a target market characterized by intensive social media usage and frequent online purchasing behaviour.

Despite these advantages, several internal weaknesses were identified. These include inconsistent content publication, limited human resources dedicated to social media management, relatively low audience engagement, insufficiently creative content, underutilization of customer reviews and user-generated content, and minimal use of promotional features offered by social media and food delivery platforms. From the external perspective, growing internet penetration, increasing reliance on digital platforms for culinary recommendations, and the expanding influence of food vloggers and local culinary influencers create valuable market opportunities. Conversely, increasing competition among food businesses and rapidly changing social media trends present significant challenges that require continuous adaptation.

The SWOT matrix generated four strategic alternatives: SO (Strength–Opportunity), WO (Weakness–Opportunity), ST (Strength–Threat), and WT (Weakness–Threat) strategies. The SO strategy focuses on leveraging product uniqueness and digital platforms to capitalize on expanding digital market opportunities. The ST strategy utilizes product strengths, positive customer reviews, and user-generated content to maintain competitiveness in an increasingly crowded culinary market. The WT strategy emphasizes minimizing internal weaknesses to reduce vulnerability to external threats. Among these alternatives, the WO strategy emerged as the most appropriate strategic priority because Ichiyo Crepes possesses considerable market opportunities but continues to experience weaknesses in digital marketing management. This strategic position suggests that improving internal digital marketing capabilities offers the greatest potential for enhancing brand awareness.

Based on the SWOT findings, this study proposes several strategic recommendations to strengthen the effectiveness of digital marketing. First, the business should establish a structured and consistent content publication schedule to improve audience expectations and algorithm visibility. Second, content should become more creative by emphasizing the business's unique selling propositions, including extensive flavour variations, customizable products, generous portions, and competitive pricing. Third, customers should be encouraged to share their experiences through social media to increase electronic word-of-mouth and organic brand exposure. Fourth, customer testimonials, online reviews, and user-generated content should be systematically integrated into the official social media strategy to enhance brand credibility and trustworthiness. Fifth, the social media accounts dedicated to Ichiyo Crepes should be separated from other business activities to strengthen brand identity and maintain communication consistency. Sixth, promotional tools available on Instagram, TikTok, GoFood, and ShopeeFood—including sponsored advertisements, vouchers, and promotional campaigns—should be utilized more effectively to expand market reach. Finally, gradual collaboration with food vloggers, local influencers, and culinary content creators should be established to increase digital visibility and attract potential customers.

To support these recommendations, a content calendar should be developed as a practical guide for systematic social media management. The calendar should combine informational posts, promotional campaigns, customer testimonials, user-generated content, electronic word-of-mouth, and interactive content aligned with current social media trends. Such a structured content management approach is expected to improve publication consistency, strengthen customer engagement, increase online visibility, and gradually elevate Ichiyo Crepes from the stages of brand recognition and brand recall toward achieving top-of-mind brand

awareness. Ultimately, these strategic improvements will contribute to stronger brand equity and greater competitiveness in Indonesia's increasingly digitalized culinary industry.

4. Conclusion

This study examined the implementation of digital marketing strategies employed by Ichiyo Crepes to enhance brand awareness and formulated strategic recommendations based on a qualitative approach supported by SWOT analysis. The findings demonstrate that Ichiyo Crepes has recognized the importance of digital technology by utilizing several online platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp Business, Google Maps, GoFood, and ShopeeFood. These platforms serve as channels for product promotion, customer communication, information dissemination, and online transactions. The adoption of multiple digital platforms indicates that the business has responded positively to the changing behaviour of consumers, who increasingly rely on digital media to search for products, compare alternatives, and make purchasing decisions. Nevertheless, the findings also reveal that simply adopting digital platforms does not automatically result in effective digital marketing or strong brand awareness. The effectiveness of digital marketing depends on how systematically and consistently these platforms are managed.

The study found that four principal digital marketing strategies have been implemented: social media marketing, content marketing, online reviews and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and food delivery platform utilization. Among these strategies, social media has become the primary communication channel between the business and its customers. However, content publication remains inconsistent because digital marketing activities are managed solely by the business owner while simultaneously handling daily operational responsibilities. Consequently, promotional activities lack regular scheduling, strategic planning, and continuous evaluation. Likewise, although the published content provides product information and promotional messages, it has not fully communicated the distinctive characteristics of Ichiyo Crepes, such as its extensive flavour variations, customizable menu options, generous portion sizes, and affordable prices. As a result, audience engagement across digital platforms remains relatively low compared with its marketing potential.

The findings further demonstrate that Ichiyo Crepes has successfully generated positive customer reviews, testimonials, and user-generated content across various digital platforms. These forms of electronic word-of-mouth represent valuable marketing assets because they contribute to consumer trust and influence purchasing decisions. Nevertheless, these digital resources have not yet been integrated systematically into the company's content marketing strategy. Similarly, although GoFood and ShopeeFood have expanded the business's market accessibility, the available promotional features – including sponsored campaigns, vouchers, and platform-based advertising – have not been fully utilized. These findings suggest that the current implementation of digital marketing remains operational rather than strategic, with considerable opportunities for further optimization.

Regarding brand awareness, the study concludes that Ichiyo Crepes has achieved the levels of brand recognition and brand recall. Consumers are generally able to recognize the brand through digital platforms and recall several distinctive product attributes after previous interactions. However, the business has not yet reached the top-of-mind stage, as competing brands continue to dominate consumers' initial recall within the crepes product category. This indicates that although the brand has established market presence, stronger and more consistent marketing communication is still required to reinforce consumer memory and increase brand preference. Continuous exposure through well-managed digital marketing activities is therefore essential for strengthening long-term brand equity.

The SWOT analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the strategic position of Ichiyo Crepes. The business possesses several competitive strengths, including product differentiation, affordable pricing, positive customer reviews, user-generated content, and the utilization of multiple digital platforms. In addition, its strategic location near university communities offers access to a digitally active target market. However, these strengths are

constrained by several internal weaknesses, such as inconsistent content management, limited human resources, relatively low customer engagement, underutilization of customer-generated content, and insufficient use of digital promotional features. Externally, increasing internet penetration, growing dependence on social media for culinary information, and the influence of food content creators create significant opportunities for business expansion, while intense competition and rapidly evolving digital trends constitute major challenges.

Based on these findings, the Weakness–Opportunity (WO) strategy emerged as the most appropriate strategic alternative. This strategy focuses on utilizing favourable digital market opportunities to overcome existing internal weaknesses. The proposed recommendations include establishing a structured content publication schedule, developing more creative and informative digital content, emphasizing the unique selling propositions of the products, encouraging customer participation through electronic word-of-mouth and user-generated content, maximizing customer reviews as promotional materials, separating the business's social media identity from unrelated commercial activities, utilizing promotional features provided by digital platforms, and gradually collaborating with local influencers and food vloggers. The development of a practical content calendar is also recommended to improve consistency and facilitate long-term digital marketing management.

Overall, this study concludes that digital marketing can significantly contribute to strengthening brand awareness when implemented through strategic planning, consistent execution, and continuous evaluation. For Ichiyo Crepes, improving the quality and consistency of digital marketing activities is expected to increase customer engagement, expand market reach, strengthen brand recognition, and ultimately achieve top-of-mind awareness among consumers. Beyond its practical implications, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on digital marketing for MSMEs by providing qualitative insights into the implementation process rather than merely measuring statistical relationships between variables. Future research is recommended to incorporate quantitative performance indicators, digital analytics, consumer behaviour metrics, or comparative case studies involving multiple MSMEs to obtain a broader understanding of the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in enhancing brand awareness across different business contexts.

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