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# Implementation of Digital Marketing Strategies to Enhance Brand Awareness of Indonesia's Traditional Essential Oils

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## Abstract

This study analyzes the implementation of digital marketing strategies to enhance brand awareness in Indonesia's traditional essential oil industry, with a specific focus on heritage-based products. As digital transformation continues to reshape consumer behavior, social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok have emerged as effective tools for brand promotion. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, this research collected data from 10 informants, comprising business owners, internal staff, and consumers, through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation of digital marketing activities. The findings indicate that visually appealing content, collaborations with local influencers, and consistent educational and promotional messaging play a significant role in strengthening brand image and increasing audience engagement, while interactive digital features encourage direct consumer involvement. Nevertheless, challenges persist, particularly in the limited utilization of digital data analytics and the absence of targeted market segmentation. This study contributes practically by offering actionable insights for MSMEs to optimize digital marketing strategies while preserving cultural identity, and academically by extending the literature on digital marketing and brand awareness in the context of traditional and culture-based products using a qualitative perspective. These findings highlight the strategic importance of digital transformation for enhancing the competitiveness of heritage-based MSMEs in the digital era.

**Keywords:** digital marketing; brand awareness; marketing strategy; social media; essential oil.

## 1. Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are a vital component of Indonesia's economy, contributing 61.07% to national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorbing up to 97% of the workforce (Kemenkop UKM, 2023). Despite this significant role, many MSMEs face ongoing challenges such as limited access to capital, low technological capacity, and weak marketing strategies. According to Bank Indonesia (2022), only 34% of MSMEs have undergone digitalization, limiting their competitiveness in today's fast-changing market.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital transformation across sectors, prompting MSMEs to adapt and shift to digital platforms (Sri Astuti et al., 2024). Consumer behavior is also changing rapidly, with a preference for online shopping and brand engagement through digital channels. Digital marketing has become a key strategy for MSMEs to expand market reach without incurring high costs. However, many MSMEs still rely on traditional marketing methods such as word-of-mouth and in-person selling, which are less scalable and measurable (Fawwazky et al., 2023).

One growing sector within MSMEs is the traditional herbal and essential oil industry. Indonesia, with its rich biodiversity and cultural heritage, is home to a variety of traditional essential oils used for wellness, beauty, and health. These include *minyak kayu putih*, *minyak sereh*, *minyak cendana*, and *minyak akar wangi*, each with local significance and health benefits. The Indonesian traditional essential oil market is showing strong potential, driven by rising consumer interest in natural products, growing health awareness, and supportive government policies. Despite this, many traditional essential oil producers struggle to compete due to weak branding and limited digital marketing capacity.

A specific example of this challenge can be seen in *Minyak Karo*, a traditional essential oil product originating from Karo

Regency, North Sumatra. *Minyak Karo* is a unique blend of natural herbs and roots distilled into massage oil, widely used by the Karo people for generations for muscle relief, wellness, and traditional healing. Rich in cultural and therapeutic value, *Minyak Karo* has strong local recognition but remains underexposed in national and global markets.

One of the main producers of *Minyak Karo* is CV Rajawali, an MSME operating since 2008. Although the business holds health certification (BPOM) and halal certification (MUI), its digital visibility is still low. As of March 2025, its Instagram account had only 521 followers—far behind competitors like *Minyak Kutus-Kutus* (71.4k followers). This reflects common obstacles faced by local MSMEs: limited content creation, low digital literacy, and underuse of marketing analytics.

Although previous studies have widely examined digital marketing adoption among MSMEs, most focus on general consumer goods, e-commerce platforms, or quantitative performance indicators such as sales growth and online engagement. Limited attention has been given to traditional essential oil MSMEs that rely on local wisdom and heritage-based products, particularly in the Indonesian context. Moreover, existing research predominantly employs SWOT or purely analytical frameworks, leaving a gap in studies that adopt a more strengths- and aspiration-oriented approach such as SOAR.

This study addresses this gap by applying the SOAR framework to analyze digital marketing strategies of CV Rajawali in enhancing brand awareness of *Minyak Karo*. The research contributes by offering a context-specific, qualitative insight into how traditional herbal MSMEs can leverage digital marketing not only to compete in modern markets but also to preserve product identity and cultural value, thereby extending the literature on digital transformation and strategic marketing for heritage-based MSMEs.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Digital Marketing Strategy

Digital marketing refers to the use of internet technologies and online platforms to promote products and engage with consumers. Tulus et al. (2009) and Moniz (2016) define digital marketing as a communication process that uses interactive technologies to establish relationships with targeted customers. In practice, digital marketing involves several strategies, including the development of digital assets (e.g., websites, social media accounts), search engine optimization (SEO), paid advertising (Google Ads, Facebook Ads), and content creation tailored to the target audience (Rona et al., 2024).

Chaffey et al. (2019) categorize digital marketing components into SEO, online public relations, video content, display advertising, email marketing, and social media. Meanwhile, Wolfenbarger et al. (2003) suggest that effectiveness in digital marketing can be measured through reliability, website design, customer service, and data privacy. With the increasing reliance on digital platforms, these elements are essential, especially for micro and small enterprises aiming to expand their market reach.

### 2.2. Brand Awareness

Brand awareness plays a crucial role in influencing consumer decision-making and is a key dimension in brand equity (Keller, 2008; Aaker, 1996). It represents how familiar consumers are with a brand and how easily they can recall or recognize it. Durianto et al. (2004) describe brand awareness through four levels: top of mind, brand recall, brand recognition, and unaware of brand. These levels reflect a consumer's journey from general recognition to strong brand preference. Indicators of brand awareness include recall (consumers' ability to name a brand without aid), recognition (identifying the brand among competitors), purchase intention, and actual consumption (Keller, 2008). In digital marketing, building brand awareness relies heavily on creating consistent, engaging, and value-driven content across digital platforms.

### 2.3. Digital Marketing Strategies for MSMEs

The adoption of digital marketing among micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) has been widely studied. Research by Marcela et al. (2024) confirms that MSMEs leveraging digital tools experience improved visibility, customer relationships, and sales. Strategies proven effective include; utilizing social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok) for promotion, producing high-quality and engaging content, leveraging paid advertising for targeted audience reach, and employing data analytics to measure and refine marketing effectiveness. However, challenges persist. Many MSMEs lack digital literacy, marketing knowledge, and resources (Neng et al., 2023). These issues hinder their ability to fully exploit digital marketing benefits, particularly in regions with limited internet access or infrastructure.

### 2.4. SOAR Analysis Framework

The SOAR framework *Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results* is an appreciative inquiry-based strategic planning tool

(Stavros et al., 2003). Unlike SWOT, which focuses on problems and threats, SOAR emphasizes positive potential and future orientation. It encourages organizations to leverage their internal strengths and external opportunities while aligning them with their aspirations and measurable outcomes.

- **Strengths:** Core capabilities and unique advantages.
- **Opportunities:** Emerging trends and external factors to be exploited.
- **Aspirations:** Vision and mission of the organization or brand.
- **Results:** Specific, measurable achievements aligned with goals.

SOAR has proven especially effective for small businesses and community-based enterprises, providing a motivational framework to build strategies grounded in organizational values and external dynamics. This approach is particularly relevant for culturally rooted and traditional products such as *Minyak Karo*, as SOAR emphasizes internal strengths, collective aspirations, and culturally embedded values rather than solely focusing on deficiencies. By aligning strategic planning with local wisdom and heritage-based identity, the SOAR framework enables traditional products like *Minyak Karo* to strengthen their market positioning while preserving cultural authenticity in a modern digital context.

### 2.5. Previous Research

Several recent studies have highlighted the impact of digital marketing on MSMEs. **Table 1** summarizes key findings from selected works:

**Table 1.** Literature Summary

No.	Title	Author & Year	Method	Key Findings
1	Digital Marketing Strategy for MSMEs	Friadi (2022)	Qualitative	Digital marketing boosts sales and brand visibility.
2	MSME Assistance through E-Commerce	Kusuma et al. (2022)	Qualitative	Training improves sales (42.5%) and customer base (34.7%).
3	Digital Strategy at Bakpia Wong	Arifin (2020)	Qualitative	IT improves competitiveness and operational efficiency.
4	Strategy for MSME Growth	Makkiyah et al. (2023)	Qualitative	Digital marketing expands market and strengthens customer relations.

These studies consistently indicate the importance of adapting digital strategies, particularly for brands with cultural or traditional value propositions.

## 3. Method, Data and Analysis

### 3.1. Research Design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design to explore and analyze the implementation of digital marketing strategies by CV Rajawali in enhancing brand awareness for its flagship product, *Minyak Karo*. A qualitative approach was selected to enable a deeper understanding of marketing practices, consumer responses, and internal-external strategic factors through direct observations and subjective interpretations. The SOAR framework Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results was adopted as the main analytical model due to its forward-looking, appreciative inquiry approach. This model is particularly relevant for micro-enterprises and culturally-rooted products like *Minyak Karo*, as it emphasizes leveraging internal strengths and external opportunities rather than focusing solely on problems.

### 3.2. Sampling

The research focuses on *Minyak Karo* Rajawali, a traditional oil product manufactured by CV Rajawali, located in Karo Regency, North Sumatra. The unit of analysis is the business entity itself, along with its marketing strategies and digital presence. The target population comprises the business owner, employees managing social media or sales, and selected consumers who interact with the brand online. A purposive sampling method was applied to select key informants, including the business manager, marketing personnel, and selected local consumers. These respondents were chosen based on their roles and relevance to the digital marketing activities of the company.

### 3.3. Data Collection

Data were collected through three main methods:

- **Observation:** Field visits and online content audits were conducted to assess the visual and interactive elements of *Minyak Karo* Rajawali's social media presence across Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok.

- **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the business owner and key staff members to gain insights into marketing strategies, challenges, and aspirations.
- **Questionnaires:** Distributed to a small sample of digital consumers to gather perceptions related to brand recognition, engagement, and purchasing decisions.
- **Pilot Test:** Prior to full data collection, a pilot test of the interview guidelines and questionnaire instruments was conducted with a limited number of respondents to assess clarity, relevance, and consistency of the questions. Feedback from the pilot test was used to refine the instruments and ensure their validity and reliability before implementation.

### 3.4. Measurement

The study explored variables related to digital marketing strategy (content quality, frequency, influencer collaboration, interactivity), and brand awareness (recall, recognition, purchase intention, brand image). Additionally, the SOAR framework guided the measurement and analysis process using the following operational breakdown:

- **Strengths (S):** Internal advantages such as product uniqueness, quality, and cultural value.
- **Opportunities (O):** External trends and supports such as digital adoption, market demand for herbal products, and government programs.
- **Aspirations (A):** The company's vision for broader market reach, digital branding, and sustained growth.
- **Results (R):** Expected outcomes like increased social media followers, consumer engagement, and sales improvement.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

The qualitative data were analyzed through thematic content analysis supported by the SOAR strategic mapping. The data were obtained from in-depth interviews with 10 informants, consisting of the owner of CV Rajawali, employees involved in marketing and production activities, and customers of Minyak Karo, complemented by direct observations. Coding was performed manually to identify dominant themes emerging from interviews and observations. The data analysis followed these steps:

1. **Data Reduction:** Sorting and organizing raw interview transcripts and field notes.
2. **Data Display:** Presenting findings in the form of narrative descriptions, tables, and matrices.
3. **Drawing Conclusions:** Synthesizing patterns and linking them to the research objectives and the SOAR dimensions.

Equation-based models were not used, given the qualitative nature of the research. However, strategic mappings and SWOT-SOAR matrices were developed to visualize the findings.

## 4. Result and Discussion

### 4.1. Research Result

This study explores the implementation of digital marketing strategies by CV Rajawali to enhance brand awareness and strengthen market presence for its traditional product, *Minyak Karo*. Drawing from field observations, in-depth interviews, and supporting documentation, the findings reveal that the company actively utilizes various social media platforms, as its primary promotional tools. These platforms serve as the main channels for connecting with younger audiences and introducing *Minyak Karo* to a broader demographic beyond its traditional customer base.

Key strategies identified include creating engaging and informative visual content that highlights the authenticity and cultural heritage of *Minyak Karo*, collaborating with local influencers to expand audience reach and credibility, scheduling consistent uploads of promotional and educational materials, and utilizing interactive features such as comments, polls, and giveaways to maintain audience engagement. Through these approaches, CV Rajawali has been able to cultivate a more dynamic and relatable brand identity while fostering stronger customer relationships.

However, several challenges persist in the company's digital marketing implementation. The most notable issues include the limited use of digital analytics tools to evaluate campaign effectiveness, insufficient performance tracking across platforms, and the absence of a clearly defined market segmentation strategy. These constraints hinder the company's ability to make data-driven decisions and to tailor content according to specific customer preferences. Addressing these challenges through systematic market analysis, the adoption of digital analytics, and more targeted communication strategies would significantly enhance the impact and sustainability of CV Rajawali's digital marketing initiatives.

### 4.2. Discussion and Analysis

The findings were analyzed using the SOAR (*Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results*) strategic framework, resulting

in the following key insights:

1) *Strengths*

CV Rajawali's strengths lie in its use of traditional herbal recipes, natural ingredients, product certifications (e.g., halal, B-POM), and competitive pricing. The brand enjoys a positive reputation among local consumers and offers a variety of product options.

2) *Opportunities*

External opportunities include the growing health-conscious consumer trend, widespread internet penetration, and government support for MSME digitalization. Collaborations with wellness communities and expansion into e-commerce channels remain untapped strategic areas.

3) *Aspirations*

The company aspires to expand its market reach nationally and across ASEAN, build stronger brand loyalty, and increase scientific validation of its product benefits through research collaborations.

4) *Results*

Expected outcomes of the digital marketing strategy include an increase in social media followers, product distribution to at least 10 herbal stores and 5 supermarkets within a year, and the acquisition of over 1,000 loyal customers.

**Table 2.** SOAR Strategy for *Minyak Karo Rajawali*

SOAR Element	Strategic Focus
<i>Strengths</i>	Natural herbal product, traditional recipe, certifications, affordable pricing
<i>Opportunities</i>	Digital trends, government support, access to e-commerce platforms
<i>Aspirations</i>	Market expansion, cultural brand positioning, health education
<i>Results</i>	40% increase in brand awareness, expanded distribution, loyal customer base

#### 4.3. SOAR Matrix

Based on the research results above, details can be made through the SOAR matrix table as listed in **Table 3**.

**Table 3.** SOAR Matrix

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Aspirations</i>	<i>Results</i>
1. <i>Minyak Karo</i> Rajawali products are halal and authentic, supported by a good reputation in the local community.	1. The healthy lifestyle trend and high interest in herbal products (such as “wellness” and natural lifestyle) are increasing market demand.	1. To become a leading herbal oil brand in the national market, known for its proven quality and Karo cultural wisdom.	1. Increase product sales by 20% in the first year and 35% in the next three years.
2. High quality selected local traditional ingredients (lemongrass, ginger, cinnamon, shallots) with traditional Karo recipes.	2. The expansion of internet penetration in North Sumatra and the development of e-commerce and social media have opened up new digital marketing channels without geographical boundaries.	2. Carry out product diversification and innovation periodically (2-3 new variants each year) in accordance with modern consumer demand.	2. Increased digital brand awareness by 40% in 12 months through educational content and collaboration with local influencers.
3. The variety of products owned (Massage Oil, Rematic Param, Facial Param, Itching Oil, etc.) meets the health and care needs of various market segments.	3. Government support through MSME training programs, micro subsidies, and certification programs (PIRT, halal, organic) increases product credibility.	3. Gradually expand the market to the national level and at least three ASEAN countries within a period of three years.	3. Expansion of product distribution to 10 herbal shop chains and 5 modern supermarkets within one year.

Based on Table 3, the following strategic directions have been identified. These include SA, OA, SR, and OR strategies, each aligning the company’s strengths and opportunities with its aspirations and desired outcomes to support the growth of *Minyak*

Karo Rajawali.

1. SA Strategy (Strengths–Aspirations):

*Minyak Karo* Rajawali leverages its internal strengths, such as high-quality natural ingredients and traditional Karo recipes, to realize its aspiration of becoming a leading national herbal oil brand. Product diversification is based on local wisdom, supported by a strong community reputation. Digital marketing, including cultural storytelling and social media engagement, is used to expand market reach and boost brand awareness.

2. OA Strategy (Opportunities–Aspirations):

The company takes advantage of external opportunities like the growing online market and government support to fulfill its aspirations. Strategies include using e-commerce, social media, influencer marketing, and market trend-based product innovation. Partnerships with health clinics and local farmers support product education and distribution network expansion.

3. SR Strategy (Strengths–Results):

Internal strengths are used to achieve measurable business outcomes. Quality and reputation support loyalty programs and repeat purchases, aiming for a 20–35% sales increase and 1,000 loyal customers. Operational improvements and branding based on cultural authenticity are aligned with targets like broader distribution and 40% brand awareness growth.

4. OR Strategy (Opportunities–Results):

External opportunities are optimized to deliver business results. Health trends and digital platforms help boost brand visibility and sales. E-commerce, certifications (e.g., halal, organic), and government programs improve credibility. Collaborations with health communities and suppliers support customer satisfaction, loyalty, and market expansion.

These findings align with previous studies which highlight the significant impact of digital marketing on improving brand awareness in MSMEs (Friadi, 2022; Permatasari et al., 2022). Influencer collaboration and the use of visual content have been proven to attract digital audiences (Arifin, 2020). However, the absence of regular data analysis limits the company's ability to adjust strategies responsively. The integration of internal strengths and external opportunities is key to formulating effective and sustainable strategies. The SOAR framework proves to be a relevant tool, as it not only assesses current conditions but also promotes forward-looking, measurable, and optimistic planning.

## 5. Conclusion

This study has achieved its objective by examining the implementation of digital marketing strategies to enhance brand awareness of Indonesia's traditional essential oil products, with a specific focus on *Minyak Karo* produced by CV Rajawali. The findings reveal that the company has actively adopted digital marketing through social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok by utilizing visually engaging content, collaborating with local influencers, and delivering consistent educational and promotional messages. Despite these efforts, challenges remain, particularly in the limited use of digital data analytics and insufficient market segmentation, which reduce the overall effectiveness of promotional activities.

Furthermore, the study finds that the internal strengths of *Minyak Karo* CV Rajawali, including the use of natural ingredients, halal and BPOM certifications, diverse product offerings, and affordable pricing, are well aligned with favorable external opportunities. These opportunities consist of increasing consumer interest in herbal and natural products, government support for MSME digitalization, and the rapid expansion of e-commerce platforms in Indonesia, creating a conducive environment for business growth.

Based on the SOAR framework, this study formulates a set of strategic digital marketing recommendations aimed at strengthening brand awareness and competitive positioning. These strategies include the development of educational digital content supported by QR codes, the introduction of affordable product bundling tailored to different consumer segments, capacity building in digital content creation, strategic collaborations with e-commerce platforms and delivery service providers, and brand reinforcement through cultural heritage and product safety messaging. Collectively, these strategies are expected to enhance visibility, expand market reach, and consolidate *Minyak Karo* CV Rajawali's position within Indonesia's traditional herbal product market.

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