

Marketing strategy and development of halal business in the digital era (case study on culinary SMEs of Sate Taichan in Medan City)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze marketing strategy, a focused plan used in the marketing industry to achieve optimal results. Using a marketing mix is one type of marketing approach that can be used to promote products and increase customer satisfaction. Four fundamental components make up the marketing mix: product, price, place, and promotion. These components are often referred to as the "4Ps" in marketing and are used to implement strategies to achieve business goals. The research method used was qualitative, with data collection techniques through interviews and direct observation. This study was conducted on April 30, 2025, located at Jl. Teuku Cik Ditiro, MSME Sate Taichan, Medan City, involving two main informants the owner of MSME Sate Taichan and employees or staff involved in business operations, as well as other supporting informants. This study uses the Miles & Huberman model data analysis technique. The results show that the marketing strategy used by culinary entrepreneurs such as Sate Taichan generally utilizes a combination of digital-era approaches. In practice, marketing is carried out through social media such as Instagram and TikTok, with the aim of reaching consumers widely and building an attractive product image among the younger generation. Social media is the main means for promoting menus, providing price information, and conveying promotions or discounts in real time. This study concludes that the synergy between digital marketing strategies and halal business principles can increase the competitiveness of MSMEs amidst intense market competition. This study also emphasizes the importance of digital literacy and a commitment to sharia values as the foundation for sustainable business development.

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1. INTRODUCTION

A marketing strategy is a type of focused plan used in the marketing industry to achieve the best results. This approach is important because without proper strategic positioning, any market, target market, or segmentation implemented will fail (Chaffey & Ellis, 2019). In Indonesia, the micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) sector plays a strategic role in the national and regional economy. MSME growth is a crucial factor in driving economic growth and reducing poverty, particularly in low-income

countries, where the expansion and progress of this sector are often viewed as indicators of development success (Putri, 2021).

MSMEs are independent, profit-oriented business units operating across various industrial sectors. Given their significant impact on regional economies, MSMEs require continuous improvement. Effective management, encompassing marketing, production, human resource, and finance, is key to MSME competitiveness. An appropriate marketing strategy is crucial because it enables MSMEs to understand market conditions, customer needs, and develop products to be offered in the modern era (Lubis, 2023).

Product strategy is a key element in the marketing mix because it shapes consumer perception of a brand. Products encompass not only the physical aspects but also the benefits and experiences they provide to consumers. From an Islamic perspective, products must meet the principles of halal and *thayyiban*. Previous research by (Yener, 2022) showed that halal certification increases consumer trust. Meanwhile, according to Qadri & Tyana (2024), product innovation that aligns with market trends strengthens the competitiveness of MSMEs.

Price plays a crucial role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Anam (2022) states that pricing must be fair, transparent, and aligned with market purchasing power. From an Islamic perspective, prices must be free from *gharar* (unclear) and fraudulent behavior to ensure that the benefits consumers receive are commensurate with the product they purchase. Puspita et al., (2023) findings indicate that pricing aligned with consumer purchasing power can increase sales of halal MSMEs, while Hariani & Sutrisno (2023) emphasize that competitive pricing can strengthen customer loyalty. Therefore, Sate Taichan's pricing strategy aligns with theory and is supported by previous research.

Distribution plays a crucial role in ensuring product accessibility for consumers. Kotler & Keller (2020) emphasized that proper business location and distribution channels must be selected to facilitate consumer access. From an Islamic perspective, the distribution process must be conducted fairly, provide easy access, and maintain product quality until received by consumers. Research by Prasetyo, (2025) shows that the use of e-commerce and delivery services can expand the market reach of halal MSMEs. Similar findings indicate that digital distribution increases efficiency and customer satisfaction in culinary MSMEs. Therefore, Sate Taichan's distribution strategy aligns with marketing theory and the results of previous research.

Promotion is an important tool for introducing products to consumers. Andrenata & Qomariah, (2022) explain that promotional objectives include increasing brand awareness, attracting new consumers, and retaining existing customers. From an Islamic perspective, promotional activities must be conducted honestly, without misleading, and without exaggerating in conveying product advantages. Research findings support this principle. Aziz, (2024) demonstrated that digital promotion through social media has a significant positive impact on MSME sales, while Prasetyo, (2025) found that digital-based promotion can strengthen the halal image while expanding market reach. Therefore, the promotional strategy implemented by Sate Taichan aligns with marketing theory and is consistent with previous research findings.

Sate Taichan, a popular culinary option among young people, has grown rapidly in various cities, including Medan. Since its inception in 2021, Sate Taichan in Medan has gained popularity through simple word-of-mouth promotion. However, in 2022, businesses began utilizing digital platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp Business to promote their products more widely. Significant changes occurred in 2023 when Sate Taichan officially joined delivery services like GoFood and ShopeeFood.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to explain the reasons for selecting Sate Taichan as a case study in this research. This selection has academic value because Sate Taichan reflects a significant phenomenon in the development of halal culinary MSMEs in the digital era. First, Sate Taichan is a type of modern culinary that is popular among young people, thus illustrating how young consumer preferences influence MSME digital marketing strategies. Second, Sate Taichan's business journey in Medan City which began with simple promotions and then utilized various digital platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp Business, GoFood, and ShopeeFood is a concrete illustration of the digital transformation process experienced by many culinary MSMEs. Third, as a culinary business targeting the halal market without the support of a major brand, Sate Taichan provides a relevant context for examining the application of halal values, honesty in promotions, and food safety standards in daily business practices. Thus, Sate Taichan is considered a suitable research object

because it is able to represent the dynamics of digital marketing, consumer behavior, and the implementation of Islamic economic principles in culinary MSMEs.

The digital era opens up vast opportunities through platforms like social media, e-commerce, and online delivery services. However, not all MSMEs are able to maximize this potential. Issues such as a lack of understanding of digital marketing, limited human resources, and low digital literacy hinder the development of halal businesses in the culinary MSME sector (Asiyah et al., 2023).

Therefore, it is crucial to examine how MSMEs not only utilize digital technology as a means of promotion and distribution, but also integrate Islamic economic values into their business practices, such as maintaining product halal certification, honesty in promotions, and social responsibility to consumers. This integration of digital marketing and Islamic economic principles is expected to be a superior strategy for building sustainable halal businesses in the digital era.

Therefore, this study is crucial to identify appropriate marketing strategies and business development efforts that align with halal principles in the context of culinary MSMEs in the digital era, with a focus on the Sate Taichan business in Medan City (Faridy et al., 2025).

2. METHOD

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach to gain a deeper understanding of the digital marketing strategies and halal business development efforts of the Sate Taichan culinary MSME in Medan. This approach was chosen to allow researchers to explore the direct experiences, interpretations, and actual practices of business owners in managing digital marketing and maintaining consistent application of halal principles in daily operations.

The research was conducted on April 30, 2025, at the Sate Taichan business location on Jl. Teuku Cik Ditiro, Medan City. The research consisted of several main stages: problem identification, field data collection, analysis, and drawing final conclusions. All stages were designed to provide a comprehensive picture of how MSMEs adapt to developments in digital marketing while implementing halal values in today's culinary business.

Data collection was conducted using three techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation study. Interviews were conducted with two key informants: the business owner and one employee involved in marketing, customer service, and daily operations. Semi-structured interviews, lasting approximately 30–45 minutes, explored the strategies and experiences of business owners in utilizing digital marketing.

In addition to interviews, researchers also conducted direct observations of various business activities, such as service processes, menu presentation, employee-customer interactions, and simple digital marketing activities like taking product photos for social media content. These observations generated field notes that provided a realistic picture of marketing practices and the application of halal principles in business activities.

The next data collection technique was a documentation study, which included a review of Instagram content, menu and food photos, promotional videos, digital menus, customer reviews, and product displays on apps like GoFood and ShopeeFood. All of these documents were used to assess the consistency of digital marketing strategies and how the halal image is presented online.

The study utilized primary data derived from interviews and observations, as well as secondary data from digital documents, literature, scientific articles, and references related to digital marketing and halal business. To ensure the validity and credibility of the data, the study utilized triangulation of sources and techniques, comparing findings from interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure accurate and accountable results.

Data analysis was conducted using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which encompasses four main processes: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction aims to select and focus information relevant to the research topic, then present the findings in a systematic narrative. Final conclusions are drawn after all data has been thoroughly analyzed to address the research objectives.

With this methodological approach, this research is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the Sate Taichan MSME develops digital marketing strategies, strengthens its halal business, and practices operational management that can serve as an example for other MSMEs in facing the challenges of the digital era.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Research Results on Marketing Strategies and Halal Business Development in the Digital Era (Case Study of Taichan Satay Culinary MSMEs in Medan City)

Table 1. The following are the results of an interview with the Sate Taichan business owner

NO	Question	Answer
1.	What Types of Menus/Products Does This Taichan Satay Business Offer?	"This business offers spicy chicken satay as the main dish, along with several other options such as skin satay, Indomie Taichan, package menus, and various levels of spiciness."
2.	How do you set the selling price of the available menu?	"We adjust our prices to keep them affordable for students, but we still make a profit."
3.	What is your reason for choosing this location/business premises?	"The business location was chosen because it's strategic, close to a busy area, and easily accessible to customers. In addition to selling directly on-site, the business has also tried online sales through the GoFood, ShopeeFood, and GrabFood apps to expand its market reach."
4.	Where are you most active in promoting? Instagram, WhatsApp, or others?	"We mostly use Instagram for promotions. We usually upload photos of our food, videos of our satay being grilled, or information about discounts. Regular customers usually order via WhatsApp. We also use TikTok for short, engaging content."
5.	To what extent does this partnership help expand your business market?	"We collaborate with halal chicken suppliers and platforms like GoFood and ShopeeFood. This expands our market reach, especially with the numerous promotions offered by these apps that help us attract new customers."

3.2 Digital Era Marketing Strategy for Sate Taichan MSMEs in Medan City

The research findings indicate that the marketing strategy of Sate Taichan MSMEs in Medan City applies the marketing mix approach (4P) product, price, place, and promotion adapted to digital developments and the needs of young consumers.

product quality and halal certification by ensuring all raw materials and processing methods comply with halal principles. Chicken slaughtering is in accordance with sharia law, and kitchen and equipment hygiene is always maintained. Furthermore, innovation is implemented through the addition of menu variations, thereby increasing appeal and preventing consumer boredom. In the context of halal business, Hidayatullah & Firdaus, (2023) emphasized that halal and thayyiban principles are fundamental to building customer trust. This finding aligns with Yener, (2022) research, which states that halal certification and product halal assurance play a crucial role in increasing consumer loyalty in culinary MSMEs. Therefore, product aspects in MSMEs should not only focus on taste but also on halal certification and innovation.

The Sate Taichan MSME offers competitive and affordable prices, tailored to the student and young working segments in Medan. This strategy is reinforced by bundled promotions, seasonal discounts, and value packages offered through delivery apps, helping maintain customer loyalty and attract new customers. From an Islamic perspective, prices must be free from gharar (non-violable) to maintain fairness in transactions. Research by Puspita et al., (2023) shows that affordable prices increase sales of halal MSMEs, while Hariani and Sutrisno (2023) confirm that competitive pricing strategies strengthen consumer loyalty. Therefore, this MSME pricing strategy is considered effective because it balances business profits and customer satisfaction.

Interviews revealed that the business's strategic location, in a nightlife culinary center and near a campus, is a key factor in attracting customers. With the advancement of digital technology, market reach has expanded through delivery apps, contributing to increased orders from consumers in the surrounding area and beyond. In the halal business, easy distribution access is an integral part of providing services in accordance with Islamic principles. Prasetyo, (2025) stated that e-commerce can expand the market for halal MSMEs, while Mardiyana et al., (2025) demonstrated that digital delivery services improve distribution efficiency and customer satisfaction. Therefore, utilizing digital platforms is a crucial element in Sate Taichan's distribution strategy, as it can expand market reach.

This MSME's promotional strategy is predominantly through social media, particularly Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp Business. Visual content such as food photos, videos of the satay

grilling process, and promotional information attract consumers. Research by Aziz, (2024) shows that digital promotion significantly increases MSME sales, while Prasetyo, (2025) confirm that digital promotion also strengthens the product's halal image. Therefore, the promotional strategy of the Sate Taichan MSME is considered effective in attracting new consumers and retaining existing ones.

3.3 Halal Business Development in Taichan Satay MSMEs in Medan City

Interview results indicate that the Sate Taichan MSME owner prioritizes halal product certification in business development. Raw materials are sourced from suppliers with guaranteed halal certification, spices are selected without questionable ingredients, and the entire processing process is maintained cleanly. These practices reflect a commitment to the principles of halal and thayyiban (good and proper) practices. These findings align with the theory of Hidayatullah & Firdaus, (2023), which emphasizes the importance of quality and halal certification as the foundation for building consumer trust and strengthening the reputation of MSMEs in the culinary market.

Halal business development is carried out through the use of digital technology. The Sate Taichan MSME has used QRIS to facilitate transactions and market its products through delivery apps like GoFood, GrabFood, and ShopeeFood, thus expanding its consumer reach. Social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok are also utilized for promotion through visual content and testimonials. This practice aligns with the theory of Chaffey & Ellis, (2019) which states that digital marketing is effective in expanding markets, strengthening branding, and increasing interaction with consumers. Thus, technological adaptation allows the Sate Taichan MSME to adapt to modern consumer preferences.

Interviews revealed that the Sate Taichan MSME owner has established partnerships with halal raw material suppliers, MSME communities, and digital delivery platforms. This collaboration ensures raw material availability, opens up opportunities for promotional collaborations, and increases business visibility. This finding aligns with the theories of Haliza & Sirad, (2023) and Hariani & Sutrisno, (2023), who emphasize that developing halal MSMEs requires synergy with strategic partners. Through this collaboration, the Sate Taichan MSME is able to develop sustainably in a competitive culinary landscape.

The Sate Taichan MSME developed its business through menu innovation and strengthened halal branding, including by adding menu variations and showcasing consistent halal compliance in digital promotions. This strategy bolstered the business's image as a modern halal culinary destination tailored to the needs of the younger generation. These findings align with the theory of Haliza and Sirad, (2023), which asserts that product innovation and consistent halal branding can increase consumer appeal and strengthen the position of MSMEs in the culinary market.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examines how the Sate Taichan MSME in Medan City implements digital marketing strategies and develops its halal business. Findings indicate that the business utilizes a marketing mix (4Ps) by maintaining product quality and halal certification, setting affordable prices for the youth segment, selecting strategic locations in nightlife and campus areas, and conducting digital promotions through Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp Business, and collaborating with food vloggers. This approach has been proven to increase consumer interest, sales volume, and customer loyalty. In terms of halal business development, this MSME demonstrates a commitment to the principles of halal thayyiban, utilizing digital technologies such as QRIS and delivery services, building collaborations with halal suppliers and MSME communities, and innovating its menu and strengthening its halal image. Research Limitations, This study focused solely on one type of MSME and one specific region, so the results cannot be broadly generalized. Data collection relying on interviews has the potential to introduce subjectivity into informants. Furthermore, the lack of consumer oversight means that customer views and satisfaction levels are not fully revealed, while the rapid development of digital trends means that the research findings only represent conditions within a specific period. Practical Recommendations, MSMEs are encouraged to continuously improve their digital marketing skills through training, promptly apply for MUI halal certification to strengthen customer trust, expand promotional strategies by utilizing TikTok's live feature and collaborating with micro-influencers, and develop loyalty programs and customer evaluation mechanisms. The use of digital applications for stock management and financial accounting is also considered important to support business efficiency. Academic Recommendations, Future research

is recommended to include consumer surveys or a mixed methods approach to further explore customer behavior and satisfaction analysis. The scope of the study could also cover various halal MSME sectors or compare several regions. Furthermore, future researchers could more specifically examine the influence of specific digital technologies such as the TikTok algorithm or promotional features on delivery apps on improving business performance. Furthermore, for further research, it is hoped that the findings of this study will be useful for future researchers who wish to investigate issues related to these findings and produce more accurate research results.

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