

TIKTOK SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY AS A MEANS OF PROMOTING LOCAL CULINARY IN MSMEs BEBEK SAMBEL KOREK SURABAYA

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Abstract. TikTok has become an important promotional medium for culinary micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) because of its visual, interactive, and broad-reach characteristics. This study aims to analyze the TikTok social media strategy used by Bebek Sambel Korek Surabaya and its contribution to brand awareness and consumer purchase intention. A descriptive qualitative case-study approach was employed. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with the owner, who also manages the official TikTok account, and nine consumers representing student, employee, and general consumer segments. Data were analyzed inductively and validated through source triangulation. The findings show that the promotional strategy includes target determination, content creation, highlighting distinctive product characteristics, audience interaction, TikTok Analytics, paid promotion, influencer collaboration, and continuous evaluation. Influencer collaboration was perceived as more effective than paid promotion in driving outlet visits. TikTok also contributed to brand awareness by helping consumers recognize the business name and remember distinctive product attributes, while purchase intention developed through attention, interest, curiosity, information seeking, willingness to try, and, for some consumers, actual visits and purchases.

Keywords: Brand Awareness, Culinary MSMEs, Promotional Strategy, Purchase Intention, TikTok

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has changed the way business actors introduce products and communicate with consumers. Social media is no longer just a personal communication space, but also serves as a promotional medium that allows businesses to reach a faster and wider audience. TikTok is one of the relevant platforms for promotional activities because it relies on short videos, dynamic visuals, trends, and content distribution algorithms. This character provides an opportunity for MSMEs to display products creatively and get attention from users who have not previously known the business. Novita *et al.* (2023) explained that TikTok can be used as a marketing promotional medium in online business because it is able to support the dissemination of product information and interaction with the audience.

The use of TikTok is becoming increasingly important for culinary businesses because food products rely heavily on visual display. Content can show product shapes, cooking processes, menu variations, prices, place atmosphere, and consumer experience in a short format. Islami *et al.* (2024) emphasizes that content consistency, trend utilization, and product visuals are important parts in increasing the appeal of promotions on TikTok. Putri and Kusuma (2025) also found that visual content, active interaction, and collaboration with

influencers can help expand the reach of culinary MSME promotion. Thus, TikTok not only serves as a place to upload videos, but can also be a marketing communication space that brings together product messages, audience responses, and consumer experiences.

Bebek Sambel Korek Surabaya is a local culinary MSME that has started to develop since 2024 and uses TikTok as one of the main promotional media. This business highlights several product characteristics, including the relatively large size of ducks, urap trancam, three types of chili sauce, and free chili sauce refill facilities. These characteristics are repeatedly displayed through content so that the audience gets an idea of the product and is able to distinguish it from similar culinary. In promoting management, TikTok accounts @bebeksambelkorek used to display products, processing processes, outlet conditions, menus, locations, and consumer activities. In addition to the account content itself, promotions are also carried out through paid features and collaborations with *culinary influencers*.

Promotional activities that get a high number of impressions do not automatically explain how the strategy works from the manager's and consumers' sides. The number of *views*, *likes*, or number of followers needs to be understood along with the consumer experience when getting to know the product, remembering its characteristics, looking for information, and deciding to try. This is important because

brand awareness is related to the ability of consumers to recognize and remember brands, while buying interest is related to consumers' tendency to approach the purchase action after receiving a promotional stimulus (Dharmaitreya & Suprpti, 2024; Senalasar *et al.*, 2024). In the context of culinary MSMEs, the relationship between the messages made by the business and what consumers actually remember is an important indicator to understand the effectiveness of promotions. Therefore, TikTok's promotional study needs to look at the promotion process more thoroughly than just digital performance.

Previous research has shown that TikTok has contributed to strengthening brand identity and consumer response. Alfari *et al.* (2025) explained that consistency and creativity of content can strengthen the identity and exposure of MSME products, while Kamal *et al.* (2025) shows that creative content and collaboration with *influencers* can expand reach and strengthen brand image in culinary MSMEs. Laraskana and Sakir (2025) also found that TikTok plays a role in increasing brand recognition through content strategies that suit the audience's character. However, studies that discuss simultaneously the content process, audience interaction, *influencers*, TikTok Analytics-based evaluations, consumer responses, *brand awareness*, and buying interest in local duck culinary businesses are still limited. This research places all these elements as a series of interconnected promotional strategies.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to analyze TikTok's social media strategy carried out by MSMEs Bebek Sambel Korek Surabaya as a means of promoting local culinary and analyze its contribution in building *brand awareness* and attracting consumer interest. The focus of the strategy includes product video content creation, distinctive highlighting, interaction with the audience, use of *TikTok Analytics*, paid promotions, collaborations with *influencers*, and promotion evaluation. From the consumer side, the study examines how exposure to TikTok makes consumers know the name of the business, recognize and remember the characteristics of the product, feel interested, look for information, and have the desire to try. With this focus, the research is expected to provide a more contextual picture of digital promotion practices in growing local culinary MSMEs.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study on MSMEs Bebek Sambel Korek Surabaya. This approach was chosen because the research is oriented towards understanding the processes, experiences, and meanings that emerge in the implementation of TikTok's promotional strategy, rather than on measuring statistical relationships. Qualitative research allows researchers to describe phenomena based on informants' experiences and the natural conditions of objects (Safarudin *et al.*, 2023). The case study is used because the study is focused on one business object and is not directed to compare strategies between businesses (Mulyana *et al.*, 2024).

Data collection was carried out on July 30–August 15, 2026 through semi-structured in-depth interviews. The key

informant is Mr. Erwin as the business owner, while the main informant is Mr. Erwin in his capacity as the manager of the @bebeksambelkorek TikTok account. Capacity separation is carried out so that information about business strategic decisions can be distinguished from the technical implementation of TikTok management. The supporting informants consist of nine consumers who know or have seen the promotion of Bebek Sambel Korek Surabaya through TikTok and have had experience as consumers. The nine consumers are divided into three segments, namely students or students, workers, and general consumers, three people each.

Interviews are directed at content creation, interaction with audiences, use of paid promotions, collaboration with *influencers*, promotion evaluation, *brand awareness*, and consumer buying interest. The interview data was transcribed, selected, simplified, and grouped based on the research theme. The analysis was carried out inductively to find patterns and relationships between findings, then the results of interviews with owners, TikTok managers, and consumers were compared and interpreted with the foundation of previous theories and research (Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024). The validity of the data is tested through triangulation of sources by comparing information between informants so that conclusions do not only rest on one point of view (Husnullail & Jailani, 2024).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Surabaya Sambel Korek Duck Promotion Strategy via TikTok

The results of the study show that the promotion of TikTok Bebek Sambel Korek Surabaya is a series of activities starting from setting goals, creating content, publications, interacting with the audience, monitoring performance, to evaluation. TikTok was chosen as the main media because, according to the owner, it has a wider reach and is easier to bring together businesses with potential new consumers. TikTok is mainly used for promotional videos, while Instagram is more widely used for menu information, location, operating hours, and business updates. The selection shows that there is an adjustment of the function of the media with promotional purposes. These findings are in line with Anam and Mauliansyah (2025) who place platform selection and data-based evaluation as an important part of the digital marketing strategy of culinary MSMEs.

The content is created directly by Mr. Erwin, starting from planning ideas, recording products, editing videos, to writing captions. Accounts can upload about three to four videos in a week, although publication times are still flexible. The content concept follows TikTok trends and pays attention to the visual quality of food, the frying or cooking process, menu variations, outlet atmosphere, location, facilities, and consumer activities. The most frequently highlighted elements are the size of the duck, urap trancam, three types of chili sauce, and free refill chili sauce facilities. The pattern suggests that content is used not only to showcase food, but also to form an easily recognizable product identity.

The prominent characteristics have a strategic function because the message made by the manager then

becomes a reference for consumers in recognizing the business. Consumers from various segments repeatedly mention three types of chili sauce, free refill chili sauce, urap trancam, and duck size as the elements they remember the most. The similarities between the characteristics that the owner wants to highlight, the elements that are displayed in the content, and the elements that the consumer remembers shows that the promotional message has consistency. These findings support Alfariasi *et al.* (2025), which explains that the consistency and creativity of message presentation on TikTok can strengthen brand identity. Thus, visual content functions as a means of product differentiation as well as strengthening the business position in the minds of consumers.

Interaction with the audience is carried out through comments and messages containing questions, positive responses, and criticism. At the beginning of account management, responses to negative comments were once considered less professional, then improved to be more careful, polite, and directed. This shows that interaction is not only a means of answering the audience, but also part of learning to manage business image. The findings of the study are in line with Andhika *et al.* (2022) which places comments, number of impressions, and user responses as part of TikTok's promotional evaluation. Thus, two-way interaction also serves as a source of feedback to improve promotional communication.

Digital evaluation is carried out through *TikTok Analytics* by paying attention to *views*, *likes*, comments, reach, and audience information. The data is used to compare the performance of one content with another and is considered in determining the next promotional activity. However, managers do not make digital indicators the only measure of success. Content performance remains compared to the number of consumers who come, sales conditions, and direct information from consumers about the source they know about their business. Thus, promotions are evaluated through a combination of digital indicators and changes that actually occur in business activities.

Bebek Sambel Korek Surabaya also uses TikTok paid promotions and collaborations with *influencers*. Paid promotions can be directed at target *views*, *likes*, areas, and reach, but according to the owner's evaluation, the impact on consumer arrival is not as big as *the influencer*. Because of this, *influencers* are more reliable when the promotional goals are related to increased attention, visits, and sales. Influencer selection considers *followers*, *views*, content performance, image, and suitability with culinary products; the number of followers is not the only basis. In the manager experience, *influencers* with fewer followers can generate higher impressions, so effectiveness is judged based on actual performance and impact on the business.

Influencer collaborations are carried out about once in two to three months and are adjusted to business conditions. *Influencers* can be used when there is a new menu, when sales are declining, or when sales are stable to maintain brand recognition and reach new consumers. Based on the owner's records, sales changes can start to be seen about one day after *the influencer's* content is published and under certain conditions reach around 100 percent compared to the previous

condition. This impact does not always stop at the first visit because some consumers then place *repeat orders*. These findings support Putri and Kusuma (2025) and Kamal *et al.* (2025) which shows that *influencer collaboration* can expand the reach and strengthen consumer responses to the promotion of culinary MSMEs.

Evaluation also arises from consumer criticism of the clarity of information and the suitability of actual conditions. In one of the *influencer* content, the price writing only displays "Rp12,000" as a *highlight* so that some consumers can understand that the price applies to the duck menu displayed. After receiving a response, the submission was corrected to "starting from Rp12,000" so that the price information is clearer. A similar evaluation appears on the cleanliness of outlets when consumers judge that the actual condition is not fully in accordance with the clean picture of TikTok content. The business then made improvements and displayed a neater condition of the outlet through the next video. The series shows that consumer responses are used as input to improve promotional communication and service conditions.

Overall, TikTok's promotional strategy on Bebek Sambel Korek Surabaya is repetitive and adaptive. Content is published, audience responses are observed, *TikTok Analytics* data is compared to visits and sales, and then findings are used to improve content and business conditions. The process shows that the promotion strategy does not stop at the publication of messages, but involves monitoring and control. Scholar *et al.* (2022) Placing analysis, planning, implementation, and control as interrelated processes in marketing. In the context of this research, the series is realized through content creation, interaction, evaluation, improvement, and determination of the next promotion.

The Contribution of Promotion Strategies through TikTok to Brand Awareness

TikTok's contribution to *brand awareness* can be seen from the process when consumers who previously did not know the business began to know the name Bebek Sambel Korek Surabaya through official accounts, *For You Page*, *influencer content*, and information from friends who have seen TikTok. After gaining exposure, consumers not only know the name of the business, but also begin to recognize the products, menus, locations, and characteristics displayed in the content. *Brand awareness* in this study therefore does not stop at the exposure of the name, but develops into the ability to connect brands with certain product characteristics. This is in accordance with Dharmaitreya and Suprpti (2024) who explain *brand awareness* as the ability of consumers to recognize and remember brands in certain product categories.

Consumer findings show a strong relationship between the messages the company creates and what is stored in memory. Haura remembers the size of the duck and three kinds of chili sauce, Zio remembers the free refill chili sauce and urap trancam, while Metry remembers the combination of duck, three chili sauces, urap trancam, and relatively affordable prices. Mr. Alfian and Mrs. Titik also connected the brand with free refill chili sauce and urap trancam as differentiating elements. When the elements highlighted by the owner and manager reappear in the consumer's answer, the condition indicates that the content has formed an association

between the business name and the characteristics of the product. Consumers get the basis to distinguish Bebek Sambel Korek Surabaya from similar culinary.

Influencers expand the path of brand *awareness formation* because products can be introduced to audiences beyond the followers of official accounts. Metry, Herman, and several other consumers believe that *influencer content* helps businesses be known more widely and makes products easier to find. These findings are in line with Kamal *et al.* (2025) who showed that collaborations with *influencers* can expand reach and strengthen brand image, and Laraskana and Sakir (2025) who found that TikTok can increase brand recognition through content strategies that match the audience's character. Thus, the process of forming *brand awareness* in this study takes place through content exposure, name recognition, product recognition, characteristic reminders, and the ability to distinguish the business from other culinary choices.

The Contribution of Promotional Strategies through TikTok to Consumer Buying Interest

The results of the study show that buying interest develops gradually after consumers receive exposure to TikTok promotions. The initial stage can be seen in paying attention to the visual of the product and the information displayed, such as the size of the duck, three types of chili sauce, urap trancam, free refill facilities, and price. This attention then develops into interest and curiosity about the product. Senalasar *et al.* (2024) explains that promotion through social media can attract attention, form interest, and encourage consumers' desire to try. The findings of the study show a similar process in the consumer experience of Bebek Sambel Korek Surabaya.

The curiosity of some consumers continues to be the search for information. Metry looked for a sales location after seeing content on *FYP* and *influencer* reviews, while Ibu Titik looked for the closest outlet after being interested in TikTok content. Rara also explained that content encourages the desire to find more information about the product. Location, menu, and price searches indicate that consumers are starting to consider actions closer to the purchase. At this stage, TikTok not only creates attention, but provides a stimulus that encourages consumers to explore before trying the product.

The desire to try then arises when consumers feel that they have obtained enough information about the product. Mr. Alfa was interested in trying it because the duck shown looked big, Haura was encouraged to come with a friend after seeing the advantages of the product, and Herman continued his curiosity by trying the product directly. For some informants, this desire develops into visits to outlets and purchases. This is in line with Saragih and Andriyansah (2023) who explain that persuasive promotions on TikTok can form a tendency to try and encourage the act of buying. While not all consumers go through each stage with the same pattern, the overall answer shows a consistent direction of response.

Influencers reinforce the process because reviews provide an overview of the consumption experience while expanding the reach of the message. Metry found out about the product through *FYP* and several culinary influencers, then felt curious, looked for a location, and came to try the product. Haura also sees content that engages *influencers* and is

encouraged to try. The findings show that *influencers* are not only on the number of audiences reached, but also on their ability to convey product experiences that arouse curiosity. Thus, TikTok's contribution to buying interest can be understood as a series of attention, interest, curiosity, information searching, desire to try, and in some consumers continuing to visit and purchase.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, the promotion strategy of Bebek Sambel Korek Surabaya through TikTok is carried out through content creation and publication, product prominence, interaction with the audience, use of TikTok *Analytics*, paid promotions, collaboration with *influencers*, and evaluation. The success of the promotion is not only seen from *views*, *likes*, comments, and reach, but also from consumer visits, sales conditions, repurchases, and direct consumer responses. Based on the owner's evaluation, collaboration with *influencers* is considered stronger in driving consumer attention and visits than TikTok's paid promotions. This strategy helps build *brand awareness* through the introduction of business names and reminders of product characteristics, as well as forming buying interest that develops from attention, interest, search for information, to the desire to try. Thus, TikTok plays a role as a promotional medium that helps strengthen brand recognition and contributes to consumer responses, which in some informants continue to be visits and purchases. However, this study has some limitations because it uses a case study approach that only focuses on one MSME, namely Bebek Sambel Korek Surabaya, so that the findings obtained are contextual. The coverage of consumer informants consists of nine people from three segments, namely students or students, workers, and general consumers, so it does not cover consumer experiences with broader characteristics. In addition, some interviews were conducted in public places so that environmental conditions were less conducive due to activities and sounds around the location. This condition can affect the comfort and concentration of informants and researchers during the interview process, especially in digging for information in more depth. Nonetheless, the researcher still uses semi-structured interview guidelines and follow-up questions to keep the information obtained relevant to the research focus. Based on these findings and limitations, Bebek Sambel Korek Surabaya is advised to maintain the use of TikTok as a promotional medium by improving the planning and consistency of content publications. The use of TikTok *Analytics* needs to be optimized to determine upload times and evaluate content performance so that promotions can reach audiences more effectively. Content also needs to be continuously developed through improving visual quality, variety of presentation, and clarity of information regarding prices and products displayed. Influencer selection should consider the performance of your content, the number of impressions, its image, and its suitability for the product, not just the number of followers. Further research is suggested to involve objects and informants with more diverse

characteristics and conduct interviews in more conducive conditions in order to gain a broader and deeper understanding.

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