
The Soar Approach: A Strategy to Improve the Competition of Halal Culinary MSMEs Based on Digital Technology

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to determine the optimal approach for enhancing the competitiveness of halal culinary products.

This research is qualitative research using quantitative tools, namely by using the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) method. The data collection technique uses questionnaires and interviews. The results of the questionnaire were then processed using SOAR matrix analysis in 3 stages: identifying SOAR factors, determining IFE and EFA values, and determining strategy results using SOAR diagram matrix. The subject of this research is Tanjungbalai halal culinary MSMEs, while the object of this research is a strategy to increase competitiveness. The respondents to this study are all halal culinary MSME sellers in Tanjungbalai.

The result of the SOAR method is SA, which is a strategy that uses all aspirations to increase the competitiveness of halal culinary MSME sales. Strength Aspirations Strategy. The strategy carried out is to improve product quality, improve the quality of labels and packaging, and diversify marketing.

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Introduction

Based on the results of previous research conducted by Hubeis, (2015) where the results of the research show that the strategy to increase the competitiveness of MSMEs is carried out by: (1) Increasing cooperation to maintain the continuity of the availability of raw materials between regions; (2) building industrial estates for MSME products; and (3) Increasing the role of the private government and universities/development research. In addition, the results of research by (Delmayuni et al., 2017) shows that the priority strategy that must be carried out by competitive food MSMEs is the use of more modern equipment in the production process so that food variations can be made more efficiently and effectively; as well as the use of modern management so that the processing of MSMEs can cover the local economy (domestic) and also abroad (Basuki., at al, 2023). Strategy is a tool to achieve company goals in relation to long-term goals, follow-up programs, and resource allocation priorities (Imsar, 2021).

The variety of competition in the MSME sector has an impact on the rapid development of the business world. Businesses are becoming increasingly dependent on the right strategy to achieve their sales volume targets (Hasibuan et al., 2023). In its development, MSMEs have become one of the creative efforts that benefit the community and the government to open new opportunities for various groups in the community (Dharma et al., 2023). As a Muslim-majority country, Indonesia continues to develop the halal industry sector. An aspect of the halal industry that the government is developing is halal MSMEs, namely the need for MSMEs to have halal certification on products (Azizah et al., 2024).

The existence of a halal certification program will increase consumer satisfaction and create better business prospects, as well as provide for government provisions listed in Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning halal product assurance (Dzikrulloh et al., 2020). Halal can be defined as a quality standard that is in accordance with Islamic Sharia law and is used in every activity carried out by Muslims (Yazid et al., 2022).

One of the efforts to boost economic growth is to pay attention to the main characteristics and potential of a region (Salsabila et al., 2024). Tanjungbalai City is one of the cities in North Sumatra Province with most fishermen and trading jobs. Some types of Halals MSMEs in Tanjung Balai are 4L4Y Culinary MSMEs, Manja Culinary MSMEs, Fofie Risol MSMEs, Gohyong MSMEs, Siomay Bandung MSMEs, Bu Fit Outlet MSMEs, and Anugerah Snack MSMEs.

There are two different types of culinary MSMEs: 4L4Y Culinary and Manja Culinary. The competition between these two types of culinary reflects the ever-evolving trends and preferences of consumers. 4L4Y Culinary which creates a varied food menu and has a place in the form of an outlet that makes it comfortable by providing wifi facilities for customers and utilizing social media to reach customers by providing online order delivery, competing with Manja Culinary which offers with less varied menu options and only opens businesses in the form of outlets and the lack of provision for online services because they focus more on offline services. Alay and Manja Culinary MSMEs need to implement the right strategies to win the competition in the digital era. The competition between 4L4Y Culinary MSMEs and Manja Culinary in the digital era is getting tighter. However, with the right strategy, these two types of MSMEs have a chance to succeed. The main key is to build brand

awareness, offer unique and attractive menus, maintain taste quality, and provide good service by utilizing digital technology.

In the city of Tanjungbalai, MSMEs have a big role in the economy. MSMEs (including halal ones) in Tanjungbalai have the potential to produce quality products and can compete globally through products that have competitive advantages that are halal certified. 4L4Y Culinary MSMEs utilize digital technology as marketing access to their business through social media, one of which is Instagram. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have an important role in strengthening the economic system in Indonesia. This important role is since MSMEs can create jobs by producing creative products so as to increase per capita income (Syahbudi, 2021).

Technology has made the production, marketing, distribution, and overall business processes more efficient and effective. In this context, Philip Kotler explains a theory of Marketing 4.0 or Digital Marketing with a new marketing approach to help marketers in anticipating and managing the impact of technology. The use of technology and the internet is so widespread among the public that it is not surprising that digital marketing is the number one choice for business (Harahap et al., 2022).

In Indonesia, the development of the food/culinary industry has been greatly affected by the existence of digital technology, including social media, websites and culinary review applications, and distribution applications. With these websites and applications, MSME entrepreneurs can easily reach a large consumer base that is active in the media. For example, as recorded by liputan6.com (2018), there are 10 culinary accounts on Instagram that provide reviews to restaurants in Jakarta with a total of more than 1 million users, which means that the reach of the consumer base of MSME entrepreneurs is very large with easy access (Krisnawati, 2018).

The existence of these obstacles is the reason why it is important to design strategies to increase MSME competition. The approach that can be used in determining a good strategy is the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) approach, which is a business strategy approach that focuses on positive elements that already exist in a business and is used as the main advantage. The purpose of my research is to analyze strategies to increase competitiveness through digital technology.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Competitiveness

According to the Great Dictionary of Indonesian Language (KBBI) (2017). "Competitiveness is the ability to compete". Competitiveness is an effort that must be made by business actors to continue to exist in carrying out their activities. There are four strategies to improve competitiveness. Individual technical expertise, business models and strategies, technological and innovation capabilities, marketing capabilities (Octavia et al., 2023).

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

Micro, small and medium enterprises, commonly called MSMEs, are businesspeople engaged in various business fields, which include the interests of the community. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are the backbone of the nation's economy (Hasanah, 2019). The role of MSMEs in the development of a country's economy is

evidenced by the reduction of unemployment and the creation of new businesses that continue to emerge (Delmayuni et al., 2017)

Table 1.
MSME Criteria

Jenis	Criteria	
	Wealth	Annual Sales Results
Micro	Maximum 50 million rupiah	The most sales result is 300 million rupiah
Small	50 million rupiah to 500 million rupiah	Annual sales of 300 million rupiah to a maximum of 2.5 billion rupiah
Medium	500 million rupiah to 10 billion rupiah	Annual sales of more than 2.5 billion rupiah to a maximum of 50 billion rupiah

Source: Processed by Researchers, Government of the Republic of Indonesia (2008)

Halal MSMEs

Halal MSMEs are a type of MSME industry that has undergone technical processes that conform to Islamic law or sharia to manufacture halal products. Halal labels/certifications are issued by authorized institutions to fortify halal products. The halal industry has experienced substantial growth in all Muslim countries, as well as non-Muslim countries, since the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) was established in the early 1970s. Halal products are also beginning to be recognized by non-Muslim communities for their advantages in terms of hygiene, safety, and nutritional value. The demand for halal products is directly influenced by this halal lifestyle (Pujiono et al., 2018).

Digital Technology

According to the World Economic Forum (2018), advances in computer technology can contribute to the progress of a country's society. In this scenario, the use of technology has the potential to provide benefits for society to improve higher living standards and increase living comfort (Nugroho, 2024).

Efforts to develop digital technology for MSMEs need to be considered several things, namely: production quality, production capacity and digital literacy. These three things must be considered by MSMEs, so that businesses opened in the digital realm can last for a long time (Priani et al., 2023).

METHOD

This research is qualitative research using quantitative tools, namely by using the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) method. The data collection technique uses questionnaires and interviews. The results of the questionnaire were then processed using SOAR matrix analysis in 3 stages: identifying SOAR factors, determining IFE and EFA values, and determining strategy results using SOAR diagram matrix. The subject of this research is Tanjungbalai halal culinary MSMEs, while the object of this research is a strategy to increase competitiveness. The respondents to this study are all halal culinary MSME sellers in Tanjung Balai.

The SOAR method is used to determine the criteria items of each component of the structure (Strength) which refers to the potential and capabilities possessed by an entity, both in the form of physical and non-physical assets, that support the continuity of the business or organization, Opportunities, which are the part of the external environment that needs to be analyzed to obtain information that can be used in decision-making for the continuity of the business or organization. Aspiration, which is the involvement and contribution of all parties in an organization or group in the planning process, with the aim of creating a strong vision and mission and building trust in products, markets, and other factors in business activities, in the hope of improving performance and service, and Result (Result) which is Setting the desired measure of achievement (measurable results) in strategic planning, in order to evaluate the extent of achievement of the goals that have been mutually agreed upon (Hill & Westbrook, 1997).

SOAR analysis is implemented in the data analysis methodology. Using the company's strengths and opportunities, SOAR analysis generates future aspirations and results (Shetti & Kumari, n.d.). The process of analyzing strategies using SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) involves the completion of several phases. The initial step is to ascertain the value of both internal factor analysis (IFA) and external factor analysis (EFA). IFA is a strategic analysis of the organization's internal determinants. The purpose of this analysis is to evaluate the organization/company's strengths and weaknesses. In the interim, EFA is a strategic analysis of the organization's external factors. The purpose of this analysis is to evaluate the organization/company's impact and achievements, as well as to appraise the long-term vision (Laily, 2023).

The initial step in obtaining IFA and EFA values is to identify the company's strengths and weaknesses in column 1 of the IFA table. Subsequently, the strengths and weaknesses are arranged by factor. The subsequent step is to assign weight to each of these factors in column 2, with a scale ranging from 1.0 (extremely essential) to 0.0 (not significant). The cumulative score of 1.00 is not exceeded by any of these weights. The strategic position of the company is considered when evaluating these factors. The subsequent step is to assign a rating to each factor in column 3, using a scale that ranges from 4 (extremely strong) to 1 (weak), according to the impact of these factors on the company's condition. By comparing them to the average of the primary competitors, positive variables (all variables that come under the strength category) are assigned a value ranging from +1 to +4. The value of the negative variable is 1 if the weakness is extremely large (in comparison to the average of similar competitors), and 4 if the weakness value is low/below the average of competitors. To calculate the weighting factor in column 4, multiply the weight in column 2 by the rating in column 3. Each factor is assigned a weighting score, with values ranging from 4.0 (prominent) to 1.0 (mild). The total weighting score for the company in issue is obtained by adding the weighting score (located in column 4).

The results of this value are then analyzed using a SOAR analysis diagram, namely by adding (adding) the total quadrant score on the EFA and IFA matrices. The results of EFA and IFA are used as the basis for strategies that can be used by the Company. In the SOAR analysis diagram, the strategy is divided into four strategies, namely the SA (Strengths-Aspirations) Strategy, which is a strategy made by utilizing all strengths (S) to achieve the

expected aspirations (A). Second, the OA (Opportunities-Aspirations) Strategy, which is a strategy made to know and fulfill the aspirations (A) of each stakeholder who are oriented to the existing opportunities (O). Third, the SR (Strengths-Results) Strategy, which is a strategy made to realize strengths (S) to achieve measurable results (R), and the fourth is the OR (Opportunities-Results) strategy, which is oriented to opportunities (O) to achieve measurable results (R). The final stage of the SOAR approach is to dedefine the strategy using the SOAR matrix descriptively, as shown in the table below:

Table 2
SOAR Matrix

Internal	Strength	Oppurtunities
External	List of internal strength factors	List of external opportunities
Aspirasi List of expected factors from internal	SA Strategy Create a strategy that uses power to achieve aspirations	OA Strategy Create an aspiration-oriented strategy that is expected to take advantage of opportunities.
Result A list of measurable outcomes to be realized.	SR Strategy Create a strategy based on strengths to achieve measurable results.	OR Strategy Strategies that are oriented towards opportunities to achieve measurable results.

Source: (Purwanggono & Pratiwi, 2022)

RESULT

Tanjungbalai is an area where most people's jobs are fishermen and traders. The largest source of income for the people of Tanjungbalai is obtained from Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) activities, this is evidenced by the large number of MSMEs that the author has explained earlier. One of these MSMEs is the 4L4Y Culinary MSME which is located on Tugu Street, Tanjungbalai City. 4L4Y Culinary MSMEs are culinary MSMEs that have halal certification and are in the center of Tanjungbalai. To increase competitiveness, 4L4Y Culinary MSMEs must determine the right strategies. These strategies can be determined using the SOAR method which is determined based on the internal and external environment by identifying the results of the questionnaire data processing that has been disseminated to the respondents, the results of the internal factor analysis (IFA) matrix analysis are presented in the following table.

Table 3
SOAR Internal Factors

No	Internal Factors	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	JML	Weigh t	rating	Bobot x rating
	Strenght									
1	The cooking technique carried out by 4L4Y Culinary MSMEs affects the taste of the products sold	4	4	4	4	4	20	0,136	2	0,247
2	In innovating the business model of 4L4Y Culinary MSMEs, they choose viral food with a varied menu	4	4	4	4	4	20	0,136	2	0,247

3	Culinary MSMEs provide delivery facilities for online order delivery	3	4	4	3	3	17	0,116	2	0,179
4	Culinary MSMEs have halal certificates as an attraction	4	4	4	4	4	20	0,136	2	0,247
Total							77			0,921
Opportunity										
1	Choosing fast food because of the habit of the people of Tanjungbalai city to consume food	3	4	3	3	4	17	0,116	2	0,179
2	Culinary has an offline store business model in the form of an outlet in the center of Tanjungbalai	4	3	4	4	4	19	0,129	2	0,223
3	Culinary MSMEs take advantage of technological developments by opening orders via online	4	3	3	3	3	16	0,109	1	0,158
4	Have social media as a means of promotion and expand marketing	3	4	4	4	3	18	0,122	2	0,200
Total							70			0,761
							147	1,000		

Source: data processed, 2024

Based on the results of the internal analysis above, the strength and opportunity factors are dominated by strength with a value of 0.921. Then continue with the external factors. The desire and results in determining the strategy to increase the competitiveness of Culinary MSMEs have external factors that can be identified with the external factor analysis matrix (EFA) in the following table:

Table 4
External Factors SOAR

External Factors										
	Aspiration	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	sum	weight	rating	Bobot x rating
1	Get additional profits to increase the amount of production.	3	3	4	3	4	17	0,113	2	0,175
2	Halal certification is an attraction to provide guarantees to consumers of the quality of the products sold.	4	4	4	4	4	20	0,133	2	0,242
3	Getting good reviews from customers on social media	4	4	4	4	4	20	0,133	2	0,242

4	Promoting products to be better known to the people of Tanjungbalai through endorsement	3	4	4	4	4	19	0,127	2	0,219	
Total		76								0,879	
Results											
1	Increasing production can increase profits for Culinary MSMEs.	3	3	4	3	4	17	0,113	2	0,175	
2	Culinary MSMEs that are in great demand by the public.	4	4	4	4	4	20	0,133	2	0,242	
3	Utilizing digital technology to get good ratings from customers	4	4	4	3	3	18	0,120	2	0,196	
4	Making MSMEs Culinary as one of the viral culinary.	4	3	4	4	4	19	0,127	2	0,219	
Total		74								0,833	
							150	1,000			

Sumber: Data diolah, 2024

The external analysis data above shows that the dominant value of the aspiration and outcome factors is aspiration with a value of 0.879. So that from the results of internal and external data analysis, a SOAR matrix with an SA (Strength Aspiration) strategy is produced. In realizing an increase in the competitiveness of halal MSMEs, Culinary MSMEs must design an SA strategy, namely creating a strategy that uses strength to achieve aspirations. These strategies can be known through the following soar matrix results.

Table 5
SOAR Matrix Results

Internal External	Strength Internal Strength Factor	Opportunities External Opportunities
Aspiration List of expectation factors	SA Strategy 1. (S1, A3) Improve product quality by improving taste. 2. (S2, A3, A4) Creating business model innovations by choosing viral food with a varied menu. 3. (S3, A1) Improving online services such as providing delivery facilities for online order delivery. 4. (S4, A2) Having halal certification as an attraction to provide assurance to consumers of the quality of the products sold.	OA Strategy Create an aspiration-oriented strategy that is expected to take advantage of opportunities.

Source: Data processed, 2024

From the explanation of the strategy in the SOAR matrix above, Culinary MSMEs can increase the competitiveness of halal culinary, first Improving product quality by improving

taste. Second, creating business model innovations by choosing viral foods with varied menus. Third, by improving online services such as providing delivery facilities for online order delivery and fourth, by having halal certification as an attraction to provide guarantees to consumers of the quality of the products sold. By focusing on the strategies produced based on the SOAR approach, Culinary MSMEs have great potential in improving quality and competitiveness.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study found that the strategy applied in realizing the increase in the competitiveness of halal MSMEs is the SA (Strength Aspiration) strategy. Some of the SA strategies that can be applied are improving service through improving cooking techniques, adding online-based delivery facilities, creating model innovations and increasing compliance in accordance with the halal branding that has been implemented. This research is in accordance with the research conducted (Fadhilah et al., 2024; Purwanggono & Pratiwi, 2022; Rusindiyanto, 2024). Although the case studies of each study are different, the results of the strategy with SOAR analysis recommend that companies need to improve the quality of online-based services and increase product innovation to improve their performance. Likewise, some other studies, such as the (Mayani, 2024) recommend collaboration with the government such as the Industry Office, the Cooperative Office and MSMEs in strengthening marketing and licensing legality. Research (Mayani, 2024) It does not recommend digital-based upgrades because the available digital infrastructure is inadequate. However, this research contradicts the research conducted (Nasution et al., 2022). The results of his research found that, although digital infrastructure is inadequate, companies or MSMEs can use social media such as TikTok, what's app, Instagram and Facebook as promotional media so that people know the advantages of the products offered. This research is also supported by the research conducted (Tangkudung et al., 2024), His research recommends that utilizing social media in business can increase sales. However, some of the strategies found by the researchers need to be implemented because each company or MSME has problems that are sometimes different, so it is necessary to implement different strategies.

CONCLUSION

Based on SOAR analysis; to increase the competitiveness of MSMEs, the SA (Strength Aspiration) strategy is a strategy that can be applied. The strategy encourages MSMEs to strengthen product quality, improve service quality, and diversify marketing.

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