

LEVERAGING TIKTOK FOR MARKETING COMMUNICATION: THE STRATEGY OF @SEGUD.OFFICIAL AMONG INDONESIAN MSMEs

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Abstract

This study examines how a micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME), @segud.official, uses TikTok as a marketing communication environment and how content creativity, audience interaction, and platform analytics are combined in everyday practice. The study adopts a qualitative case-study design with descriptive analysis of platform performance indicators, content observation, semi-structured interviews, and a small audience survey. The observation covered the @segud.official TikTok account from 1 to 28 May 2025. The reported account metrics show growth in followers from 2,120 to 3,540, average views per video from 1,850 to 3,210, engagement rate from 4.2% to 7.8%, TikTok-attributed product sales from 120 to 298 units, and a reported 28% reduction in customer acquisition cost. Content analysis indicates three recurring strategic mechanisms: short-form audiovisual content linked to trends, responsive two-way interaction, and iterative use of analytics to adjust content timing and themes. Local cultural storytelling also appears as a mechanism for making product narratives more distinctive and relatable. Rather than treating the observed changes as causal evidence, the study interprets them as descriptive patterns within a bounded single case. The study contributes a context-sensitive framework for MSME TikTok marketing in which creative content, relational interaction, and data-informed adaptation operate as mutually reinforcing practices. The findings extend social media marketing research by connecting platform-specific affordances with the resource constraints and adaptive capabilities of Indonesian MSMEs.

Keywords: TikTok marketing, marketing communication, social media marketing, MSMEs, consumer engagement, short-form video

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana usaha mikro, kecil, dan menengah (UMKM), @segud.official, memanfaatkan TikTok sebagai wadah komunikasi pemasaran serta bagaimana kreativitas konten, interaksi dengan audiens, dan analisis platform dipadukan dalam praktik sehari-hari. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif dengan analisis deskriptif terhadap indikator kinerja platform, pengamatan konten, wawancara semi-terstruktur, serta survei skala kecil terhadap audiens. Pengamatan

mencakup akun TikTok @segud.official dari tanggal 1 hingga 28 Mei 2025. Metrik akun yang dilaporkan menunjukkan peningkatan jumlah pengikut dari 2.120 menjadi 3.540, rata-rata penayangan per video dari 1.850 menjadi 3.210, tingkat keterlibatan dari 4,2% menjadi 7,8%, penjualan produk yang dikaitkan dengan TikTok dari 120 menjadi 298 unit, serta penurunan biaya akuisisi pelanggan sebesar 28%. Analisis konten menunjukkan tiga mekanisme strategis yang berulang: konten audiovisual berdurasi pendek yang terkait dengan tren, interaksi dua arah yang responsif, dan penggunaan analitik secara berulang untuk menyesuaikan waktu dan tema konten. Penceritaan budaya lokal juga muncul sebagai mekanisme untuk membuat narasi produk lebih khas dan mudah dipahami. Alih-alih menganggap perubahan yang diamati sebagai bukti kausal, penelitian ini menafsirkannya sebagai pola deskriptif dalam satu kasus tunggal yang terbatas. Studi ini menyumbangkan kerangka kerja yang sensitif terhadap konteks untuk pemasaran TikTok UMKM, di mana konten kreatif, interaksi relasional, dan adaptasi berbasis data beroperasi sebagai praktik yang saling memperkuat. Temuan ini memperluas penelitian pemasaran media sosial dengan menghubungkan kemampuan khusus platform dengan keterbatasan sumber daya dan kemampuan adaptasi UMKM Indonesia.

Kata kunci: pemasaran TikTok, komunikasi pemasaran, pemasaran media sosial, UMKM, keterlibatan konsumen, video pendek

INTRODUCTION

The digitalization of marketing communication has changed how small firms discover customers, present products, cultivate relationships, and evaluate promotional performance. Social media is no longer simply an additional publicity channel; it has become an interactive communication infrastructure in which firms and consumers simultaneously produce, circulate, and interpret brand-related content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kietzmann et al., 2011). Contemporary digital marketing research further emphasizes that social media creates opportunities for lower-cost market access, customer engagement, electronic word of mouth, and data-supported decision making, while also introducing challenges associated with content saturation, negative feedback, and rapidly changing platform environments (Appel et al., 2020; Dwivedi et al., 2021).

For MSMEs, these dynamics are particularly consequential because marketing decisions are commonly made under constraints of finance, human resources, technological capability, and managerial time. Research on SMEs shows that perceived usefulness, compatibility, marketing capability, and relational social-commerce capability influence how firms translate social media adoption into business value (Chatterjee & Kar, 2020; Marolt et al., 2022). Evidence from West Java also indicates a positive relationship between social media use and SME performance, although the mechanisms connecting platform use to outcomes remain context dependent (Noviaristanti et al., 2023). Accordingly, the relevant question is not simply whether an MSME uses social media, but how platform affordances are converted into repeatable communication practices.

TikTok is particularly relevant to this question because its short-form video architecture combines audiovisual storytelling, trend-based content discovery, algorithmic recommendation, interactive features, and creator participation. Research on TikTok and related short-video environments suggests that entertainment, information, perceived value, authenticity, and social presence can shape user experience and consumer

responses (Omar & Wang, 2020; Zhang et al., 2023; Zhao & Wagner, 2023). More broadly, research on social media content shows that vividness, interactivity, content context, and experiential affordances are associated with differences in user engagement (de Vries et al., 2012; Pletikosa Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013; Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021; Tafesse, 2016).

Despite this expanding literature, there remains a contextual gap concerning how resource-constrained Indonesian MSMEs integrate TikTok's creative and relational affordances into a coherent marketing communication strategy at the level of an individual business. Much of the literature examines consumer responses, brand pages, advertising, or cross-sectional relationships among constructs, whereas fewer case-based accounts show how a small business combines content production, audience interaction, and platform analytics as an iterative managerial routine. Studies of Indonesian SMEs have begun to address social media performance, but platform-specific qualitative evidence remains comparatively limited (Roosdhani et al., 2023).

This study therefore examines @segud.official, an Indonesian MSME in the food and beverage sector, as a bounded case. It asks three questions: (1) How is TikTok incorporated into the firm's marketing communication practice? (2) What content and interaction strategies characterize the account? and (3) How are platform analytics used to support communication decisions? The study's contribution is not a claim that TikTok universally causes business growth. Instead, it develops a contextual explanation of how creative content, relational interaction, and data-informed adaptation are assembled within a small-business marketing practice.

Literature Review

Social Media Marketing as Interactive Communication

Social media marketing differs from conventional mass communication because audiences can respond, remix, share, and co-create brand-related messages. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) conceptualize social media as applications built on Web 2.0 and user-generated content, while Kietzmann et al. (2011) emphasize functional dimensions including identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups. These affordances reposition consumers from passive recipients toward active participants in marketing communication.

Consumer engagement is consequently multidimensional. Barger et al. (2016) show that engagement research encompasses antecedents and outcomes at both consumer and firm levels. Tafesse (2016) demonstrates that experiential affordances can generate higher levels of engagement, while Voorveld et al. (2018) caution that engagement is platform specific rather than a uniform property of 'social media' as a whole. For marketing practice, this implies that a communication strategy must fit the affordances, user expectations, and content grammar of the selected platform.

Content Strategy, Interactivity, and Brand Engagement

Content characteristics are central to social media performance. Ashley and Tuten (2015) found that branded social content can employ creative strategies to stimulate consumer

engagement, while de Vries et al. (2012) showed that vivid and interactive brand posts can influence post popularity. Pletikosa Cvijikj and Michahelles (2013) similarly identified content characteristics and posting conditions as relevant to online engagement. Shahbaznezhad et al. (2021) further demonstrate that the effect of content depends on the interaction among format, platform, and content context.

These findings are compatible with social media marketing capability perspectives in which firms do not gain value merely by being present on a platform. Rather, value depends on the ability to create appropriate content, interact with users, learn from platform feedback, and adapt activities over time (Yadav & Rahman, 2017; Dwivedi et al., 2021). For MSMEs, such capabilities are especially important because limited resources make the efficient allocation of content-production effort and attention critical.

TikTok and Short-Form Video Marketing

TikTok intensifies several characteristics of social media marketing by combining short-form audiovisual communication with recommendation-driven discovery and participatory features. Omar and Wang (2020) identify motivations and personality-related factors associated with watching, sharing, and creating TikTok videos. Zhang et al. (2023) report relationships among perceived value, emotional pleasure, flow experience, and purchase intention in TikTok social-media marketing. Zhao and Wagner (2023) further show that information, entertainment, and parasocial experiences can contribute to platform and influencer commitment, which in turn relates to purchase intention.

Recent evidence also indicates that short-form video advertising is not simply a matter of visual brevity. Meng et al. (2024) identify trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, authenticity, and brand heritage as important content characteristics in short-form video advertising. These dimensions are particularly relevant to MSMEs because smaller firms may compensate for limited media budgets through authenticity, founder visibility, local narratives, and close interaction with audiences. In this sense, TikTok can function simultaneously as a content-distribution system, a relationship channel, and an informal market-feedback mechanism.

MSME Digital Marketing and the Indonesian Context

SME research indicates that the value of social media is mediated by organizational and relational capabilities rather than by adoption alone. Chatterjee and Kar (2020) show that perceived usefulness, ease of use, compatibility, and cost conditions influence the impact of social media marketing among SMEs. Marolt et al. (2022) highlight relational social-commerce capability and competitive advantage as mechanisms connecting social media use with business performance. In Indonesia, Noviaristanti et al. (2023) found that social media use was positively associated with SME firm performance in a sample of 300 West Java SMEs, while Roosdhani et al. (2023) examined strategies for converting social media activity into measurable performance. These studies establish the broader relevance of social media for Indonesian SMEs while leaving room for platform-specific case analysis.

METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative case-study design focused on one bounded MSME, @segud.official. Case study methodology is appropriate when the research aims to understand a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context and when contextual conditions are central to interpretation (Yin, 2018; Stake, 1995). The case is bounded by the business account, its TikTok activities, and the observation period of 1–28 May 2025. Platform metrics are treated as descriptive case evidence rather than as an inferential test of causal effects.

The original manuscript described the analysis as combining qualitative analysis with descriptive, inferential, and regression statistics. Because no regression model, inferential test, coefficient, p-value, or model diagnostics are reported, the revised article does not retain a claim of inferential statistical analysis. Instead, numerical platform indicators are presented descriptively and interpreted alongside qualitative observations. This adjustment prevents the methodology from claiming analyses that are not documented in the source material.

Data Sources and Collection

Four forms of evidence were identified in the source study: (a) observation of the public @segud.official TikTok account; (b) platform analytics, including followers, views, engagement, click-through activity, and TikTok-attributed product sales; (c) semi-structured interviews concerning motivations, strategies, and challenges; and (d) a short audience survey involving 50 respondents. The account was observed intensively for four weeks, including videos, comments, likes, shares, posting patterns, music choices, hashtags, and audience activity. Internal business materials were also identified as a contextual data source.

Content was examined for recurring communication patterns, including product promotion, storytelling, educational material, trend participation, founder-related narratives, and audience interaction. Interview and observational material were organized thematically, drawing on the logic of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), while content analysis followed the principle of systematic classification and interpretation of communication material (Krippendorff, 2018).

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Analysis proceeded in four stages. First, the researchers organized the account observations and platform indicators chronologically. Second, content and interaction patterns were coded into recurring strategic categories. Third, descriptive changes in performance indicators were calculated from the beginning and end of the observation period. Fourth, the qualitative and quantitative evidence were compared to identify convergent and divergent patterns. This process is consistent with case-study logic, where multiple sources are used to strengthen contextual interpretation rather than to create artificial statistical generalization (Yin, 2018).

Triangulation was used across platform observations, reported analytics, interview evidence, and audience responses. However, the source manuscript does not provide the number and characteristics of interview participants, the interview protocol, the survey instrument, or a formal inter-coder reliability procedure. These details should be reported in the final submission if available. The present analysis therefore emphasizes analytic transparency and bounded interpretation rather than claiming population-level generalizability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Content Strategy: Short-Form Video, Trends, and Storytelling

The account's content strategy was characterized by short videos, generally reported as 15–60 seconds, that combined popular music, trend participation, challenges, product-related information, and storytelling. The storytelling frequently connected the product to the production process and the founder's background. A distinctive feature was the use of local cultural narratives, including content related to traditional bamboo weaving. This combination suggests that the account did not rely exclusively on direct product promotion; it embedded commercial messages within narratives designed to provide entertainment, information, and contextual meaning.

This pattern is consistent with prior research showing that vividness, interactivity, experiential affordances, and content context can shape social media engagement (de Vries et al., 2012; Pletikosa Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013; Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021; Tafesse, 2016). It also aligns with TikTok research emphasizing the role of entertainment and information experiences (Omar & Wang, 2020; Zhao & Wagner, 2023). The case therefore illustrates how an MSME can translate platform-specific content conventions into a recognizable brand narrative.

Relational Communication: From Posting to Conversation

Audience interaction was a second prominent component of the strategy. The account reportedly responded to more than 85% of comments within 30 minutes, conducted Live Q&A sessions, and used interactive functions such as Duet and Stitch. One Live Q&A reportedly attracted an average of 210 simultaneous viewers. These practices shifted the communication process from one-way dissemination toward reciprocal interaction.

From a theoretical perspective, this finding is consistent with the relational and conversational dimensions of social media identified by Kietzmann et al. (2011). It also supports the broader literature showing that interactive and vivid content can generate stronger engagement responses than less interactive formats (de Vries et al., 2012; Barger et al., 2016). Importantly, however, the case does not establish that rapid responses alone caused trust or loyalty. The evidence supports the more bounded conclusion that responsive communication was systematically incorporated into the account's marketing practice and occurred alongside increased engagement.

Descriptive Performance Changes

The platform data reported in the source manuscript show clear changes across the four-week observation period. These changes are presented descriptively in Table 1. They should not be interpreted as causal estimates because the study has no control case, no pre-registered intervention, and no inferential model.

INDICATOR	BEGINNING	END	REPORTED CHANGE	INTERPRETATION
FOLLOWERS	2,120	3,540	+66.98%	Audience size increased during observation
AVERAGE VIEWS/VIDEO	1,850	3,210	+73.51%	Average video exposure increased
ENGAGEMENT RATE	4.2%	7.8%	+85.71% relative	Observed engagement ratio increased
BIO-LINK CLICK-THROUGHS	Baseline stated	not Reported +193%	+193%	Traffic activity increased; baseline value not documented
TIKTOK-ATTRIBUTED PRODUCT SALES	120 units	298 units	+148.33%	Tracked promotional-code sales increased
COST PER ACQUISITION	Baseline stated	not Reported -28%	-28%	Acquisition cost was reported to decline

Note. Percentages for followers, views, engagement rate, and sales are calculated from the beginning and end values reported in the source manuscript. The click-through and CPA changes are reported as percentage changes without baseline values. The figures are descriptive and should not be read as causal effects.

Analytics as an Adaptive Decision Routine

The account also used platform analytics to adjust posting time and content themes. The source manuscript identifies approximately 19:00–21:00 WIB as a period of high audience activity and reports a 28% reduction in customer acquisition cost after schedule optimization. Rather than treating analytics as a passive reporting tool, the case indicates an iterative routine: observe audience activity, adjust posting decisions, monitor subsequent responses, and refine content. This is consistent with the broader view that digital marketing capabilities involve continuous learning and adaptation rather than one-time technology adoption (Appel et al., 2020; Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, the evidence is observational. Without a controlled comparison between optimized and non-optimized periods, the reported CPA reduction cannot be attributed exclusively to posting-time changes. Other factors—including content type, audience

composition, promotions, seasonality, platform recommendation dynamics, and concurrent offline activities—could contribute to the observed movement. This distinction is important for an international journal because descriptive platform analytics should not be presented as experimental evidence.

Audience Response and Cultural Storytelling

The source manuscript reports that 71% of the 50 audience-survey respondents felt 'closer' to the brand after viewing a culturally oriented storytelling video. The case also reports that Gen Z and younger millennial users, particularly women aged 18–29, were prominent among the responsive audience. These observations are useful for understanding audience segmentation within the case, but they should not be generalized beyond the surveyed group because the sampling procedure and questionnaire validation are not documented.

The cultural storytelling component is theoretically relevant because it adds brand meaning beyond functional product information. Research on short-form video advertising emphasizes authenticity and brand heritage as meaningful content characteristics (Meng et al., 2024). In the @segud.official case, local cultural references appear to provide a distinctive narrative resource through which product communication can be connected to identity, production practice, and place. The contribution is therefore less about 'viral content' alone and more about the integration of platform-native creativity with culturally situated storytelling.

DISCUSSION

A Three-Component Model of MSME TikTok Marketing Communication

Taken together, the findings suggest a three-component model of TikTok marketing communication for the focal MSME: (1) creative content, (2) relational interaction, and (3) data-informed adaptation. Creative content attracts attention through short-form audiovisual narratives, trend participation, and culturally meaningful storytelling. Relational interaction converts exposure into conversation through comments, Q&A sessions, and participatory platform features. Data-informed adaptation closes the loop by using platform feedback to modify posting time, themes, and content decisions.

The model extends the literature in two ways. First, it treats engagement as an outcome of an interconnected communication process rather than as a single content effect. This is compatible with engagement research that emphasizes multiple antecedents and consequences (Barger et al., 2016; Tafesse, 2016). Second, it emphasizes the organizational capability required to repeatedly enact these practices. For resource-constrained MSMEs, the strategic value of TikTok is therefore not simply its reach but its capacity to integrate communication, relationship management, and low-cost learning within one platform environment.

Relationship to Prior TikTok Research

The case is broadly consistent with TikTok studies that associate information and entertainment experiences with user commitment and purchase intention (Zhao & Wagner, 2023), and with research linking perceived value and emotional experience to

purchase intention (Zhang et al., 2023). However, the present study differs in its unit of analysis. Rather than testing consumer-level hypotheses, it examines the managerial communication process of one MSME and the way platform practices are organized over time.

This distinction matters because consumer-level evidence cannot automatically explain how a small firm actually implements social media marketing. The Indonesian SME literature similarly suggests that organizational capabilities, relational capabilities, and the ability to convert social media activity into performance are important mechanisms (Marolt et al., 2022; Noviaristanti et al., 2023; Roosdhani et al., 2023). The present case adds qualitative detail to that capability perspective.

Theoretical Contribution

The central theoretical contribution is a contextualized account of platform-specific marketing capability. The case indicates that TikTok marketing competence can be conceptualized as the ability to coordinate content creativity, relational responsiveness, and analytics-based adaptation. This conceptualization connects three strands of literature that are often examined separately: creative social media content (Ashley & Tuten, 2015), consumer engagement and interaction (Barger et al., 2016; Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021), and SME digital marketing capability (Chatterjee & Kar, 2020; Marolt et al., 2022).

Importantly, the proposed model is not presented as a validated universal theory. It is an analytically derived framework from a single bounded case. Its value lies in offering a testable conceptualization for subsequent comparative studies across MSME sectors, regions, and platforms.

Managerial Implications

For MSME practitioners, the case suggests that TikTok activity should be managed as a communication system rather than as a sequence of isolated promotional posts. First, content should combine product information with entertainment, storytelling, and recognizable cultural or brand cues. Second, audience interaction should be treated as part of marketing communication rather than as an after-sales activity. Third, analytics should be used for iterative learning, with decisions linked to observable audience responses. Fourth, performance monitoring should distinguish awareness indicators (followers and views), engagement indicators (likes, comments, shares, live participation), traffic indicators (bio-link clicks), and conversion indicators (tracked sales). This separation reduces the risk of interpreting a high-visibility metric as direct evidence of commercial success.

Limitations and Future Research

The study has several limitations. First, the observation period is only four weeks, limiting assessment of long-term sustainability. Second, the study focuses on one TikTok account, so transferability to other MSMEs, sectors, and market conditions cannot be assumed. Third, several outcome indicators are based on platform dashboards and TikTok-attributed promotional codes and therefore may not capture offline or cross-platform sales. Fourth, the audience survey involved only 50 respondents, and the source

manuscript does not document the sampling procedure or instrument validation. Fifth, the source manuscript does not report the number, characteristics, or quotations of interview participants, which limits the auditability of the qualitative evidence.

Future research should therefore compare multiple MSMEs and extend observation to six or twelve months. Longitudinal designs could examine whether engagement and sales patterns persist after trends decline. Comparative content experiments could test differences between music-only, storytelling-only, and combined content formats. Cross-platform research could examine whether TikTok practices generate complementary effects on Instagram, Facebook, marketplaces, or other social-commerce channels. Future studies should also integrate verified offline point-of-sale data and larger, transparently sampled audience surveys.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the marketing communication strategy of @segud.official through TikTok as a bounded Indonesian MSME case. The evidence indicates that the account combines three mutually reinforcing practices: creative short-form content, responsive audience interaction, and analytics-informed adaptation. During the four-week observation period, the reported account indicators moved upward across followers, average views, engagement rate, TikTok-attributed sales, and other platform measures. The case also demonstrates the communicative value of local cultural storytelling in differentiating content and connecting product narratives with audience experience.

The findings should be interpreted as descriptive case evidence rather than proof that TikTok caused the reported business changes. The principal contribution is a contextual framework that conceptualizes MSME TikTok marketing capability as the coordination of creative content, relational communication, and iterative analytics. This framework offers a basis for future comparative and longitudinal research on how resource-constrained firms convert platform affordances into sustainable marketing practices.

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