

The Role of Affiliators in Increasing Brand Awareness in the Digital Era

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Abstrak- The advancement of digital technology has transformed how companies cultivate brand awareness, highlighting effective and quantifiable techniques via affiliate marketing. Affiliators, as external collaborators, are crucial in broadening market access and fostering consumer engagement. This study seeks to examine the function of affiliates in enhancing brand awareness in the digital age, concentrating on strategy and efficacy. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed to collect data through a literature review, examining affiliate practices on platforms like TikTok and Shopee. The findings indicate that affiliates, by leveraging personal relationships and innovative material, markedly enhance brand visibility and credibility. These findings underscore the significance of the AIDA principle (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) in affiliate marketing, which effectively enhances consumer engagement and buy intention. Moreover, affiliate programmes enhance brand credibility and sales efficacy. Notable instances encompass the TikTok Affiliate and Shopee programmes, which exemplify the efficacy of affiliate marketing in the digital realm. The research finds that a transparent and smart affiliate approach can enhance brand recognition and generate economic opportunities for affiliates.

Keywords: Affiliate, Brand Awareness, Digital Marketing, Tiktok, Shopee

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has changed the way companies build *brand awareness*, especially through digital platforms that enable more measurable and efficient marketing strategies. One method that is very relevant in this era is affiliate marketing, a model of cooperation between companies and third parties (affiliators) to promote products or services [1]. Affiliators play an important role in expanding market reach, connecting brands with potential consumers, and encouraging interactions that can increase loyalty to certain products. In Indonesia, this method is growing thanks to the increasing use of social media and e-commerce platforms [2].

Affiliate marketing relies on collaboration in which the affliator promotes products or services through digital channels such as blogs, social media, or special links on shopping applications [3]. In this scheme, the affliator receives a commission based on results, for example from clicks on links, application downloads, or purchases made

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through their recommendations. This model offers advantages for both parties [4]. On the one hand, companies can reach new consumers without incurring upfront marketing costs. On the other hand, affiliators get revenue opportunities from their audience networks [5]. For example, the TikTok Affiliate program has become one of the tools that many brands use to expand their brand awareness [6]. The Kukai brand utilizes this platform by involving affiliates to promote its products through creative videos and live broadcasts. These contents are created by utilizing the AIDA (*Attention, Interest, Desire, Action*) theory, in which affiliates attract the attention of the audience, arouse interest, create desire, and finally encourage purchasing actions [4]. Research shows that this approach is effective in increasing consumer interaction with brands and converting interest into purchases [2].

Not limited to social media, affiliate programs are also growing through e-commerce platforms such as Shopee. The Shopee Affiliate program offers the opportunity for affiliates to promote products through affiliate links with incentives in the form of commissions from sales [1]. This strategy not only helps increase traffic to the platform, but also encourages sales of the promoted products. Recent studies have highlighted that the use of Shopee Affiliate is able to significantly expand audience reach and build consumer confidence in certain products [7]. In addition to affiliate marketing, collaboration with influencers is also a popular strategy in digital marketing. Influencers with a large following base are able to influence the purchasing decisions of their audience. Research by Roni et al. (2023) found that collaborating with influencers through digital campaigns can significantly increase brand awareness. Content created by influencers not only conveys information about the product but also provides first-hand experience through reviews or product demonstrations. This strategy creates an emotional connection between consumers and the brand, thus increasing consumer loyalty [6].

The importance of digital marketing is also reflected in the local context, where this strategy is applied to increase the competitiveness of superior local products [5]. For example, research by [1] shows how digital marketing has successfully increased consumer awareness of palm sugar-based products, a local product from North Sulawesi. This approach includes the use of social media to introduce the advantages of the product, attract consumer attention, and create a positive impression of the product. The shift in consumer behavior towards digital has also been a major driver of the adoption of affiliate and digital marketing strategies [8]. A report from Google Indonesia (2022) reveals that more than 70% of Indonesian consumers search for product information online before making a purchase. This demonstrates the importance of brand presence on digital platforms to build consumer awareness and trust. In an ever-changing marketing landscape, affiliate marketing provides companies with flexibility and efficiency in achieving their goals. In addition to providing great opportunities for brands to build awareness, this strategy also empowers individuals and groups to earn income through their role as affiliators [2].

The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of affiliators in increasing brand awareness in the digital era. This study also aims to understand the strategies used by affiliators, the effectiveness of the approaches applied, and their impact on consumer behavior. By understanding this role, companies are expected to be able to develop more targeted and effective affiliate programs to increase their brand awareness in the digital market.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the role of affiliates in increasing *brand awareness* in the digital era. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to describe phenomena in depth and focus on a specific context. This method aims to understand the strategy, effectiveness, and impact of affiliate activities on brand awareness based on data available in the literature. Data collection was carried out through a literature study of journals, books, articles, and other relevant sources. The collected data was analyzed by examining the patterns, themes, and relationships between concepts that supported the research [9]. The data sources in this study came from literature related to affiliate marketing, digital marketing, collaboration with influencers, and other digital strategies aimed at increasing brand *awareness*. Data analysis was carried out using content analysis techniques to evaluate the content and relevance of the sources used. This method was used to understand how affiliate strategies are applied to various digital platforms and to identify their success in building brand awareness. The results of the analysis were then presented descriptively to provide a comprehensive overview of the role of affiliates in digital marketing [10].

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Development of Digital Technology and Affiliate Marketing

The development of digital technology has had a significant impact on the world of marketing [11]. One marketing strategy that is increasingly relevant in this era is affiliate marketing. In affiliate marketing, affiliates act as strategic partners to promote certain products or services to their audience [12]. This process benefits brands, affiliates, and consumers. In Indonesia, this trend is growing rapidly along with the increase in internet and social media users. Social media such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube are becoming effective platforms for utilizing affiliate marketing strategies. E-commerce sites such as Shopee and Tokopedia also utilize affiliate programs to expand their marketing networks. In this system, affiliates earn commissions based on their performance results, which are usually measured through sales, clicks, or leads generated [3].

3.2 The Effectiveness of Affiliates in Increasing Brand Awareness

Affiliates play an important role in increasing brand awareness because they are able to reach a wider audience [13]. By utilizing their social networks and influence, affiliates can convey brand messages in a more personal way [14]. Creative and authentic content is the key to attracting the attention of the audience. This is relevant because consumers tend to trust recommendations from individuals or groups they know or admire rather than traditional advertising [15]. The in-depth knowledge that affiliates have about their audience's preferences makes this marketing strategy even more effective [16]. For example, affiliates can adjust the style of communication and type of content to suit the needs and interests of a particular audience. This process creates a stronger relationship between consumers and the brand, which ultimately strengthens brand awareness [2].

3.3 Effect of Affiliate Programs on Brand Performance

Affiliate programs not only increase brand awareness, but also contribute directly to increased sales and consumer loyalty. In the digital world, affiliate links are often used to track the contribution of affiliates to the success of marketing campaigns [5]. This data

helps brands analyze the effectiveness of their strategies and optimize affiliate programs in the future [15]. Studies show that well-managed affiliate programs can increase brand credibility in the eyes of consumers. Product recommendations from affiliates known or trusted by consumers have a positive impact on consumer perceptions of the brand [16]. This is especially the case in product categories that require a high level of trust, such as health and beauty products [17].

3.4 Case Study of Affiliate Usage in The Country

The use of affiliates on the TikTok platform is an interesting study in this context. TikTok Affiliate has become a very effective marketing tool, especially for brands like Somethinc. Recent research shows that the creativity of content generated by affiliates on TikTok helps these brands reach a wider market [18]. Personal and authentic recommendations from affiliates not only increase brand visibility, but also build consumer confidence in the product [19]. Another example is the Shopee affiliate program, where users can generate additional income by promoting products through affiliate links. Shopee provides training and guidance to their affiliates to ensure that marketing strategies are effective [20]. This initiative not only increases brand awareness, but also creates economic opportunities for affiliates [1].

3.5 The Importance of Transparency in Affiliate Marketing

Consumer trust is the foundation of a successful affiliate marketing strategy. To maintain this trust, affiliates must ensure that the information they provide about products or services is accurate and not misleading [2]. This includes transparency about their relationship with the brands they promote. For example, including a “sponsored content” or “affiliate link” label can help build transparency and integrity in marketing communications [21]. Non-disclosure in affiliate relationships can cause doubt and mistrust among consumers. Therefore, brands and affiliates need to work together to create clear ethical guidelines in affiliate marketing [22].

3.6 AIDA-Based Marketing Strategy in Affiliate Marketing

The AIDA theory, which involves four stages: attention, interest, desire, and action, is a framework that is often used in affiliate marketing. Successful affiliates usually start by creating engaging content to get the audience's attention [3]. Once attention is gained, they generate interest by conveying relevant information about the product or service [23]. Next, they cultivate the audience's desire to own the product through convincing reviews or demonstrations. The final stage is to encourage the audience to take action, such as buying the product or using the service [24]. This approach allows brands to utilize emotional power in attracting consumers and encouraging them to make purchasing decisions [25].

3.7 Challenges in Implementing Affiliate Marketing

Although affiliate marketing offers various advantages, there are challenges that brands and affiliates must face. One of the main challenges is building consumer trust in the recommendations provided [6]. A mismatch between promotion and product quality can damage the reputation of both the brand and the affiliate. Therefore, it is important for affiliates to ensure that the products they promote meet the quality standards expected by consumers [26]. In addition, the increasingly fierce competition on digital platforms is also a challenge [27]. With more and more brands using affiliate marketing strategies, affiliates must compete to create unique and engaging content. This requires creativity, dedication, and a deep understanding of market trends [28].

3.8 Recommendations for Affiliate Marketing Optimization

To maximize the effectiveness of affiliate marketing, brands need to develop well-structured affiliate programs [29]. Training and support for affiliates is essential to ensure that they have the tools and knowledge necessary to promote products effectively [30]. In addition, the use of technology such as data analytics can help brands monitor and evaluate affiliate performance in real-time. Brands also need to build strong relationships with their affiliates [31]. Good relationships allow for more open communication and more effective collaboration between the two parties. This can create a mutually beneficial marketing ecosystem for all parties involved [5].

4. CONCLUSION

Affiliate marketing has proven to be an effective strategy in increasing brand awareness in the digital age. Through creativity and affiliate influence, brands can reach a wider audience and create more personal relationships with consumers. This advantage is reflected in the ability of affiliates to convey brand messages in a relevant and authentic way, which builds trust and increases brand visibility. However, successful affiliate marketing requires special attention to several important aspects. Transparency is the key to maintaining good relationships between brands, affiliates, and consumers. The information provided must be accurate and not misleading to maintain credibility. In addition, the quality of the content produced by affiliates must be in line with the brand's values and identity, so as to create a positive impression in the minds of consumers. As a suggestion, brands should build strong relationships with affiliates through open communication and ongoing support. Special training for affiliates on products and marketing strategies can increase the effectiveness of campaigns. On the other hand, the use of clear metrics to measure the success of affiliate programs is also important so that the results achieved can be optimized. With a planned, ethical, and quality-focused approach, affiliate marketing can be a very effective tool in supporting brand growth in competitive markets.

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