

Persuasive Elements within Indonesian Affiliate Marketing Content on Tiktok

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates Indonesian affiliate marketing strategies on TikTok. Using content analysis, 25 successful affiliate videos were analysed through the lens of Jamieson's Electronic Eloquence Model. The findings confirm the model's effectiveness in identifying persuasive elements, with self-disclosure building rapport, conversational style enhancing authenticity, synoptics summarizing key information, and visual dramatization engaging viewers. Successful affiliates combine these elements, focusing on storytelling and visuals to drive persuasiveness. This study provides actionable insights for TikTok affiliates, emphasizing the importance of relatable content and strategic visual aesthetics.

Keywords: Indonesian affiliate marketing, TikTok marketing strategies, social media persuasion, electronic eloquence model, content creation.

Elemen Persuasif dalam Konten Affiliate Marketing Indonesia di Tiktok

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menyelidiki strategi affiliate marketing di Indonesia pada Tiktok. Menggunakan analisis konten, 25 video affiliate yang sukses, dianalisis melalui lensa Model Electronic Eloquence dari Jamieson. Temuan mengonfirmasi efektivitas model ini dalam mengidentifikasi elemen-elemen persuasif, dengan pengungkapan diri membangun hubungan, gaya percakapan meningkatkan autentisitas, sinoptik merangkum informasi kunci, dan dramatization visual menarik perhatian pemirsa. Afiliasi yang sukses menggabungkan elemen-elemen ini, berfokus pada storytelling dan visual untuk meningkatkan daya persuasif. Studi ini memberikan wawasan yang dapat diterapkan bagi afiliate Tiktok, menekankan pentingnya konten yang dapat dipahami dan estetika visual yang strategis.

Kata Kunci: *affiliate marketing Indonesia, strategi pemasaran Tiktok, persuasi media sosial, model electronic eloquence, pembuatan Konten.*

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INTRODUCTION

Any individuals, businesses, and organizations seeking to promote their goods or services now have a plethora of ways through which they can obtain their objective (Forbes, 2022). The newer marketing practices, delivered digitally, promises great avenues of wider reachability through its low-cost, and niche nature, being able to reach various demographics (Dwivedi, 2017). A rise in preference towards digital media marketing has also been observed, as businesses and individuals adapt to the change of rising internet penetration in Indonesia (Nurhayati-Wolff, 2023).

The rising preference over traditional media towards digital media is in line with the rising interest in the population towards the internet and the services it provides. In Indonesia alone, Standard Insights (2022) reported that as of 2022, more than one-third of the population have access to the internet, with an impressive 68.9% of Indonesians being involved in social media. Among internet users, 70.7% of Indonesians consumers reported to attribute their source of information from social media, compared to only 15% from deliberate internet research. This large number reflect the potential of reaching a very large market base through the internet, especially social media.

Within the development of digital marketing, a subset of influencer marketing has gained considerable traction. It is this method that is the main focus of this research due to its growing significance and potential for further investigation: affiliate marketing.

While affiliate marketing is not a new concept—having its start as early as 1994—Indonesia saw a considerable traction in the last few years with the proliferation of online marketplace in Indonesia in tandem with Social Media creators that that profit off of the promotions of products. In 2023 alone, there were about 6 million sellers on TikTok shop and close to 7 million affiliates on the social media platform (Reuters, 2023).

Affiliate marketing is understood as the collaborative partnerships between affiliates and businesses, wherein affiliates promote products or services through referral links and earn a commission for each successful sale or engagement generated through their efforts. This symbiotic relationship benefits both parties, as businesses gain exposure and sales while affiliates earn income based on their promotional efforts (Duffy, 2005). With each click and purchase, affiliate will earn commission depending on the respective determined rates. It is this commission payment that motivates affiliates to market products in the most creative way possible (Husnayetti et al., 2023).

The growth of affiliate marketing surged by 47% between 2018 and 2022, further emphasizing the increase in reliance on this method by many retailers. This rise is partially a response to the financial strain caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced businesses to seek cost-effective alternatives for promoting their products (Ross, 2022). One of the key drivers behind the effectiveness of affiliate marketing lies in consumer behaviour. A survey by Inmar Intelligence (2021) revealed that 84% of shoppers have made purchases based on online recommendations, viewing them as more credible and relatable (Duke, 2022). Together, these factors illustrate the growing importance of affiliate marketing as a trusted and adaptable tool for brands navigating an evolving market landscape.

Affiliate marketing and its pay-per-performance basis allows for a risk-free advertising campaign where businesses only have to pay for advertising campaigns that work and reward affiliates that are efficient. This elimination of risk that conventional advertising cannot offer makes affiliate marketing a very attractive and lucrative method for businesses and organizations to further promote their goods.

Affiliate marketing has emerged as a significant marketing method in recent years, driven by the rise of social media platforms like TikTok and others. This trend is particularly evident in Indonesia's digital market, where Shopee leads the affiliate marketing landscape with a 59% share of orders, followed by TikTok at 27% (Jatmika & Widiarini, 2023). The growing influence of these platforms highlights their crucial role in shaping modern marketing strategies. In 2023, a nationwide ban of TikTok Shop and consequently its affiliate program was enacted due to TikTok posing an unfair marketing advantages over offline merchants and other e-commerce platforms through incomparably low prices (TechHQ, 2023). However, early in 2024, TikTok acquired rights to Tokopedia and created a partnership that made TikTok Shop return to Indonesian market, consequently its affiliate marketing program (Kompas, 2024). Therefore, as of 2024, the biggest affiliate program in the Indonesian landscape falls to Shopee and Tiktok.

Despite the growing popularity of affiliate marketing, not all affiliates have been equally successful in implementing this strategy. Some has managed to significantly boost sales for various products, while many others have struggled to achieve similar results. This discrepancy underscores the importance of understanding the communication strategies employed by successful affiliates.

For this reason, this research aims to explore the communication strategies utilized by affiliates in the context of affiliate marketing. By delving into the storytelling techniques, content creation approaches, and engagement strategies employed by successful affiliates, this study seeks to unravel the dynamics of affiliate marketing communication. Understanding these narrative strategies is crucial for both affiliates and businesses looking to optimize their collaborative efforts and navigate the evolving landscape of affiliate marketing effectively.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs the quantitative descriptive method. Franzosi (2008) describe quantitative descriptive method as collecting numerical data from various content sources—such as texts, images, or media—to quantify specific elements like word frequency, theme prevalence, or sentiment. To this end, the primary method this research employs is the content analysis. Data for this research will be obtained through Content analysis, which is a widely used method in media studies to systematically analyse the content of various forms of communication. Krippendorf (2018) defines content analysis as the analysis of the deliberate and unintended content of a body of communicated material through classification, tabulation, and evaluation of its key symbols and themes in order to determine its meaning and probable effect. Stemler (2000) maintained that content analysis is useful to examine trends and patterns in certain documents; this method provides additional cultural and contextual insights unable to be provided through quantitative analysis alone.

A study of similar interest by Mathur et al. (2018) investigated the risk that online advertising has when it is posing as non-advertising content done by affiliates on YouTube and Pinterest. The study attempts to answer two questions: how prevalent are content disclosures and how do content creators disclose their affiliate marketing relationship. The method, detailed in Figure 1.5., has been modelled and adapted by the aforementioned study; a process which is divided into three stages:

- a. Data Collection.* This research employs sampling using keywords, a method that has been employed in previous studies (Anthony et al., 2013). Whereby samples are gathered using a set of predetermined keywords; likely keywords that would logically generate the most affiliate content TikTok.

- b. Discovering Affiliate Marketing Content.* After all of the samples have been gathered, contents including an affiliate link are singled out. Adapting the method by Mathur et al. (2018), URLs containing a distinctive tag as an affiliate are gathered. From there, URLs belonging to contents that are high-performing content are isolated. From all of the contents including an affiliate link, the five best performing content from each keyword are isolated, making a total of 25 content.
- c. Analysing Affiliate Marketing Content.* This stage of the analysis is adapted from the study by Ithnin et al. (2020), where persuasive strategies and styles within the isolated contents are examined using the Electronic Eloquence Model.
- d. Limitations.* Since the information of income generated from affiliate marketing is only available to the affiliates themselves and not to the public, it was not part of the considerations within this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Electronic Eloquence Model defines five elements that underpins persuasion within the field of media: *personification*, *self-disclosure*, *conversational style*, *synoptic*, and *visual dramatization*. It is these elements that this research seeks and dives into during the analysis.

For additional precision, the sampling technique this research employs has been the random sampling with the use of keywords, i.e. keywords that have been indicated to yield more affiliate contents. *Ads.TikTok.com* indicated five keywords that would yield a lot of affiliate contents. They are *Perfume*, *Cases*, *T-Shirts*, *Casual Dresses*, and *Serums*.

From here, Tiktok containing affiliate content was isolated. They are the contents containing a yellow basket within the video, or the presence of an affiliate marketing link somewhere in the creator's account. Five of such contents from each keyword was isolated for

further analysis, making a total of 25 contents for the course of this research. A detailed report of the data collection process is included in Appendix 1. For the purpose of clarity, each of the content has been labelled. Contents about Perfume as P1 through P5, Cases as C1 through C5, T-Shirts as T1-15, Casual Dresses as D1 through D5, and serums as S1 through S5.

Table 1 Quantitative Research Result

<i>Element</i>	<i>Occurence (of 25)</i>					<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
	Perfume	Cases	Tshirts	Dresses	Serums		
<i>Personification</i>	5	2	2	2	3	12	48%
<i>Self-Disclosure</i>	5	4	2	4	4	19	76%
<i>Conversational Tone</i>	5	2	3	1	5	16	64%
<i>Synoptic</i>	5	4	5	4	5	23	92%
<i>Visual Dramatization</i>	5	5	5	5	5	25	100%

Across the dataset, a count was conducted to see which element was most and least used in affiliate content, expressed in Table 1.1. Findings indicated that visual dramatization is the most prevalent (100%), followed by synoptic elements (92%) and the least used elements being personification (48%).

The dominance of visual dramatization, in particular, highlights the platform's emphasis on visual engagement, where powerful and captivating visuals are essential to capture and maintain the audience's attention within the brief time frame that TikTok allows. The visuals have to also be arranged in a form of delivery that is engaging and authentic, capable of capturing the audience's attention and interest. This is achieved through having storytelling that sustains that attention and deepens the connection with the audience. It helps creators to craft a coherent message that resonates emotionally with their audience, creating a stronger persuasive effect.

Additionally, the frequent use of synoptic elements reflects the need for conciseness and clarity in delivering messages. Synoptics help distil information into easily digestible formats, allowing creators to convey their message swiftly before users scroll past. The strategic use of

synoptic elements complements the visual dramatization by enhancing the content's overall impact.

The key strategies observed in successful affiliate contents within the dataset contains three main aspects: storytelling, which governs the flow of content; visuals, which encompass how visual aspects are put together; and role-specific strategies, which are strategies related to particular aspects of the content production. It is these findings that this chapter will discuss in greater detail, employing various academic sources that will offer a deeper understanding of the principles underlying effective affiliate marketing strategies.

Storytelling

This study emphasizes the importance of storytelling in affiliate marketing content, particularly on TikTok. Storytelling structures and personalizes content to engage and persuade audiences by creating relatable or aspirational narratives. The data shows that strategies like self-disclosure, personification, and conversational styles are effective, allowing creators to embed personal experiences into their messages. This makes content appear authentic, increasing trust and credibility.

Previous research supports this idea, such as Kedrowicz & Taylor (2016), who found self-disclosure and visual dramatization central to improving persuasive communication in TED talks. Similarly, Salee & Srijongjai (2022) found conversational styles most persuasive in Thai travel vlogs. This study confirms that storytelling fosters empathy and connection, vital for effective affiliate marketing.

Relatability is a key storytelling strategy where creators present scenarios that reflect the audience's own experiences or aspirations. Research supports that audiences are more likely to trust creators they can identify with (Cialdini, 2001). Relatable storytelling, whether through testimonials or self-disclosure, establishes a personal connection that increases trust and enhances

the effectiveness of affiliate marketing. Visuals, such as creators demonstrating product use, also contribute to relatability by allowing audiences to envision the product's impact in their own lives.

Aspirational storytelling, where creators depict idealized lifestyles or outcomes, is another powerful persuasive tool. By aligning products with goals or desires, creators tap into the audience's motivation to improve or achieve certain ideals (Dahl, 2021). Aspirational content often triggers emotional responses, making the product seem more desirable. The audience's desire to emulate the creator's success drives engagement and purchase decisions.

Visuals

Visual presentation is essential to affiliate marketing success on TikTok. The data reveals three critical visual strategies: credibility, aesthetic appeal, and attention-grabbing elements. Visual dramatization enhances content by making it more engaging and persuasive, as confirmed by prior research (Ab Rashid et al., 2016; Cyphert, 2019).

Visuals help establish creators' authority by demonstrating expertise or showcasing product effectiveness. This builds credibility, a crucial factor in persuasion (Amblee & Bui, 2011). Creators visually communicate their knowledge and experiences, reinforcing their recommendations.

Aesthetic appeal is crucial on TikTok, where visually pleasing content captures attention and encourages product interest. Creators use visually appealing backdrops, compositions, and editing to attract viewers. Research supports the importance of design and presentation in eliciting audience interest (Chan et al., 2023).

With TikTok's short video format, grabbing attention in the first few seconds is critical. Creators use synoptic strategies—presenting key information at the beginning—to maintain viewer interest. This method ensures the core message is delivered quickly, even if viewers don't watch the entire video (Ngangom, 2020).

Affiliate success also depends on the creator's niche, product quality, and content format. Niche creators build loyal, trusting audiences, while promoting well-curated, high-quality products adds credibility. Consistent content formats, such as countdowns or lists, help maintain audience engagement and cater to diverse preferences. This multifaceted approach ensures persuasive communication aligns with the unique dynamics of TikTok's platform.

CONCLUSION

Extensive academic reviews reveal that while social media marketing is well-explored, research on affiliate marketing, particularly in Indonesia, remains limited. This study on successful Indonesian affiliate marketing strategies on TikTok uncovered several key findings.

Analysis of the data highlighted specific functions for each element: Self-disclosure builds rapport, enhances credibility, and inspires; Conversational style bridges the gap between creator and audience, making content more authentic and establishing the creator's authority; Synoptics capture attention and summarize information; Visual dramatization demonstrates, engages, and inspires the audience. Furthermore, this research supports the application of Jamieson's Electronic Eloquence Model in analysing persuasive elements of affiliate marketing campaigns.

From these findings, a successful strategy emerges that emphasizes two main aspects: Storytelling and Visuals. Storytelling structures content flow, incorporating relatable and aspirational elements, while visuals focus on creating credible, aesthetically pleasing, and attention-grabbing content. Additionally, the study suggests that affiliate creators benefit from niche specialization, acting as curators for the products they promote, and presenting content in countdown or list formats.

Overall, the research indicates that successful affiliates effectively combine elements of the Electronic Eloquence Model to deliver persuasive messages. These elements, when strategically

aligned with the product and audience, prove highly effective. The insights gained from this research can guide individuals seeking to become successful affiliates on TikTok.

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