CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1.   Background of Study

Anyindividuals, 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 traditional marketing, sometimes also referred to as the conventional marketing,includes the methods practiced for decades using *above-the-line* marketing techniques, such as print, telephone books, direct mail, phone, radio, and TV. These methods have been effective in reaching a wide audience for brand building, establish credibility, and attract consumers (Bharti & Kumar, 2020). The conventional method involves a more holistic manner, targeting a larger and a more general audience base, with a more mass, one-way and singular direction of communication. This method of communication is often used to meet the objective of raising awareness and building brand (Routledge, 2016).

In contrast, the newer method of marketing includes practices that implements electronic devices and the internet; they are promotional content that appears through computers, phones, tablets, or other devices (Henry Stewart Publications, 2015). The newer digital method is associated with a niche marketing strategy, targeting various different demographics. It is also the method that allows for a two-way interaction with its audience (Mailchimp, 2021).Specifically for businesses, digital marketing

offers an added advantage compared to its conventional counterpart through lower cost and the capacity to reach a more targeted audience (Dwivedi, 2017).

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.Due to this high number of social media penetration, Nurhayati-Wolff (2023) opined that the rise in influencer marketing in recent years is the response of businesses trying to adapt to this change.

The data presented above demonstrated the potential of digital marketing in reaching a wide audience and its growing prevalence in society. 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.*

Affiliate marketing is not a new concept, havingits start as early as 1994when the company CD Now launched its commission program. The visitors can read reviews on the music server and commissions are made when readers purchase an album through the link embedded therein. Two years later, Amazon launched its own associates program, becoming the largest in the world (Jurišová, 2013).

Ever since then, the affiliate program hasbeen utilized by many companies. Affiliates would feature their links on blogs, as well as other websites (Jurišová, 2013). Specifically in Indonesia however,it has gained 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).

A survey by Inmar Intelligence (2021) has found that 84% of shoppers have made a purchase recommended by somebody on the internet. This can be attributed to several reasons: it is seen as more credible, genuine, and relatable (Duke, 2022). Between 2018 to 2022, it was reported that affiliate marketing saw 47% in growth, demonstrating a preference towards this method for many retailers. It has been found that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic left businesses and organizations to be scraping for funds, unable to promote and advertise their goods in the way that they used to (Ross, 2022). 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, especially in difficult times.

At its core, affiliate marketing entails collaborative partnerships between affiliates and businesses, wherein affiliates promote products or services through referral links and earn a commission for each successful sale 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).This performance-based structure means that anyone can be an affiliate, not only limited to individuals with a high following. This accessible method gives a new source of passive income for many who are passionate in marketing and advertising (Times Square Chronicles, 2018).Affiliate marketing and its rising popularity, as reflected by its rising interest from businesses, is a significant cornerstone that moves this thesis to investigate the strategies employed by successful affiliates.It has the potential to be both profitable and helpful for individuals aspiring to be affiliates and businesses alike.

Researchby Husnayetti (2023) specified that consumers are more convinced through this method of persuasion rather than sponsored advertisements because the experience of a product user, i.e. affiliates or influencer who reviews or gives recommendation about a certain product, is much more valuable an information in terms of factor to buy or not. The nature of the promotional content made by affiliates is more geared towards relatability which fosters a sense of trust in the consumer. This is also corroborated by Ngangom (2020) who found that users on Tiktok are more open to persuasion made by honest product reviews done by fellow users rather than influencers or celebrities.

Furthermore, the nature of affiliate marketing, which is centrally electronic word of mouth, offersa more seemingly unbiased, non-sponsored information pertaining to a certain product.Ghosal et al., (2020) maintained that this factor helps to increase the adoption rate of online shopping. Word of mouth is perceived to be

more reliable due to the empathetic nature of the information, allowing consumers to imagine themselves in the situation described by the information delivered using this method (Allsop et al., 2007). Therefore, affiliate marketing becomes a way where attention can be attained through value-based approach (Ghosal et al., 2020).Additionally, the nature of digital marketing also opens the opportunity for viral and trend marketing as well as niche marketing, which has a significant effect on impulse buying (Liyanapathirana, 2021).

The landscape of affiliate marketing has undergone a significant transformation in recent years, primarily driven by the ascent of social media platforms as influential digital spaces. With billions of users engaging on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, these channels have become influential digital spaces where affiliates can effectively promote products or services to a vast audience. The visually-driven nature of social media complements affiliate marketing strategies, allowing affiliates to showcase products in engaging and relatable ways(We, 2023).

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.

Hasbullah et al. (2018) defines communication as the process of delivering messages, done by a communicator to communicants, to tell, change attitudes, opinions, or behaviour, either directly, orally, or indirectly through media. Effectively navigating the dynamics of affiliate marketing requires a deep understanding of the

techniques utilized by affiliates to communicate to their audience. By dissecting these strategies, businesses can gain insights into how to optimize their affiliate partnerships and maximize the impact of their marketing efforts in the digital realm. Consequently, there is a pressing need for research aimed at unravelling the intricacies of affiliate marketing narratives and their implications for the current and future state of online marketing.

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
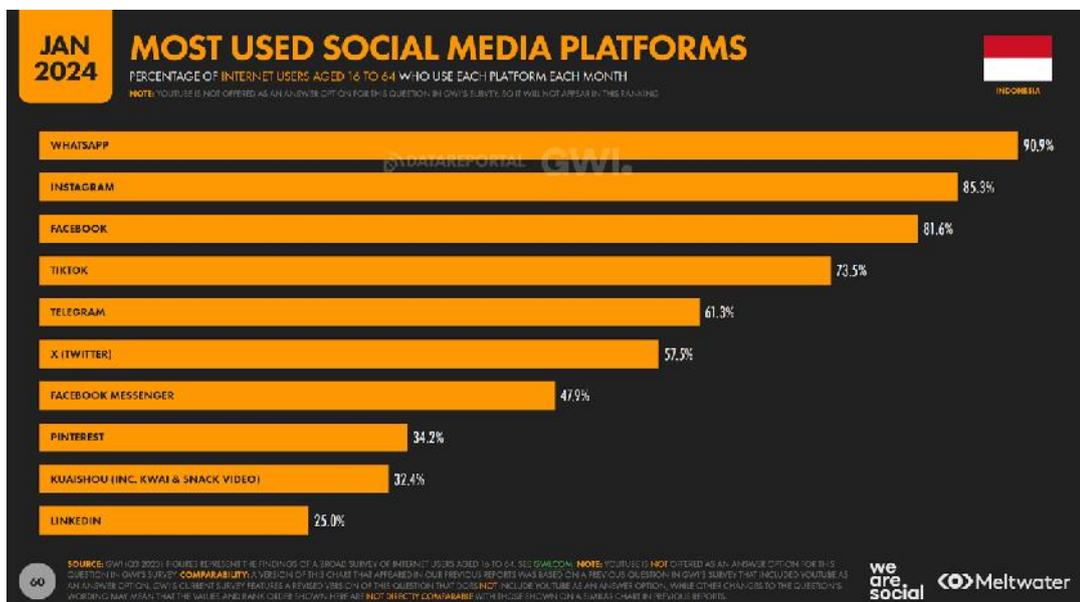

Figure 1.1. Indonesia's most used social media platform. Source: Meltwater.com

the evolving landscape of affiliate marketing effectively.

The focus of this research is the affiliate marketing on one of the emerging social media platforms in Indonesia:The China-owned short video social media platform, Tiktok. Meltwater (2024) reported that as of January, Tiktok is used by almost one in three Indonesians. Figure 1.1. puts Tiktok at the fourth place as the most used social media platform in Indonesia. It also the fastest growing social media platform, boasting a 13.2% ad reach in 2023 alone, which demonstrates its potential as a big player in Indonesian marketing landscape and thus direct this study to examine TikTok further.

WithinIndonesian digital market landscape, the biggest affiliate marketing program as of 2023is led by Shopee with a 59% *share of orders*, followed by TikTok at 27%(Jatmika & Widiarini , 2023).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.
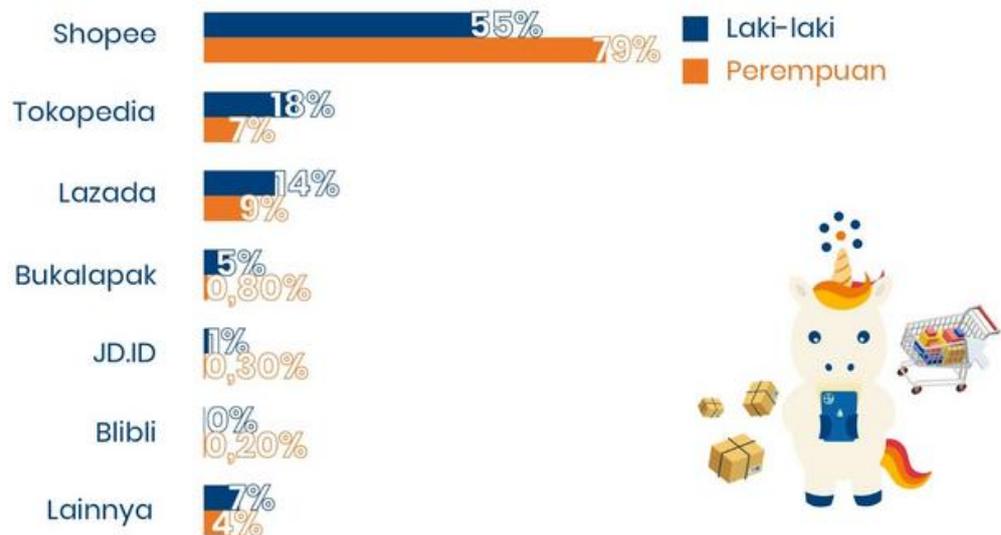
Figure 1.2. E-Commerce used in Indonesia. Source: info.populix

Additionally Figure 1.2. is a report by Populix.co (2020) that encapsulates the most used e-commerce platforms in Indonesia. Shopee and Tokopedia are the top two most used e-commerce platform both for women and men, followed by Lazada, and Bukalapak.

All the above gathered data points this study to focus on the fastest growing social media platform in Indonesia, i.e. TikTok, as the medium of the two biggest affiliate programs in the country, i.e. Shopee and Tiktok Shop/Tokopedia.

Affiliate marketers or affiliates function in a similar way across different programs, they are to upload a content that is related to the product they are trying to promote, attempting to garner as much attention and to convince the audience to click on their referral link and purchase the recommended products. Figure 1.3. is an example of Shopee affiliate marketing conducted on TikTok

Figure 1.3. Affiliate Marketing through Shopee done on TikTok.. Source: TikTok.com/dosenkecantikan
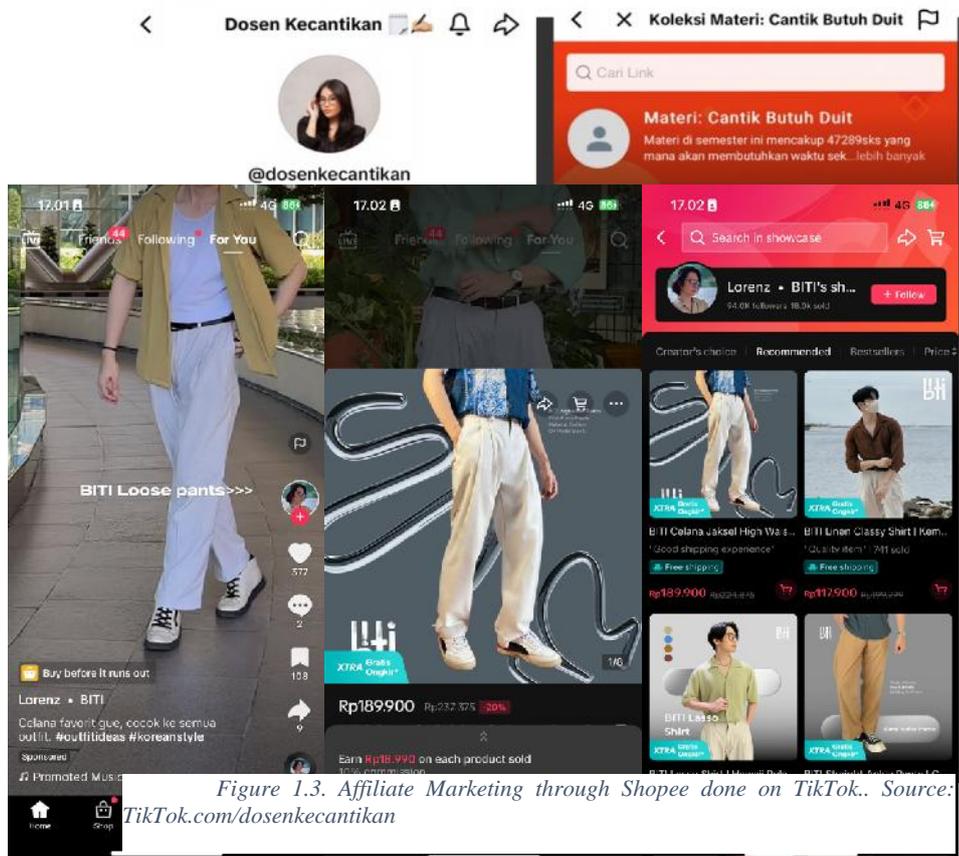
As depicted, the influencer with the username @dosenkecantikan on TikTok infuses story telling of a high-class girl navigating the world with products and procedures that she has done in order to look just like her. The link on her bio leads to all the products she has featured on her TikTok videos, which can be visited by anyone interested in using the products she uses. She has amassed 774.100.000 followers on her platform with a sum of likes of more than a million.

Figure 1.4. is a similar example of affiliate marketing done for TikTok's own shop with its embedded *Yellow Basket*. Audience can purchase the product promoted by Lorenz (@skorpiyooo) straight from Tiktok without ever leaving the app.

Figure 1.4. . Affiliate marketing done on TikTok Shop/Tokopedia on TikTok. Source: Tiktok.com

With each click and purchase, affiliate will earn commission depending on therespective determinedrates.It is this commission payment that motivates affiliates to market products in the most creative way possible (Husnayetti et al., 2023).Consequently, affiliate marketing stands apart in two fundamental aspects when contrasted with influencer endorsements and other sponsorships: firstly, it originates directly from the e-commerce platforms themselves, and secondly, it remains accessible for anyone seeking to participate.

1.2. Problem Statement

Whilst affiliate marketing is recently on the rise, few affiliates actually manage to successfully increase their reach and engagement for rewarding conversions and sales. Thus, it is deemed necessary to understand the narrative strategies employed by successful affiliates in order to aid all individuals seeking to employ this method of promotion for themselves or organizations. With all things considered,the problem statement can be reiterated as follows:

What are the marketingmessage strategies of successful affiliate marketing on TikTok?

1.3. Research Objective

This study aims to identify persuasive message strategies employed by successful affiliate marketing campaigns on TikTok

1.4. Research Significance

1.4.1. Academic Significance

This research would be an addition to the academic body of knowledge by providing a detailed analysis of marketing communication strategies within the affiliate marketing context. It contributes to the understanding of how marketing strategies adapt to specific markets and industries.

The methodology employed in this research i.e., content analysis, can serve as a model for future researchers interested in studying affiliate marketing and other similar topics. Furthermore, this work can be used as an educational resource for students as well as researchers interested in marketing, e-commerce, and affiliate

marketing. It serves as a practical example on how to conduct textual analysis in the field of marketing.

1.4.2. Social Significance

As e-commerce and digital marketing become more prevalent in Indonesia, this research can benefit creators by encouraging creativity and effectiveness in affiliate marketing, which would lead to better content and a more favourable shopping experience.

The growth of e-commerce and digital marketing has a profound impact on the digital economy of Indonesia. By shedding light on successful strategies, this research can contribute to the growth and development of the digital economy when the strategies deduced are applied. This may potentially lead to increased opportunities for individuals and marketers through gained insights.

1.4.3. Practical Significance

This thesis attempts to address a pertinent aspect of contemporary marketing practices i.e., affiliate marketing. By focusing on campaigns on TikTok, valuable insights can be attained to understand what works in the dynamic e-commerce market of the country. This research can offer actionable recommendations to enhance the affiliate marketing efforts of businesses, including Shopee and Tokopedia among other digital markets.

Furthermore, Individuals and especially marketing professionals can find this research particularly significant. The findings of this research can assist them in

refining marketing strategies, resource allocation, and increasing the success rate of affiliate campaigns, not only on Shopee, but potentially in similar markets.

Lastly, Successful affiliate campaigns can generate e-commerce growth that has a broad economic implication, namely revenue generation, sales increase, as well as economic development in Indonesia.

1.5. Theoretical Framework

1.5.1. Research Paradigm

Research paradigms guide scientific research through assumptions and principles that helps direct the data processing (Park et al., 2020). The paradigm that underpins this research is the positivistic approach, where focus is placed on the objective examination and empirical understanding of the textual elements that are analysed. Park et al. (2020) also specified the emphasis of this approach, which entails the use of structured methodologies and qualitative data analysis to identify strategies, with the goal of uncovering generalizable insights that can contribute to the development of effective marketing communication strategies.

In this research context, the positivistic approach involves the systematic analysis of promotional contentof affiliate campaign on TikTok in Indonesia, such as its content strategies, visual aspects, wording, and other relevant elements. The analysis is conducted using predefined characteristics and descriptive quantitative measures to identify specific linguistic features, persuasive techniques, and cultural nuances that contribute to the success of the campaign within the Indonesian market. This method allows for a rich exploration of the subjective elements and cultural

13

nuances that quantitative approaches may overlook. Through the content analysis techniques, the research aims to uncover patterns, themes, and underlying trend embedded in the communication strategies, contributing to a holistic understanding of their effectiveness. This research aims to identify the key elements that resonate with the Indonesian audience, leading to successful engagement and conversion within the context of Shopee's affiliate marketing campaign.

Additionally, the positivistic approach underscores the importance of maintaining objectivity and minimizing the influence of personal biases during data interpretation (Park et al., 2020). It seeks to establish a clear separation between the researcher and the researched content, ensuring that the findings are grounded in empirical evidence and can be applied to a broader context beyond the specific case of Shopee in Indonesia.

1.5.2. State of the Art

This section aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current literature and research pertaining to marketing communication strategies and affiliate campaigns, specifically focusing on the context of the thriving Indonesian e-commerce market. For this particular section, six studies are highlighted to identify key theoretical frameworks, empirical studies, and practical insights that have contributed to our understanding of effective marketing communication within the realm of e-commerce, while also highlighting the gaps and opportunities that lay the foundation for the present research.

The first study that we discuss is one conducted by Erwita and Handayani (2022) entitled "*Content Marketing Analysis on Indonesian Local Fashion Brand on Instagram*". They analysed digital marketing strategies used by local fashion brands in Indonesia on the social media platform Instagram. To assess the content marketing and consumer engagement, the research studied 196 social media posts among two local fashion brands: *Erigo*, a clothing line that focuses on trendy and adventurous style, and *Nevertoolavish,* a fashion brand with artsy characteristics incorporating minimalistic hand-printed designs.The research was conducted from December 2020 to January 2021.

Upon analysis, the authors found that branding, product information, photos were effective for marketing content. Conversations that circulated regarding the product consisted of quality, emotions, relations, and services and these conversations are deemed to be effective for consumer engagement. Utilizing the two-way communication social media provides is found to be effective in establishing consumer-brand relationship, compared to the one-way method of conventional media advertising.

The research concluded with specifying marketing content with a high level of reliability – brand names, information, photos, website links, product reviews, contact, news, services, events, product descriptions, offerings, buying,instruction, sales and promotion, emoticons, questions, appreciation, and quotes. They identified brand name, photos, and product information to be the most reliable. For the case of consumer engagement, quality, product, emotions, prices, innovation, services, promotion, and locationis most reliable.This research offers us insights to the

characteristics that marketers should pay attention to the most when creating content that people will engage with. This way, strategies can be narrowed down to more specific goals that can be achieved.

The second study that to be discussed is written by Dwi et al. (2022), originally titled as *'Pengaruh Unggahan dari Content Creator Program Afiliasi E-Commerce Shopee Terhadap Minat Beli,'* or the 'Impact of Content Creator Uploads within the Shopee Affiliate Program on Purchase Intentions'.The research examined the relationship between contents from creators affiliated through the Shopee program on the purchase intention of audience and a significant influence was found. They employed quantitative research with 94 respondents:students ofclass of 2019 in communications majorfrom Singaperbangsa Karawang University.

It was found that the significance of creator uploads yielded 14.3% magnitude on purchase intention. They also incorporated the AIDA (Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action) Model in their investigation and it was determined that affiliate marketing content wields its most significant influence during the desire and action stages.

Consequently, it can be deduced that affiliate marketing content is more adept at stimulating purchases and driving sales, rather than primarily fostering awareness of a particular product. Through this understanding of the method's advantage, we can craft a more effective strategy tailored to the aforementioned stages, as well as gaining deeper insights into the mechanics behind the success of certain affiliate marketing campaigns.

Not only that this research confirmed the effectiveness of affiliate marketing on purchase decisions, but also indicated the objectives for which the method is most productive, i.e. stimulating purchases, rather than fostering awareness and brand building.

The next research, Kusuma and Sholikah (2023) analysed marketing content on the TikTok account of @solocarifood, in a study entitled 'Marketing Content Analysis on the TikTok Application Platform (Case Study of the TikTok Account @solocarifood)'.

@solocarifood focuses on food and other culinary topics, including recipe videos, cooking tips, restaurant reviews, or food promotions. Using the qualitative method, the authors analysed the content that are uploaded by the account to examine their style and approaches in delivering their marketing messages. This includes the music, visual effects, as well as the narratives that stands out. The method they used are interviews, observation, and content analysis, data analysis using a thematic or narrative approach, interpretation of results, and preparation of reports.

The authors have found that the account has succeeded in their objectives. Their content has been found to have a significant influence on consumer decisions and that audience has expressed interest in trying the locations recommended by the account. In fact, it has influenced their perception of the brand being featured. The niche nature of the account that focus specifically on culinary topics is argued to help the account maintain a consistent audience who are attracted to said topics. The account incorporates story telling with a humorous and educative manner, this is argued to be effective in capturing audience interest and attention.

The research demonstrated that contents with unique recipes or creative presentations yielded more audience interaction and engagement. It was also found that content that follow trends or respond to them have the potential to attract more audience interaction and engagements.

This study can offer insight into the characteristics that make a promotional content successful. For this case, the study indicated that audience respond well to their style of content delivery that has been identified as interesting, entertaining, and informative. Furthermore, the content aligns with user preferences regarding delivery style and language used.

Turning to the next research, Amelia et al. (2023) set out to determine the influence that online customer reviews and affiliate marketing has on impulsive buying actions on the Shopee online marketplace. In research entitled 'The Effect of Online Customer Reviews and Affiliate Marketing on Impulsive Buying of Products in the Shopee Marketplace',they employed qualitative research on a population of 153 people, those who have made purchases on Shopee.

The study found that online customer reviews have a positive and significant effect on impulsive buying. The study emphasized the importance of these two variables in creating purchase decisions of consumers: 89% of consumers considers reviews before purchasing. However, this is a double-edged sword because 80% of consumers will actually abstain from buying when they see a negative review. Therefore, product review is paramount to purchase decisions, however it is very sensitive towards negative ones.

In terms of affiliate marketing, this study confirms that affiliate marketing is a significant method of marketing at this stage, as impulsive buying is largely facilitated by affiliate marketing.

This research can point us in the direction of the kind of consumers we can focus on in our formulation of strategies, i.e. those who have participated in impulsive purchase and impulse buyers. These types of consumers are generally individuals who seek immediate gratification, sensation seeking, impatient, and are greatly affected by peers and social validation.

Finally, the last research, conducted by Erfiati and Helfi (2023), discusses effective content strategies employed by content creators during live broadcasts on TikTok in a study entitled, 'Digital Marketing Analysis: TikTok Livestreaming Strategies for Affiliate Marketing' or originally '*Analisis Pemasaran Digital: Strategi Konten Live Streaming TikTok untuk Memasarkan Produk Affiliate*'. The authors conducted a very interesting case study on a very successful account on TikTok that amassed a profit of 15 million rupiahs after their live selling, which lasted for about 19 hours non-stop. Lina Amelia or *Mami Louisse* on her TikTok account @louissescarlettfamily broke record as the first Indonesian woman in affiliate creator to sell beauty products at such a scale, being watched by over 2,8 million people on her special live event *'Gebrakan by Mami Louisse'*. The watchers were also involved in interactive segments through giveaways that amounted to a million rupiahs, *flash* sales with prices starting from Rp 1.000 alongside her sales pitch.

With a focus on the creative methods utilized by content creators and the impact of audience interaction on broadcast success, the study employs a random

selection of live broadcasts from @louissescarlettfamilyfor visual content and audience engagement analysis. The data collected encompasses content planning through content pillars, exploring the types of content presented to enhance engagement, including likes, comments, and shares, leading to potential sales on the TikTok shop. The goal is to provide comprehensive insights into diverse strategies employed by TikTok content creators for developing engaging and interactive live broadcast content.

@louissescarlettfamily uses a concept of *shoppertainment*, where shopping comes first, entertainment second. It was found that through livestreaming, consumers can see the product in use at real-time, providing necessary information for a purchase, and accommodating two-way communications between seller and buyers.

The study compiled several strategies that the successful TikTok account has employed to garner such engagements –audience and trend research, content planning through the use of content pillars, and using TikTok's own paid promotion. Creators must be aware of the audience they wish to target, the study specified that creators can use relevant and catchy hashtags for this purpose. Creators must also be cognisant of the audio choice for their content as it greatly affect how the content will perform under TikTok's algorithm.

Specifically for Livestreams, it was found that the time of day that are most effective to be from 09:00 – 11:00 from Monday to Friday, as well as any time after 19:00, this are the times where people who work are no longer working and are looking to be entertained.

Affiliate marketing is currently gaining popularity among many content creators, with successful affiliate @louissescarlettfamily standing out for their focus on TikTok Livestreaming as a source of income. However, effective Livestreaming requires strategic content creation, involving audience and trend research, Livestream scheduling, and the development of content outlines based on content pillars. These steps are taken to engage the audience and prompt them to take action through compelling content, thereby expanding its reach. Learning from successful affiliates like @louissescarlettfamily, shoppertainment proves to be a key asset in creating captivating content that resonates with the audience, serving as a valuable lesson for novice affiliates to differentiate themselves as creators. The study highlight the potential of using paid promotion to the TikTok platform as a strategy for content creators to livestream events and the account itself to attract more viewers and increase product purchases during live broadcasts. This promotional feature involves paid promotions that creators can leverage according to their needs.

To conclude, the aforementioned studies have provided some insights that should be highlighted to support the direction of this research. Marketing content with high levels of reliability are indicated to be brand names, information, photos, website links, product reviews, contact, news, services, events, product descriptions, offerings, buying, instruction, sales and promotion, emoticons, questions, appreciation, and quotes. With brand name, photos, and product information as the most reliable. Furthermore, affiliate marketing was found to be most useful for stimulating purchases rather than to build brand identity.

Social media marketing are prone to be more successful when the contents are unique and creative in its presentation, informative,and are able to keep up and respond to trends.

Affiliate marketing also has the potential to be very effective among impulse buyers and the studies advocated for the targeting of these audiences, specifically for affiliate marketing done through short-video format on social media

The planning of content, as well as the time of upload also becomes a notable aspect in creating affiliate marketing that are successful, a marketer must be aware of who to target, what to talk about to entice those audiences, when to publish, and most of all the quality of the content.

Lastly, even with the abundance of understanding we have about this issue so far, it must also be noted that the above literature has not yet focused on affiliate marketing program as a whole, especially pertaining to strategy, and no literature has been found on this issue employing the descriptive textual analysis method. Therefore, this thesis argues that research on that specific topic is pertinent to add to the body of knowledge on the ever-evolving realm of digital marketing.

In the next section we delve into the theoretic underpinnings that are utilized to direct this research. The theories all fall under the persuasive communication framework. Persuasive Communication Theory has a rich history that spans multiple disciplines, including communication, psychology, sociology, and marketing. While its roots can be traced back to ancient rhetoric and persuasion techniques, the formal study of persuasive communication began to emerge as a distinct field of inquiry in the 20th century (Briñol, 2012).

1.5.3. Electronic Eloquence Model

The Electronic eloquence model (EEM) was first proposed by Jamieson (1988) to explain the changing pattern of persuasion within the age of the media. The model offers a useful perspective in understandingpersuasion techniques in online settings. Borchers (2012) breaks down the five elements that underpins this model: personification, self-disclosure, conversational style, synoptic, and visual dramatization.

Personification. This element entails the description of things as having agency and being able to take action. It also entails the use of theself, i.e. the communicator, to embody the ideas of the messages they are trying to convey, thereby personifying the values of intended messages. This is done to create a state where audience feels a sense of realism and plausibleness within the message, essentially building a relationship with the audience.

*Self-disclosure.*Communicators make use of their own stories as proofto support their ideas and belief. This method makes the supporting proof seem more accessible to the audience, creating a sense of relatability and plausibility.

Conversational style. This element refers to the choice of words that are used to present ideas to the audience. Within the context of social media, the style of writing often used is the informal one, using simple vocabularies in order to avoid confusion, which will reduce the audience's attention. The use of pronouns in this context is relevant; 'I' and 'We' can create a sense of relatability within the story.

Synoptic. Communicators use short and concise phrases to summarize the idea they attempt to disseminate. This idea is captured in the term *Synecdoche—*a figure of

speech in which a part is used to summarize a concept as a whole. Communicators who are eloquent are able to synopsize an idea in a clear, concise, and dramatic statement. This is especially relevant to social media where posts are limited to a certain duration, or word limit.

*Visual dramatization.*Also known as visual rhetoric, images that accompany messages carry a sense of trustworthiness and newsworthiness as these images provide eternal evidence and create a memorable impression for the audience. Visuals on social media is especially important to provide added trustworthiness and attraction, making them avital aspect in social media persuasion techniques.

This model provides a foundational framework for understanding the methods by whichpeople use electronic media to persuade others to adopt a certain idea or participate in a certain action. For this reason, this model was picked to be the main theoretical underpinning that directs the analysis of the data within this research.

1.6.   Operationalization of Concepts

The aim of this study is to analyse the content strategies employed by successful affiliates gain attention, engagement, and conversions to the product they are promoting, as well as persuade their audience to purchase the product they recommend.

Affiliates are independent voluntary salesperson who choose to promote a certain brand using their platform on social media. They promote the products along with a link that audience can click to purchase the product from a third-party website. Each

click and purchase translates to a commission for the affiliate.The content that this research examines was sourced from TikTok in the form of short videos.

Adopting the electronic eloquence model (EEM), this study considers that the strategy for a successful affiliate marketing campaigns utilize the five elements laid out by the model:

a. *Personification.* Communicators personify the values of their intended message, thereby creating a connection with the audience through common goals. For example, authors may use the voice of another person or object in addressing their audience, in Ithnin et al., (2020) personification can be seen in the instance where the research subject uses wisteria flowers akin to the experience of a woman blooming into her more expressive self, or referring to a company as a "family" to convey a sense of unity and support, making stakeholders feel more connected and valued.

b. *Self-disclosure.*The use of storytellingand narrative of the creator's own experience as proof of the persuasive message being delivered. This element doubles down on the empathetic nature of the audience and help them see themselves in the shoes of the communicator.For example, admitting that a creator uses a certain product personally, or elaborating the advertising with a personal an anecdote to emphasize the trueness of the message.

c. *Conversational style.*The tone or diction in the message delivery; whether the message is conveyed using formal or nonformal language, and whether the message is conveyed using direct or indirect pronouns. For example, the use of 'I', 'We', and 'You', as well as using the informal language can instil a

sense of closeness as well as giving a sense of interactivity and connectedness between the creator and their audience.

d. *Synoptic.* This element is the use of generalizable statements that can represent the whole point trying to be expressed. The use questions can often act as a trigger the audience to relate to the topic or the issue. Synoptics act as a way to capture initial attention of the audience. For example, "People keep asking me what perfume I wear so here it is" or "this shirt is going to make people think you're rich."

e. *Visual dramatization.*Visual dramatization involves using striking, vivid, or exaggerated imagery to capture attention and convey a message powerfully. This technique can include: *High-Quality Images and Videos*: Using visually appealing, high-resolution images and professionally produced videos. *Bold Colours and Contrasts*: Employing vibrant colours and contrasts to make visuals stand out. *Dynamic Composition*: Using creative angles, perspectives, and compositions to create a sense of movement or excitement. *Symbolism and Metaphors*: Utilizing visual metaphors and symbols to communicate complex ideas quickly and effectively.

1.7. Research Method

1.7.1. Research Approach

To conduct a comprehensive analysis of successful affiliate marketing on Tiktok, 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. The primary goal is to provide a structured overview of the content being analysed, allowing researchers to draw conclusions based on statistical evidenceData 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. It involves quantifying and analyzing the presence, meanings, and relationships of certain words, themes, or concepts within media texts(Macnamara, 2011).

This study also chooses to focus Tiktok due to its growth and prevalence in Indonesian society and to focus on creators and affiliate URLs linked with Shopee and TikTok Shop/Tokopedia, which are the dominant affiliate programs found on TikTok. The subjects was chosen using random sampling using keywords to yield as diverse a result as possible. From each keyword, five best performing content per keyword are isolated. With a total of 25 content, Electronic Eloquence model is then used to analyse the elements within the affiliate marketing strategies.

1.7.2. Research Subjects

The subjects for this qualitative research are the contentsfrom affiliate marketers that uses TikTok to promote products, content with a sizable engagement which indicates click-through conversion, and content with an affiliate URLembedded in the content themselves or in the profile of the creator. The subjects are content generated in Indonesia,made by creators aged 18-30, all genders.

1.7.3. Data Collection Methods

The primary data for this study is derived from affiliate content from TikTokthat are systematically examined and interpreted to define their textual, visual, and multimedia elements. 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 isuseful to examine trends and patterns in certain documents; this method provides additional cultural and contextual insights unable to be provided through quantitative analysis alone.

Through content analysis, textual, visual, and multimedia elements of affiliate marketing content areanalysed systematically. This involves identifying recurring themes, persuasive strategies, and engagement techniques employed by successful Shopee affiliates.

From five keywords, five best performing content are isolated. The metrics of the performance are determined by its engagement rate. In total the research has analysed 25 contents. From there, the elements of the content are analysed using the Electronic Eloquence Model to determine any recurring themes that might indicate a strategy that makes the contents successful.

These methods are intended to provide a nuanced analysis for the successful Shopee affiliate marketing landscape in Indonesia, uncovering contextual and cultural insights that can provide a holistic view of successful Shopee affiliate marketing strategies in Indonesia.

1.7.4. Sources and Types of Data

1.7.4.1. Primary Data

The primary data that underpins this research are the obtained content from research subjects as well as observational data from audience response through likes, shares, and reposts.

1.7.4.2. Secondary Data

Secondary data are obtained from additional sources, namely academic literature, including journals, books, internet sites, and other references with relevant and accurate data.

1.7.5. Data Processing Techniques

Data Collection
- Tiktok Content will be collected using the following keywords:
- **Perfume**
- **Cases**
- **T-Shirts**
- **Casual Dresses**
- **Serums & Essences.**

Discovering Affiliate Marketing (AM) Content
- Gathering Contents that includes yellow basket and creator showcase, or affiliate link in creator bio.
- **5 best Affiliate Marketing Content per Keyword will be isolated.**

Analysing AM Content
- Chosen content will be analysed using **Electronic Eloquence Model** accoding to:
- Personification
- Self-Disclosure
- Conversational Style
- Synoptic
- Visual Dramatization

Figure 1.5. Research Model.

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:

29

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 keywordare 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), wherepersuasivestrategies and styleswithin 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.

1.7.6. Goodness Criteria

Marshall (1989) defined goodness criteria to includeappropriate research focus, researchers' objectivity, manipulation of people examined, study completeness and value considerations within qualitative research. The criteria for evaluating the

goodness of qualitative research include trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

In the context of this research on successful Indonesian affiliate marketing strategies on TikTok, Marshall's (1989) goodness criteria offer a crucial framework to assess and ensure the study's rigor. First, trustworthiness is achieved by grounding the research findings in a detailed content analysis of TikTok affiliate campaigns. This systematic approach ensures that the insights drawn are both accurate and reliable, reflecting the genuine strategies employed by successful affiliates. By carefully collecting and analysing data, the research ensures that its conclusions are well-supported and dependable.

The study's credibility is bolstered by using multiple data sources and cross-referencing findings with established theoretical frameworks, such as Jamieson's electronic eloquence model. This not only enhances the believability of the results but also ensures that the interpretations are robust and trustworthy. The careful alignment of empirical data with theory strengthens the overall validity of the research.

Transferability is also a key consideration, as while the study is specifically focused on the Indonesian context, the strategies identified—such as the use of storytelling, visuals, and strategic application of electronic eloquence elements—can potentially be applied in other cultural and social media contexts. This broad applicability makes the findings valuable beyond the immediate scope of the research, offering insights that could be relevant in various global marketing scenarios.

The dependability of the research is ensured through a consistent methodological approach, which means that if the study were to be repeated, similar results would likely be obtained. By following a clear and replicable research process, the study maintains a stable foundation, ensuring that its findings are consistent over time.

Finally, confirmability is maintained by minimizing researcher bias through transparent data analysis methods. By grounding conclusions firmly in the data, rather than personal perspectives, the research ensures that its findings are objective and free from undue influence. This commitment to objectivity ensures that the results accurately reflect the data, making the research a reliable and unbiased contribution to the field of social media and affiliate marketing.