

Analysis Of Tiktok Content Marketing Strategies In Promoting Opportunities For Influencers/Affiliates In Small Areas

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Abstract

The rapid growth of the digital era has transformed how individuals and businesses engage in the modern economy. TikTok, as one of the most influential social media platforms, has evolved beyond entertainment into a digital economic space that creates opportunities for influencers and affiliates, particularly in small regions. Creative, authentic, and relevant content strategies have become essential in attracting audience attention and building trust toward products or brands. This study employed a qualitative descriptive method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations of TikTok creators in small regions, and documentation of uploaded content. The analysis process involved data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to identify key elements of effective content strategies in promoting digital economic opportunities. The results indicate that TikTok content strategies play a significant role in enhancing local creators' visibility and expanding market reach. Interactive features such as live streaming, duet collaborations, and affiliate programs have proven effective in increasing audience engagement and creators' income. TikTok functions not only as a promotional medium but also as a platform for social and economic empowerment in small regions, demonstrating strong potential to foster inclusive and sustainable digital economic growth.

INTRODUCTION

In the era of digital transformation, the evolution of communication and marketing strategies has reached an unprecedented scale. The integration of digital platforms into daily life has changed not only the way individuals interact but also how businesses and communities sustain themselves economically. Among various social media platforms, TikTok has emerged as a dominant force in shaping contemporary marketing ecosystems. Its short-form video format, user-friendly interface, and powerful algorithm have revolutionized how content is created, distributed, and consumed. TikTok's global growth especially in Indonesia, with 112 million active users in 2024 illustrates its potential as both an entertainment hub and an emerging economic tool for users across different demographics. The platform's capacity to reach mass audiences instantly makes it particularly valuable for individuals and small businesses in rural or small regions seeking to participate in the digital economy.

Empirical studies reinforce the increasing significance of content marketing as a strategic approach within TikTok's ecosystem (Rolando et al., 2024) found that content marketing and influencer collaboration significantly shape consumer purchase decisions, with engagement and authenticity being the primary determinants of success. Unlike traditional marketing, TikTok's algorithm amplifies relatable, entertaining, and emotionally resonant content favoring creativity over capital. For individuals in small regions, this offers an accessible entry point to digital entrepreneurship without the need for major financial investment. Moreover, the emergence of affiliate marketing systems within TikTok Shop has further expanded monetization opportunities. Creators and micro-influencers can now earn commissions through product recommendations, thereby transforming passive users into active digital entrepreneurs.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study is grounded in the Digital Content Marketing Theory proposed (Olivia Sabina et al., 2025)), which emphasizes that successful marketing in the digital era depends on the creation of meaningful narratives that build emotional bonds

between brands and audiences. This aligns with Regina Luttrell's (2020) Circular Model of SOME, which outlines four essential components of social media strategy: *Sharing*, *Optimization*, *Management*, and *Engagement*. These frameworks collectively suggest that effective content marketing requires not just creative storytelling but also strategic management of audience interaction and data-driven optimization. Within the TikTok ecosystem, the integration of these principles can be observed in viral trends, duet collaborations, and real-time engagement through comments and live sessions all contributing to a self-sustaining digital marketing loop.

Empirical evidence from small business contexts underscores TikTok's potential as an economic equalizer. (Gunawan Aji et al., 2022)) revealed that TikTok Live streams increased the monthly revenue of UMKM (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) by up to IDR 10 million. Similarly, Lesmana and demonstrated that TikTok affiliate training programs in Sindangbarang Village enhanced local residents' digital literacy and economic independence. These findings suggest that TikTok not only serves as a promotional medium but also functions as a form of digital empowerment a pathway for social mobility and inclusion. In regions with limited job opportunities and access to capital, TikTok becomes a democratizing tool, enabling individuals to monetize creativity, preserve cultural identity, and participate in global digital networks.

The novelty of this research lies in its exploration of TikTok content marketing as a catalyst for influencer and affiliate development in small regions an area underrepresented in current scholarship. Previous studies have predominantly focused on urban markets and established influencer economies, overlooking how TikTok reshapes economic participation in rural settings. This study aims to fill that gap by investigating how individuals in small Indonesian communities leverage TikTok's content strategies to generate income, gain visibility, and foster local entrepreneurship. Furthermore, it seeks to analyze how authenticity, storytelling, and engagement tactics contribute to success in these non-urban contexts. By integrating empirical data and theoretical insights, this research contributes to broader discussions on digital inclusion, economic empowerment, and sustainable creative industry development in emerging digital economies.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Previous literature underscores that *content marketing* is a core component of contemporary digital marketing. (Nisa Alifah Zahra, 2024)states that TikTok content marketing strategies should follow a structured process of *planning*, *organizing*, *actuating*, and *controlling* to ensure consistency and impact. The goal is not merely to advertise but to craft relevant, emotional, and entertaining narratives that connect with audiences. Successful campaigns often use dynamic visuals, relatable storytelling, and interactive participation to build brand loyalty and engagement.

(Harahap & Sazali, 2024) observed that affiliate marketing within TikTok Shop significantly enhances consumer trust and purchase intent. The affiliate system allows creators to promote products through unique links, earning commissions from each successful transaction. This system fosters a mutually beneficial relationship between sellers and creators while offering consumers authentic recommendations. Similarly, (Fiquddin & Insiyah, 2025) identified that affiliates employ key strategies such as storytelling, unboxing, viral trend participation, and discount-based giveaways to capture audience attention

Furthermore, (Arvia et al., 2024) highlighted TikTok's transformative role in generating new employment opportunities, especially in small regions where digital job access is limited. The platform's accessibility enables individuals to monetize creativity, regardless of geographic or socioeconomic background. For many users, TikTok has become a flexible and self-sustaining source of income through micro-influencing and affiliate-based marketing.

Community development studies further reinforce TikTok's socio-economic impact. Lesmana and (Lesmana & Supratman, n.d.)) found that TikTok Affiliate training in Sindangbarang Village significantly improved participants' digital literacy and business performance.

Likewise, Pujianto et al. (2023) demonstrated that affiliate business workshops for youth organizations in South Sumatra enhanced local entrepreneurship and income generation. These studies collectively show that TikTok can function as a tool for both digital empowerment and economic inclusion.

Overall, the literature converges on the idea that TikTok's marketing ecosystem operates at the intersection of technology, culture, and social participation. It provides not only economic opportunities but also a platform for identity expression and community connection. However, challenges remain in bridging the digital literacy gap and ensuring that small regional communities receive sufficient education, infrastructure, and institutional support to compete in the digital economy.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach using an exploratory case study design to examine TikTok's content marketing strategies in small regional contexts. This approach allows an in-depth exploration of real-life practices, behaviors, and perceptions among creators who operate in digitally developing areas. The qualitative method is chosen to capture the socio-cultural nuances of how individuals in small regions engage with TikTok as both a creative and economic platform.

Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with 15 participants, consisting of 10 active affiliates, 3 micro-influencers, and 2 local entrepreneurs utilizing TikTok for promotion. Additional field observations were conducted on 30 TikTok accounts representing local product marketing activities such as culinary, handicrafts, and fashion. Observations focused on content formats, engagement techniques, and communication strategies used to attract and retain audiences.

Secondary data were sourced from recent journal publications (2023–2025) relevant to digital marketing, social media strategies, and community empowerment. The analysis followed Miles and Huberman's model, involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data credibility was enhanced through source triangulation, incorporating insights from academic experts, local business owners, and active TikTok creators.

The research instrument included a semi-structured interview guide emphasizing four main aspects: (1) content strategy development, (2) audience engagement, (3) supporting and inhibiting factors, and (4) economic impact of affiliate participation. Interviews were conducted both online and offline, depending on participant accessibility.

This methodological framework provides a holistic understanding of TikTok's influence on small-region economies. It emphasizes qualitative depth over numerical generalization, enabling the study to offer practical recommendations for digital literacy training, local

government support, and the sustainable development of community-based digital entrepreneurship.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

1. Content Strategy Development

The findings reveal that creators and affiliates in small regional areas primarily design their content strategies around local identity and community relevance. Most participants integrate cultural symbols, regional dialects, and local products such as traditional foods or handicrafts into their TikTok videos to enhance authenticity and emotional connection with viewers. This localized approach not only differentiates their content from mainstream creators but also builds stronger audience trust. The research shows that storytelling and educational content formats (e.g., “how-to” videos about local crafts or small business processes) attract more sustainable engagement than purely promotional videos. This supports the view of digital marketing scholars that effective content strategy on TikTok requires cultural alignment and authenticity to sustain long-term engagement in micro-markets.

2. Audience Engagement and Interaction Techniques

Based on both interviews and field observations, audience engagement is mainly achieved through interactive communication using features such as “duet,” “stitch,” and live streaming. Creators use these tools to foster community participation and build personal connections with followers. Engagement is further reinforced through consistent posting frequency, emotional storytelling, and direct responses to comments. However, the study also found that content saturation and algorithmic fluctuations often lead to inconsistent visibility, especially for creators with limited technical knowledge. Thus, the study emphasizes that maintaining authenticity and adaptability are key to sustaining audience attention in competitive digital spaces.

3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Three major supporting factors emerge from the analysis: (1) the accessibility of TikTok’s content creation tools, (2) community collaboration among local creators, and (3) the viral potential of culturally unique content. These enablers help small-region influencers expand their digital presence without requiring large financial investment. Conversely, inhibiting factors include unstable internet connectivity, limited digital literacy, and the lack of structured training on analytics and brand management. Several participants expressed difficulty in understanding engagement metrics or negotiating sponsorship deals, which restricts their professional growth. These findings align with Miles and Huberman’s analytical emphasis on understanding real-life challenges through data triangulation, confirming that infrastructure and education gaps remain the primary obstacles to regional digital development.

4. Economic Impact of Affiliate Participation

The study demonstrates a significant economic contribution of TikTok-based marketing for local communities. Ten out of fifteen participants reported measurable income increases through affiliate commissions, local business collaborations, and product sponsorships.

Affiliates play a crucial role in connecting local entrepreneurs with wider audiences, thus facilitating micro-economic empowerment in digitally developing areas. Additionally, TikTok functions as an informal marketplace that encourages small entrepreneurs to participate in digital trade without the complexities of e-commerce platforms. This supports the idea that content marketing acts as both a promotional and economic enabler, especially in rural and semi-urban regions where traditional advertising is less accessible.

5. Strategic Implications and Community Empowerment

The integration of content marketing with local entrepreneurship demonstrates that TikTok serves as a catalyst for community-based digital empowerment. The study suggests that the sustainability of influencer and affiliate activities depends on the synergy between individual creativity, platform support, and local government involvement. Policymakers and regional authorities can leverage these insights to design digital literacy workshops, creator incubator programs, and micro-funding initiatives for creative entrepreneurs. This aligns with the broader goal of sustainable digital transformation, where content marketing becomes not only a business tool but also a mechanism for regional economic inclusion and cultural preservation.

The image below: illustrates the synergy between a planned TikTok content strategy and the economic results realized in the form of “Influencer/Affiliate Opportunities” for small communities.



Fig 1. Encouraging local influencers in small areas through content and community.

Table 1: This table provides an overview of key aspects in the analysis of TikTok content strategies used to support influencer and affiliate opportunities in small regions.

Keyword	Explanation	Relevance to the Study
Engagement	Refers to the level of audience interaction with TikTok content, including likes, comments, shares, and active viewers.	Indicates how effective content strategies are in attracting attention and building relationships with audiences.
Interactivity	The two-way communication process between creators and audiences through features such as <i>duet</i> , <i>stitch</i> , and <i>live streaming</i> .	Serves as a key indicator of how successfully a creator fosters an active and loyal community on TikTok.
Authenticity	The honesty and originality expressed by creators in delivering messages through content.	Builds audience trust, particularly in small regions where local values and sincerity are highly appreciated.
Consistency	The frequency and regularity in uploading relevant and appealing content.	Influences TikTok's algorithm and helps maintain a stable engagement rate over time.
Emotional Connection	The creator's effort to build closeness through personal narratives or relatable themes that reflect audience experiences.	Plays a crucial role in generating audience loyalty and expanding content reach within local communities.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that TikTok content strategies play a vital role in fostering and expanding opportunities for influencers and affiliates in small regions. The platform has transformed from a space for entertainment into a dynamic and inclusive digital economic ecosystem, enabling individuals from various social and geographic backgrounds to participate as creators, digital entrepreneurs, and marketing agents. With its short-form video format, interactive features, and algorithm-driven visibility, TikTok has opened new pathways for small communities to reach wider audiences and engage meaningfully with digital markets.

The findings indicate that an effective TikTok content strategy relies on creativity, authenticity, and consistency. These elements help build audience trust, strengthen engagement, and influence consumer behavior, particularly in promoting products and affiliate programs. Content that is relatable and emotionally engaging tends to perform better and contributes to sustainable audience growth. The success of this strategy also depends on the ability to manage interactions, optimize trends, and maintain storytelling that aligns with the audience's cultural and social context.

In small regional contexts, TikTok serves as a medium for both economic and social empowerment. It provides access to digital entrepreneurship, enhances local product visibility, and supports the development of community-based creative industries. The platform also contributes to improving digital literacy and income generation for individuals who previously had limited access to traditional economic opportunities.

Nevertheless, several challenges remain. Limited internet access, uneven digital education, and dependence on algorithmic exposure can hinder the long-term sustainability of digital participation in small regions. Addressing these barriers requires collaborative efforts among government institutions, the private sector, and educational organizations to provide equitable digital infrastructure and capacity-building initiatives.

In conclusion, TikTok's content marketing strategy is not merely a promotional approach but a transformative force that bridges creativity and economic inclusion. By leveraging its interactive features and storytelling power, TikTok empowers individuals in small regions to participate in the digital economy, strengthen local identity, and contribute to sustainable social and economic development.

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