

The Impact of Influencer and Digital Marketing on Brand Awareness in MSMEs: A Case Study in the Creative Industry Sector in Medan City

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ABSTRAK

This research is designed to assess the impact of influencer and social media marketing on the popularity of brands within MSMEs: a case study in the creative industry sector in Medan City. This research is quantitative, employing multiple regression analysis methods with SPSS analysis tools. The respondents in this study consists of the professionals within the creative industry sector in Medan City. The technique used for determining the participants in this investigation is a non-probability sampling approach involving incidental testing. The unknown population is estimated using the Slovin formula, resulting in an assesment numbering seventy individuals. The data collecting method in this investigation is by distributing survei forms. The results of the study show that influencer marketing and digital marketing has a good and significant impact on the popularity of brands. Influencer and digital marketing have a simultaneous impact on the popularity of brands in MSMEs: a case study in the creative industry sector in Medan City.



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1. INTRODUCTION

The present situation of the Indonesian creative economic system creates optimism and enthusiasm, thereby supporting the achievement of the objective of becoming a developed country. The foundation of the creative economic system remains in the creative business. A dedication by the government toward improving the creative economy can be witnessed through the rebranding of the department from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, alongside the formation of the Creative Economy Agency as provided in Presidential Regulation Number 6 of 2015 and the strategic plan for the Creative Economy 2020-2024. Medan, which has enormous people resources, offers the ability to cultivate young creators who are both creative and innovative, thereby empowering them to become entrepreneurs capable of enhancing and advancing the economic sector of Medan City. Innovative because to its inherent potential: a) Medan City has significant cultural diversity encompassing cuisine, traditional attire, handicrafts, music, and performing arts. b) A variety of natural resources serving as raw materials for crafts and cuisine, c) An advantage in demographics characterized by a predominance of the productive age population (youth), and d) A substantial middle-class demographic acting as consumers of creative economy products, providing a robust domestic foundation.

In the evolving rapidly digital era, traditional marketing techniques are no more sufficient to build a solid reputation within progressively fierce competition, especially for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The creative industry mainly depends on its reputation to attract market attention, as a goods added value is frequently defined by consumer perceptions of its

reputation and identity. In the context of limited resources and budgets, MSMEs in this sector are transitioning to digital media to reach customers more extensively and effectively. Two prevalent strategies that are currently used are influencer marketing and online platform marketing. The marketing of influencer uses the popularity of individuals with a large audience and authority on social media platforms to endorse items in a more intimate and persuasive approach.

Social media marketing use digital channels such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook to share advertising messages directly through diverse creative and interactive content formats. Medan, an established city experiencing rapid MSME expansion, notably within creative industries such as fashion, culinary arts, crafts, and design, increasingly use social media and influencers as a common strategy. However, the efficacy of these two strategies in enhancing brand awareness necessitates additional empirical investigation, as not all digital efforts achieve a substantial increase in brand recognition or recall among consumers. This study attempts to investigate the amount to which influencer marketing and marketing through social media, both independently and concurrently, affect brand recognition among creative industry MSMEs in Medan City. This research is significant for MSMEs as it influences their digital marketing strategies and contributes academically to the comprehension of the relationship between contemporary marketing communication strategies and brand awareness development in small-scale businesses within rural areas.

2. METHOD

The investigation involved a statistical study design with multiple regression analysis techniques and SPSS as the analytical instrument. The study's population included stakeholders from the creative industry sector in Medan City. This study applied a non-probability sampling approach involving incidental testing; the unknown population was estimated using the Slovin formula, resulting in an assessment numbering seventy individuals. The strategy used to gather data in this investigation was the distribution of survey forms. This research utilized a multiple linear regression model to conduct the analysis of model and technical data. To validate the precision of the multiple regression analysis outcomes, the quality of the observational instruments, data normality assessments, and classical assumption evaluations were initially conducted. Data processing was conducted with statistical tools.

Table 1. Operational Definitions

Variables	Operational Definition	Indicator	Measurement
Brand Awareness	A form of digital marketing that utilizes social media platforms as a communication tool to reach consumers and build closer relationships with customers."	1. Brand Unaware 2. Brand Recognition 3. Brand Recall 4. Top of Mind	Likert Scale
Influencer Marketing	The marketing strategy that relies on figures or individuals (influencers) to promote products or services, thereby influencing the audience's purchasing decisions through recommendations based on trust, expertise, and emotional closeness, with the aim of increasing brand awareness and sales.	Source: Kotler & Keller (2022:269) 1. Attractiveness, 2. Expertise, and 3. Trustworthiness.	Likert Scale
Social Media Marketing	The platform of marketing that is implemented to increase consumer knowledge about the brand, this is done through tools from social media platforms that can be run anywhere.	1. Content Creation(Content Creation), 2. Content Sharing(Content Sharing), 3. Connecting(Building Connections) and 4. Community Building(Community Development). Source :Sarah et al., 2021:416)	Likert Scale

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The respondents obtained in this investigation was seventy individuals. The questionnaires were distributed directly to the respondents. Creative Industry Sector Players in Medan City, and briefly explain how to complete them. The distribution of the questionnaires, along with the rate of return of the processed questionnaires, is shown in Table 1 as follows:

Table 2. Distribution of Questionnaires

Information	Number of Questionnaires	Percentage
Distribution of questionnaires	70	100%
Unreturned questionnaires	0	0%
Returned questionnaire	70	100%
Processable questionnaire	70	100%

Source: Primary Data, processed 2025

According to Table 2, seventy copies of the questionnaire were distributed with a return rate of 100%, resulting in all questionnaires being used. The findings of the questionnaire showed that specific profiles of the respondents were determined by gender and age. The survey findings revealed the following categories of respondent characteristics:

Table 3. Respondent Characteristics

Work	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Man	44	63%
Woman	28	37%
Age		
20-30 Years	6	9%
31-40 Years	22	31%
41-50 Years	28	40%
>50 Years	14	20%

The respondent characteristic appeared in table 3. The amount of male respondents is 44, accounting for 63%, while the number of female respondents is 28, accounting for 37%. The age group of respondents between 20-30 years includes six people or 9%, while those between 31-40 years include 22 people or 31%. The age group between 41 and 50 years includes 28 people, or 40%. The age group of >30 years includes 14 people or 20%.

Classical Assumption Test Normality Test

Table 4. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		Unstandardized Residual
N		70
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Standard Deviation	1.79848574
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.074
	Positive	.074
	Negative	-.032
Test Statistics		.074
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 ^{c,d}

- a. Test distribution is Normal.
- b. Calculated from data.
- c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.
- d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

The findings of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov analysis showed that the significance value is > 0.05, namely 0.200, hence the data follows a normal distribution.

Multicollinearity Evaluation

Table 5. Multicollinearity Evaluation

Variables	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Influencer Marketing	.671	1,491
Social Media Marketing	.671	1,491

Source: SPSS output, processed data2025

Table 5 above showed that the tolerance value and the equation value of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) showed that all uncorrelated variables have a tolerance value of > 0.1 and VIF < 10. So, the regression approach have not multicollinearity between the uncorrelated variables used in the study.

Heteroscedasticity Evaluation

Figure 1 represent the scatterplot graph of the regression model employed in this investigation. In Figure 1, it is shown that the points are distributed uniformly and are scattered both above and below the zero mark on the Y axis. Therefore, it can be proven that the regression model in this investigation did not show heteroscedasticity.

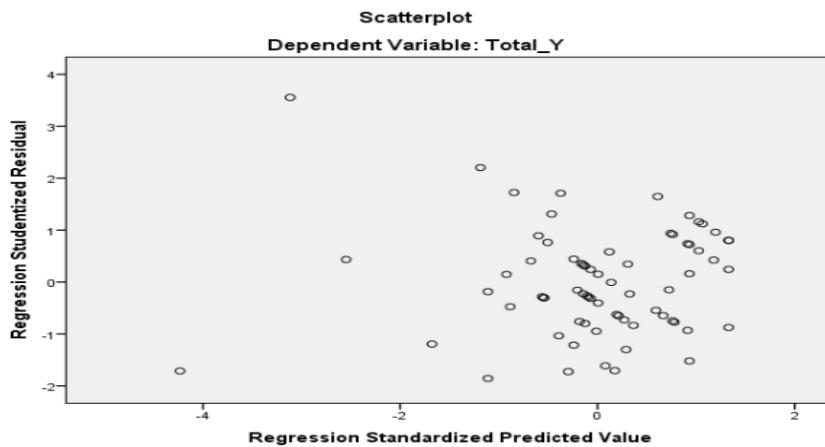


Figure 1. Heteroscedasticity Test

Multiple Linear Regression

Multiple linear regression aims to identify the linear relationship between multiple unrelated factors (X) and the related factors (Y). The regression equation approach is as follows:

Table 6. Multiple Regression Analysis
Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	7,071	1,925			3,674	.000
Influencer Marketing	.324	.062	.505		5,262	.000
Social Media Marketing	.284	.077	.356		3,710	.000

a. Dependent Variable:Brand Awareness

Source:SPSS 22 output, processed data2025

The regression equation model derived from these findings are able to be represented as follows:

$$Y=7,071+ 0.324X_1+ 0.284X_2$$

The regression equation model is defined as follows:

- Regression coefficient Brand Awareness(Y) is positive 7.071, this indicates that the values of the other variables must remain constant, then Brand Awareness is 7,071 units.
- Variable regression coefficient. Influencer Marketing (X1) is 0.324, this indicates that for every one-unit changes in the factor Influencer Marketing. At the same time, the value of the other variable remains constant, Brand Awareness will experience an increase or decrease of 0.324 units.
- Variable regression coefficient. Social Media Marketing (X2) is 0.284, this indicates that for every one-unit changes in the factor Social Media Marketing. At the same time, the value of the other variable remains constant, Brand Awareness will experience an increase or decrease of 0.284 units.

Research Hypothesis

t-Evaluation (Partial Test)

The findings of the partial regression analysis or t-statistic evaluation in this investigation are shown in table 7 as follows:

Table 7. t-Evaluation Results (Partial Test)

Model		Coefficientsa		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	7,071	1,925		3,674	.000
	Influencer Marketing	.324	.062	.505	5,262	.000
	Social Media Marketing	.284	.077	.356	3,710	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Awareness

Depend on the table above, the findings of the SPSS model analysis indicate that the significance and impact of the unrelated and related factors are as follows:

- The calculated t value for influencer marketing(X1) is 5.262 with a significance level of 0.000, so the variable influencer marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness. The calculated t value is $5.262 > t_{table} 1.994$, and the significance value is $0.000 < 0.05$.
- The calculated t value for social media marketing(X2) is 3.710 with a significance level of 0.000, so the variable social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness. The calculated t value is $3.710 > t_{table} 1.994$, and the significance value is $0.000 < 0.05$.

F Evaluation (Simultaneous Test)

According on the data below (Table 8), the estimated F-value is 47.597 with a significance level of 0.000. Using a significance level (α) of 5%. Based on the table, $0.000 < 0.05$ is obtained, and $fhitung 47,597 > ftable 3.13$ This shows that there is a simultaneous influence between influencer and digital marketing on brand awareness.

Table 8. F-Evaluation Results (Simultaneous Test)

Model		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	317,102	2	158,551	47,597	.000b
	Residual	223,184	67	3,331		
	Total	540,286	69			

a. Dependent Variable: brand awareness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Influencer Marketing, social media marketing

According on data below, the calculated F value is 47.597 with a significance level of 0.000. Using a significance level (α) of 5%. Based on the table, $0.000 < 0.05$ is obtained, and $fhitung 47,597 > ftable 3.13$ This shows that there is a simultaneous influence between influencer marketing and social media marketing on brand awareness.

Coefficient of Determination

According to the outcomes of the determination coefficient evaluation in Table 9 above, the R-squared value in the regression model was 0.587. This suggests that the unrelated factors employed in this investigation account for 58.7% of the variance in brand awareness. In contrast, the remaining 41.3% is influenced by characteristics that are not included in this regression model.

Table 9. Coefficient of Determination
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.766a	.587	.575	1.82513

a. Predictors: (Constant), X2, X1

Source: SPSS 22 output, processed data2025

Influence influencer marketing to brand awareness

The initial hypothesis suggests that influencer marketing creates a favorable influence on consumer preferences. The preliminary test results yielded a t value of 5.262. The essential t-value in the table is 1.994, which is less than this. Furthermore, the level of significance is 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 criterion. It shows that influencer marketing is influential, positive, and significant towards brand awareness. Research conducted on several MSMEs in the creative industry sector in Medan City found that influencer marketing significantly increases brand awareness. MSMEs that utilize the services of influencers, especially local micro-influencers with high audience engagement, show a clear increase in brand recognition and consumer recall of their business names and products.

The strategies used by influencers, such as authentic storytelling, the use of familiar local language, and attractive visual presentations on social media, effectively attract the attention of the target audience and increase their interest in the brand. Furthermore, the trust placed by the influencer's followers in the recommendations provided also strengthens the positive image of the promoted MSMEs. This study also shows that the frequency and consistency of collaboration with influencers are important factors in maintaining brand presence in the minds of consumers. Overall, influencer marketing has demonstrated itself as an effective and appropriate digital marketing strategy for MSMEs within the creative sector in Medan City, aiding them in establishing and enhancing their brand awareness amidst rising market competition.

The findings of this research are consistent with research conducted by Muzakki and Andarini (2024), who found that influencer marketing had an impact on brand awareness. Kurniati(2023) agrees that influencer marketing has an impact on brand recognition.

Influencing social media marketing to customer preferences

The further theory suggests that digital marketing has a positive impact on customer decisions. The partial test results show that the estimated t value is $5.262 > t$ table 1.994, with an important value of $0.000 < 0.05$. It discovered that digital marketing is effective and beneficial to brand awareness. According to the findings of this investigation, marketing through social media has a favorable and significant impact on the development of brand awareness among the micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the creative industry in Medan. When micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) make active use of social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, they are able to reach a larger audience and develop an emotional connection with their customers. Digital marketing activities, such as consistent content posting, using relevant hashtags, collaborating with influencers, and directly interacting with followers, have been shown to increase visibility and brand recognition. Furthermore, the use of social media allows MSMEs to creatively and visually display brand values, thereby helping strengthen consumer retention of the products or services offered. This study also found that MSMEs with a targeted content strategy and an understanding of local audience characteristics are more successful in building brand awareness than those with unstructured social media usage. Therefore, online marketing is an effective and efficient strategy for creative MSMEs in Medan to increase competitiveness and expand their brand reach in today's digital era. The conclusions of this research are in agreement with the findings of the research carried out by Intan (2024), which demonstrates that digital marketing has an effect on the popularity of brand.

Influence influencer marketing and social media marketing to brand awareness

The third hypothesis proposed is that interior design and digital marketing positively influence buyer preferences. As shown in Table 8, the data obtained from simultaneous tests reveals that the count value is 47.597, with a significant value of 0.000, which is less than the predetermined threshold of 0.05. When it comes to increasing brand recognition, it is possible to draw the conclusion that

influencer marketing and social media marketing are both significant, favorable, and influential platforms. The investigation found that influencer and digital marketing simultaneously contribute to building and increasing brand awareness, particularly among MSMEs in the creative industry sector. Influencer marketing creates impact through an interpersonal approach, where the influencer's credibility and closeness to their followers create a more convincing recommendation effect than conventional advertising.

Meanwhile, social media marketing strengthens brand presence through frequent content exposure, easy access to product information, and two-way interactions that encourage consumer participation. The combination of the two creates a complementary synergy: influencers build emotional appeal and trust, while social media expands the reach and continuity of brand messages. The study also indicates that consumers tend to recognize and remember brands more quickly when they actively promote through these two strategies consistently. In the context of MSMEs, this integrated strategy has been proven to increase brand visibility organically and build stronger relationships between brands and consumers, ultimately strengthening the brand's position amidst increasingly competitive digital markets.

The findings of this investigation are consistent with the research conducted by Ayu Ningrum (2022), it indicates that influencer and marketing through social media platforms concurrently influence the popularity of brands.

CONCLUSION

According to the outcomes of data evaluation and the discussions conducted, this study yields the following three conclusions: 1. Marketing based on influence has a large partial impact on the popularity of brands of MSMEs: a case study in the creative industry sector in Medan City. 2. Digital marketing through digital platforms has a large partial impact on the popularity of brands of MSMEs: a case study in the creative industry sector in Medan City. 3. Marketing based on influence and digital marketing through digital platforms have a significant simultaneous impact on the popularity of brands of MSMEs: a case study in the creative industry sector in Medan City.

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