Affiliate Marketing Strategy to Increase Online Sales

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ABSTRACT
Currently, online sales are experiencing rapid development. This can be seen from several internet sites that offer various goods or products presented to buyers. It is not easy to offer goods online, because conventional sales require various strategies. Therefore, sales that are carried out online must also have a strong strategy from conventional sales. Marketing strategy is very important to do in offering goods or services done online. This research uses a type of analytical descriptive research that aims to understand a phenomenon that will be experienced in the research subject, namely how much influence the Affiliate has in marketing the sellers' products through online sites. The results of this study show that Affiliate Marketing strategies, sales, and consumer behavior have a positive and significant effect on consumer behavior. To increase online sales, marketing strategies are needed, including product quality sales, price influence, the role of brand image, communication with customers, return guarantee.

Keywords: Marketing Strategy, Affiliate, Marketing, Online Sales

INTRODUCTION
Currently, online sales are experiencing rapid development. This can be seen from several internet sites that offer various goods or products to buyers. Indeed, it is not easy to offer goods online, as conventional sales require various strategies. Online buying and selling systems have been widely used in society, especially in the field of e-commerce. The practical and efficient nature of these systems has led many people to switch from conventional trading to online systems (Ramadhayanti, 2021). The proliferation of insights and technology today brings about significant changes in the sales process. Sales processes are facilitated by digitalization, specifically online-based (Brilianita &
Online-based sales require sellers to implement the latest strategies and innovations to attract buyers' interest in purchasing traded goods.

The most appropriate marketing business is affiliate marketing, used to promote websites, products, and provide commissions to boost the economy. Among the various marketing businesses, the most popular is affiliate marketing. Affiliate marketing is a concept commonly used to promote websites, products, and services, where affiliates provide commissions for visitors or customers who come through their efforts (Warsiati et al., 2021). A simple example is when affiliates successfully sell products or services and automatically receive a commission from the sales. In this business, there is a collaboration between two parties without direct involvement, where commissions of up to 7% are obtained for each order generated. By participating in affiliate marketing programs on e-commerce platforms like Lazada, Shopee, Tokopedia, online-based sales can certainly be increased through digital marketing strategies.

Affiliate marketing is a digital marketing method where individuals earn commissions or income when they make sales transactions for products, they promote through affiliate links or share on various platforms (Marquerette & Hamidah, 2023). Essentially, affiliate marketing is a social media marketing strategy where brand owners provide a certain commission to those who promote and successfully sell their products (Windi, 2023). Affiliate marketing is a collaboration to gain profit for both parties in an agreement through advertising products or services (Agustina et al., 2023). Affiliates can earn commissions if their reviews influence consumer purchasing decisions and increase traffic to the website or marketplace, resulting in purchases.

Therefore, online sales must also have strong strategies like conventional sales. One strategy that sellers can implement is marketing products using the services of affiliates together with Affiliate Marketing techniques. The involvement of affiliates in the buying and selling process has a significant influence on the online-based sales process.

METHOD

This research employs descriptive-analytical research, aiming to understand a phenomenon experienced by the research subjects, namely the extent of the influencer's impact in marketing products for sellers through online sites. The research subjects may encompass behaviors, perceptions, motivations, and even actions in the study. The data analysis involves descriptive qualitative analysis and is presented in the form of conclusion points (Sugiyono, 2019). The qualitative data analysis technique in this research comprises three steps. Firstly, data reduction, which involves the process of selection, focus, abstraction, and transformation of raw data from the field. This process aims to sharpen, classify, direct, discard unnecessary elements, and organize the data so that interpretations can be drawn. It is useful to ensure that the data used are accountable. In this study, the steps for data reduction involve assigning codes to the research data and information.

Next is data presentation, which is a structured set of information that allows for drawing conclusions and taking action. In this research, data can be presented in the form of interview quotations relevant to specific themes addressed in the study. The purpose of data presentation is to facilitate reading and drawing conclusions. Furthermore, the conclusions will be verified throughout the research process. The various meanings emerging from the data must always be tested for truth and relevance to ensure data validity. At this stage, the researcher will formulate principles logically related to the data, conduct repeated examinations of all available data, classify the formed data, and formulate propositions. The next step is to report the research results comprehensively (Dawam & Ruski, 2022).

RESULT

Marketing Strategy

Every e-commerce platform employs clever marketing strategies to increase public interest in shopping on their platform, such as running affiliate programs that are trending
nowadays. This strategy also aims to drive traffic to the e-commerce site, resulting in increased revenue for the company from each sale. Digital marketing facilitates sales promotion, such as using social media, which is widely used by marketers as well as online business actors. In conducting digital marketing, companies are required to implement various strategies to attract potential consumers and generate interest in the marketed products. In this regard, ingenuity is needed in efforts to capture consumer attention through promotional activities to achieve the ultimate goal of purchase decisions (Kerin & Musadad, 2022).

Purchase decisions are something that every consumer must go through in choosing various alternative options regarding the products they need or desire (Gabriella, & Hutauruk, 2023). The information obtained by consumers can serve as a benchmark in deciding which product will ultimately be their final decision. The success of a company in influencing consumers in making purchase decisions is supported by the company's efforts to increase promotion, one of which is by utilizing social media for promotion.

In the current era of competitive marketing, the ability to present more competitive products is crucial as a marketing strategy. Through the use of technology and high expertise, manufacturers can produce quality products, but to have a competitive advantage among competitors, it requires various additional initiatives by marketers (Safitri & Sujito, 2012). Marketing communication strategies create an interaction between the company and potential consumers who are the target of marketing. In this case, the company aims for clear and realistic goals for a marketing communication strategy, which is the success of introducing and selling products to consumers, as well as satisfying long-time subscribers (Batra & Keller, 2016).

In traditional marketing, the main essence of marketing is the product. Transactions are still based solely on the necessities of life and what we need. In this situation, communication is not yet very necessary for marketing, except to simply offer products and consumers will determine whether to accept or reject the product. Although the market is still in a simple form, communication is very necessary to ensure that the message intended by the seller (communicator) reaches the prospective consumer (communicant).

The quality of a product offered must match the platform it's offered on, meaning sellers must maintain the quality of the product as promised to the consumers. Products must be consistently maintained in quality to ensure consumer satisfaction. Furthermore, price, which is the amount of money consumers are willing to spend to obtain a product or service marketed. In determining the price, the goal is profit-oriented. The pricing stage aims to seek profit even in the presence of other business competitors; the company remains consistent in determining product prices without disrupting market equilibrium. Another factor to consider in determining prices is consumer characteristics, as they tend to trust the prices set because they have confidence in the product quality and purchase service guarantee.

Price determination requires careful analysis so that prices can be used as a competitive advantage for the company's products. According to Kotler (2009), the price is the amount of money charged for a product. Price plays an important role for companies in winning marketing elements that are flexible, meaning they can change quickly. It can be interpreted that the price is the result of demand and supply activities in the market, and for each price set by the company, the results will differ based on the demand generated.

Brand image is the perception held by customers about a brand depicted through brand associations existing in customers' memory, while customer associations themselves are everything related to the memory of a particular brand. Brand image is one of the important attributes of a product, by providing a brand to a product, it will be more easily recognized by consumers and provide an opportunity to develop a good relationship with consumers, hopefully increasing sales volume and capturing a larger market share.

Marketing communication is carried out as an initial step in an effort to introduce products to consumers and is expected to generate significant profits from the sales efforts carried out (Batra & Keller, 2016). Communication is not only based on spoken words
Acceptable to consumers but also gestures and body language also determine whether consumers will buy the product or not. Ethics or manners become important when delivering marketing communication. These fundamental aspects must be observed and carried out by traders or sellers if their marketing goals are to be successful. Consumer return services are provided because the product does not match what was offered; then the seller can immediately respond and refund the money or replace it with a good product as ordered.

### Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing is a collaborative activity between organizations and companies to profit both parties through agreements in advertising products. Essentially, affiliate marketing connects depicted traffic to facilitate customers to navigate to specific sales websites (Susanto, 2022). Affiliate marketing is a key marketing strategy for e-commerce in increasing Gross Merchandise Value (GMV), which is a benchmark in e-commerce growth (Restyajani et al., 2023). Affiliate Marketing is an effective and efficient solution in promotional steps because it can save offline promotion costs, has a broad marketing reach, and is not time-restricted (Safitri & Sujito, 2012).

This affiliate program has several advantages, such as relatively cheaper capital because they don't need to create products, don't need to think about selling places, so the costs incurred are not much. Meanwhile, the risk of loss is much smaller. There are many costs that we can minimize, so the risk of loss can be reduced (Marquerette & Hamidah, 2023). Meanwhile, for buyers, affiliates are useful so that buyers understand the product better. For example, when an affiliate reviews a product or item using video, buyers or users can learn more details about the product or item they want to buy. From the content created by the affiliate, so buyers can determine whether the product is worth buying or not.

In general, the way affiliate marketing works is almost the same as a broker or intermediary in the offline world, namely how affiliates bring as many visitors as possible to the merchant's website selling products or services (Safitri & Sujito, 2012). When website visitors make purchases of merchant products or services, affiliates will earn commissions from the merchant. The website owner or merchant will know that the visitor came based on the affiliate reference because before marketing the merchant's product, the affiliate will be given a special link or commonly known as an affiliate link or replica web. This affiliate link will inform the system on the merchant's website if there are sales and which affiliate has successfully referred them.

Actually, the form of an affiliate link is not much different from the merchant website link. The difference lies only in the addition of affiliate code behind the website address. For example, www.AffiliateMerchantProduct.com/?id=AffiliateID. This affiliate link is then distributed by affiliates to market products or services sold by the merchant. Affiliate marketing can be used as an online marketing strategy run by two parties aimed at obtaining mutual benefits. This strategy can be carried out through collaboration between companies and influencers such as YouTubers, vloggers, or bloggers (Lady et al., 2023).
Affiliate marketing is a type of marketing where an affiliate promotes products or services from a company and receives a commission if a consumer makes a purchase through their affiliate link.

Online customer reviews are one of the factors that can influence purchase decisions. Online customer reviews, as consumer product evaluations, can be positive or negative depending on the experiences they share. According to Lestari & Maharani (2023), online customer reviews can be considered as experiences that consumers provide regarding the services they receive (Amelia et al., 2021). The experiences that others have had with a product become a source of influence for the purchase decisions of other potential consumers. Positive information about a product will increase the consumer’s seriousness in making a purchase. It’s not uncommon for companies to receive negative reviews from consumers about a product they purchased. It is important for companies to respond to this by evaluating whether the information or opinions expressed in the review are genuine or not (Clare et al., 2018).

In marketing programs using affiliate marketing and online customer reviews, both provide information about a product that can help consumers make purchase decisions. Referring to previous research conducted by which stated that promoting products through TikTok social media (affiliate marketing) and product reviews have a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions (Anugrah, 2023). The results of the marketing strategies carried out can lead consumers to purchase the product. However, with the development of technology, information, and communication today, which facilitates our activities in various fields, consumers can purchase the product through electronic commerce (e-commerce). They do not have to visit a store that sells the product directly to buy it, but they can buy it online or remotely from home using e-commerce.

**Online Sales**

Purchase decisions often occur when consumers see promotions conducted by affiliates and make purchases of the products. Purchase decisions can also occur when consumers see good reviews from other consumers who have experience in purchasing the product. In those studies, it is shown that both affiliate marketing and online customer reviews influence purchase decisions. According to research by Suryahadi et al. (2022), there are several factors influencing the increase in purchasing power of society, one of which is the use of digital marketing, which has the most dominant influence in increasing the purchasing power of society. This is because digital marketing does not only require understanding and knowledge but also the ability to manage and utilize online shopping application services well in order to attract products and product choices, thus maximizing the use of digital marketing (Agustin & Suranto, 2023). With digital marketing, customers can easily obtain information about products they want to purchase through social media.

<table>
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<th>No.</th>
<th>Data Name</th>
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<td>5</td>
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According to projections by Google, Temasek, and Bain & Company in the Economy SEA 2023 report, the gross merchandise value (GMV) of e-commerce in Indonesia this year will reach US$62 billion. This figure grew 7% annually (year-on-year/yoy), slowing down compared to 2022 where the growth rate reached 20% (yoy) (Fietroh, 2021).
Table 2. 5 E-Commerce with the Most Visitors in Indonesia (January-December 2023)

<table>
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<th>No.</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tokopedia</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Lazada</td>
<td>762,400,000</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Blibli</td>
<td>337,400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bukalapak</td>
<td>168,200,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on data from SimilarWeb, Shopee is the leading marketplace e-commerce platform in terms of website visits in Indonesia throughout 2023. During January-December 2023, cumulatively, the Shopee site received approximately 2.3 billion visits, far surpassing its competitors. During the same period, the Tokopedia site received around 1.2 billion visits, and the Lazada site received 762.4 million visits. Meanwhile, the Blibli site received 337.4 million visits, and the Bukalapak site received 168.2 million visits. In addition to winning in terms of quantity, the Shopee site also achieved the highest growth rate in visits. Throughout January-December 2023, the number of visits to the Shopee site recorded an increase of 41.39% (year-to-date/ytd). On the other hand, visits to the Tokopedia site decreased by 21.08% (ytd), Lazada decreased by 46.72% (ytd), and Bukalapak decreased by 56.5% (ytd) (Ahdiat, 2023).

Based on the above, online sales continue to experience significant increases, as evidenced by the large number of visitors to e-commerce sites and the volume of transactions conducted. Affiliate marketing has several advantages for those who are just starting or are just starting to enter the online business. Here are some advantages of affiliate marketing online income programs: Relatively faster. Faster in the sense that you can start now. You don't have to bother creating products first; you just have to market other people's products. Relatively cheaper capital. With affiliate marketing, there are costs that you don't need to incur, such as not having to create a product offering website, not having to think about customer management costs, or other costs. The risk of loss is much smaller. There are many costs that can be minimized, so the risk of loss can be reduced.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it is known that marketing and Affiliate Marketing have a significant influence on online sales volume. To increase online sales, various marketing strategies are needed. First, product quality must be considered to match the offered platform. Second, price determination also has an important impact on sales speed, but must be done without disrupting market balance. Furthermore, the role of brand image is crucial in recognizing products by consumers and building a good relationship. Communication with customers is also an important aspect in introducing products and generating significant profits from sales. Finally, providing return guarantees for customers is an important step in maintaining trust and satisfaction, so sellers must be responsive in addressing complaints and ensuring that refunds or replacements are done properly according to the order.

REFERENCES


