SHORT VIDEO CONTENT STRATEGY TO INCREASE BRAND AWARENESS THROUGH DIGITAL MARKETING ON TIKTOK IN GENERATION Z

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ABSTRACT

The growth of social media platforms, particularly TikTok, has opened up a huge opportunity for brands to increase brand awareness among Generation Z, who have a unique preference for concise and creative visual content. This study aims to explore the effective short video content strategies in increasing brand awareness through digital marketing on TikTok in Generation Z, as well as the role of influencer collaboration and hashtag challenges in supporting these goals. The method used is descriptive qualitative research with data collection through literature studies that include scientific journals, articles, and related industry reports. The results of this study are expected to provide comprehensive insights into the optimization of short video content in digital marketing and strategies to attract Generation Z engagement on TikTok.

Keywords: **Brand Awareness, Tiktok, Generation Z, Short Video Content, Digital Marketing.**

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, there have been many significant changes in various aspects of human life, ranging from the way of communication, work, to shopping. The development of information technology, especially the internet and mobile devices, has changed the world to be more connected, accelerating the exchange of information, introducing many ways to access data instantly (Rolando, 2025; Setiawan & Rolando, 2025; Winata & Rolando, 2025).

These changes also affect the business sector profoundly. Companies are no longer only focusing on traditional marketing, but instead are shifting to digital marketing that is more interactive and directly reaches consumers. TikTok is one of the fastest-growing social media platforms. TikTok was launched by a Chinese tech company in 2016. According to Munsch, TikTok short videos are user-generated content, where users can create and share the content they want into videos published on short video-based platforms with a duration of 10 to 30 seconds (TikTok offers an engaging interactive and visual experience, according to the preferences of Gen Z who are looking for short but interesting entertainment. (Rozaq et al., 2023)

TikTok utilizes a highly advanced algorithm to deliver personalized content on the For You or FYP (For Your Page) page, which is filled with videos that match the user's preferences and habits. The TikTok phenomenon not only attracts the attention of individuals but also attracts the attention of various major brands who want to reach young audiences through interactive and creative digital marketing strategies. TikTok has particular appeal among millennials and Gen Z, which are age groups with high levels of tech adoption and different media consumption habits than previous generations. Both groups tend to be more interested in short, dynamic, and entertaining visual

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content. This makes TikTok a very effective platform to reach and interact with them. Generation Z, who were born between the late 1990s and early 2010s, is a generation that grew up in the midst of rapid technological developments. They are more comfortable consuming visual-based content and are quick to adapt to new trends on social media, so traditional approaches to marketing are often less effective for this group. TikTok caters to Generation Z's need for fast, easy-to-digest entertainment, while also providing an opportunity for brands to communicate in a way that aligns with the interests and values of this generation. Tiktok often uses influencers to judge a brand with a communication style that is easy to understand and blends with the community. The use of influencers is very important in conveying information about a product, because it will be able to bring various benefits to the content posted on social media and the target audience feels that what the influencer conveys is non-commercial, authentic and not controlled by the Company. (KHOIRUNISA, 2022)(Pratiwi et al., 2023)

In the context of digital marketing, brand awareness is one of the main goals that companies want to achieve. Brand awareness is the ability of consumers to recognize or remember a brand, which is the first step in the process of making a purchase decision. TikTok, with its unique characteristics and vast user base, offers a great opportunity for companies to increase their brand awareness. Through creative content, hashtag challenges, and collaborations with influencers, brands can effectively convey their message and build stronger relationships with audiences.(Manurung et al., 2023; Rolando, 2025d, 2025a; Wigayha & Rolando, 2025)Based on this background, this study aims to further explore the strategy of short video content in increasing brand awareness through digital marketing on TikTok in Generation Z. By understanding how an effective short video content strategy can influence brand awareness among Generation Z, as well as identifying key elements such as the role of TikTok's algorithm, collaboration with influencers, and the hashtag challenge, this study is expected to provide comprehensive insights into content optimization in digital marketing for young audiences.

Therefore, this study will answer the following questions:

1. What are the effective short video content strategies in increasing brand awareness through TikTok in Generation Z?
2. What is the role of influencer collaboration and hashtag challenges in the strategy of increasing brand awareness on TikTok?

These questions will be explored using a descriptive qualitative research method, which aims to deeply understand the application of short video content strategies in building brand awareness on TikTok as well as the challenges and opportunities faced by brands in reaching Generation Z through this platform (Rolando, 2024d, 2025f; Wigayha & Rolando, 2024).

1.1 Literature Review

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is the ability of consumers to recognize or remember a brand, which is the first step in the process of making a purchase decision. TikTok, with its unique characteristics and vast user base, offers a great opportunity for companies to increase their brand awareness. Meanwhile, according to, Suryani et al., 2021)Brand Awareness can be defined as the extent to which a brand is considered to have a solid presence in the minds of customers. Through creative content, hashtag challenges, and collaborations with influencers, brands can effectively convey their (Rolando, 2024a; Rolando & Chondro, 2025; Zahran & Rolando, 2025)message and build stronger relationships with audiences. According to Akbarsyah, (Manurung et al., 2023)Brand Awareness has a positive effect on the purchase decision of a product, both goods and services. (Edwar, 2014)High brand awareness has a significant effect on purchasing tendencies, where consumers prefer well-known products over unfamiliar products. Companies increase brand awareness through repeated exposure and emotional associations that can attract audiences (Mulyono & Rolando, 2025; Rolando, 2024c, 2025e).

The importance of having strong brand awareness is the key for companies to excel in business competition. The reason is, consumers tend to choose products or services from brands they know and this is what makes sales increase. But in fact, sometimes consumers are also more interested in brands or product brands that have just appeared. They tend to switch brands out of curiosity and want to compare quality and quantity. Therefore, awareness of a brand plays an important role in consumer purchasing decisions. In this case, consumers believe that a brand that has a positive image is a guarantee of product quality. Consumers will always buy products to meet their needs but which products they buy and how they make decisions will be closely related to how they feel about the brands offered.(Edwar, 2014)

TikTok

TikTok is designed to increase user engagement with algorithms that support short and engaging videos, making it a valuable platform for brand awareness campaigns targeting Generation Z. TikTok's algorithm promotes content based on viewership history and user engagement patterns, which increases the likelihood of brand content reaching a wide audience. Over time, TikTok has evolved into a major platform in pop culture, which is not only for entertainment but also for activism, education, and marketing. Many brands and artists are using TikTok to promote their products, create music trends, and connect with younger generations, especially Gen Z. Despite facing challenges related to data privacy and regulations in some countries, TikTok continues to innovate, including adding shopping features, collaborations with brands, and augmented reality technology to improve the user experience.
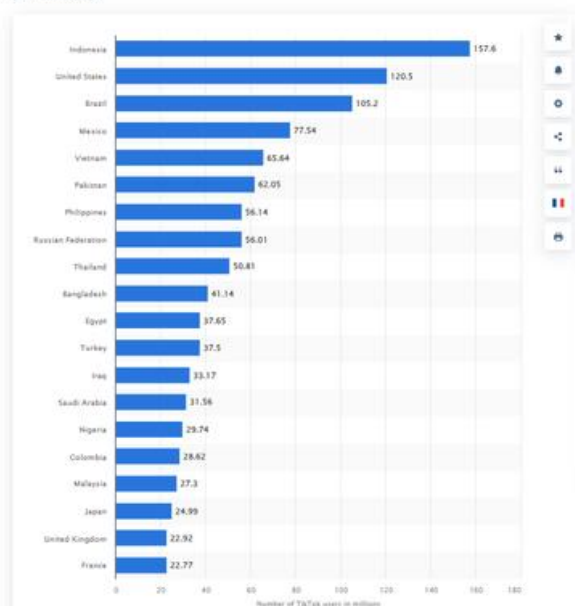

Figure 1. TikTok user data 2024

The number of TikTok users in Indonesia reached 157.6 million as of July 2024, based on a report titled "Countries with the largest TikTok audience as of July 2024" released by research firm Statista in August 2024. This figure makes Indonesia the country with the largest number of TikTok users in the world, surpassing the United States which has 120.5 million users. In April 2023, Statista recorded the number of TikTok users in Indonesia as many as 113 million, below the United States which has 117 million users. However, within one year, the number of TikTok users in Indonesia increased rapidly to reach 157.6 million in July 2024. The growth of TikTok users in Indonesia has shown a significant trend in the last six years. In July 2018, ByteDance's SVP, Zhen Liu, reported that the number of monthly active TikTok users in Indonesia had only reached 10 million. This figure

has jumped more than 15 times to reach 157.6 million users by July 2024, reflecting the rapid development of the TikTok community in Indonesia (Rolando, 2023, 2024b).

Retail marketers with marketing strategies using mobile phones are now starting to include content generated by TikTok users. According to O'Hern (2013) User Generated Content is an original contribution made by a user, expressed in a number of different media (such as physical objects, sound recordings, computer code, and graphic design), and widely shared with other users and/or with companies. TikTok users are motivated to enjoy entertainment, spend time and escape while also archiving, social interaction, and community building motivate users to participate on TikTok.(Lawrence, 2020)

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing can be defined as the exploitation of digital technology, which is used to create channels to reach potential recipients, to achieve corporate goals, through more effective fulfillment of consumer needs. Digital marketing is quite often considered a synonym for Internet marketing or e-marketing. According to him, digital marketing is a targeted, measurable, and interactive marketing process of goods or services using digital technology to reach and convert prospects into customers and preserve them. Its main goal is to promote brands, form preferences, and increase sales through several digital marketing techniques. He emphasized measurable and interactive targets and converting potential consumers into loyal customers. Digital marketing is an activity of selling or introducing products to the public using social media, which aims to attract customers.(Sahata Sitanggang et al., 2024)(Dania Todor, 2016)(Astuti Tarigan et al., 2024)The main types of digital marketing include several complementary approaches. SEO, for example, focuses on increasing a website's visibility in organic search results so that it is easier for users to find. Meanwhile, Pay-Per-Click (PPC) is a paid advertising strategy where advertisers only pay when a user clicks on the ad. Content marketing is also an important element by providing valuable information to the audience, such as articles, videos, or infographics, that can attract and retain consumer interest.

In addition, social media marketing and email marketing also play a significant role. Social media marketing leverages platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok to build relationships with audiences and increase brand awareness, while email marketing maintains a more personal relationship with customers through direct communication that contains promotions, information, or the latest content. Affiliate marketing, in which companies work with third parties to promote their products or services and provide commissions on sales or visits generated, is also becoming a popular strategy. In its development, digital marketing is getting more sophisticated with the support of artificial intelligence (AI) and data analysis that allows for content personalization at scale. This technology allows companies to create a more personalized experience for users and increase conversions significantly.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore understanding related to the application of short video content strategies in increasing brand awareness through digital marketing on TikTok for Generation Z. Not aiming to test causality relationships quantitatively, this study emphasizes more on the description of the phenomenon that occurs. Qualitative research is research that intends to understand the phenomena of what the research subject experiences e.g. behavior, perception, motivation, action, etc., holistically, and by way of description in the form of words and language, in a specific natural context and by utilizing various natural methods. This method allows research to gain in-depth insights into the application of short video content strategies and Generation Z's perception of content (Moleong, 2014)

Data collection was carried out through literature studies that included analysis of books, journals, articles, industry reports, and other sources relevant to digital marketing topics, brand

awareness, and Generation Z behavior on the TikTok platform. This method was chosen because the literature study provides a solid theoretical foundation for understanding the problem being researched. In this study, the literature search process includes several important references, including:

1. Scientific Journal: Analyzes previous research that discusses the strategy of short video content in digital media, especially TikTok, and its impact on increasing brand awareness.
2. Books and Articles: Collecting theories regarding digital marketing, social media user behavior, and content strategies tailored to the characteristics of Generation Z.

This literature search is expected to be able to provide a broad and comprehensive understanding of how short video content strategies on TikTok can affect brand awareness among Generation Z.

The data analysis method used is qualitative thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is often used to find patterns or themes in qualitative data that focus on the interpretation of the data through coding and identification of key themes.(Christou, 2023)

The stages of analysis in this study include several main steps, namely:

1. Recognizing Data: The researcher conducted a thorough reading of the collected data, especially references related to the use of TikTok in increasing brand awareness. This step aims to understand the context and nuances contained in the initial data.
2. Initial Coding: After reading, the coding process is carried out to group the data according to the themes that appear, such as "short video content strategy", "digital marketing", "brand awareness", "TikTok". This coding serves as a foundation in identifying significant patterns.
3. Search and Categorization of Key Themes: At this stage, the researcher identifies and group themes relevant to the content marketing strategy on TikTok. For example, themes such as "short video content innovation" and "influence on Generation Z" can help understand the relevance of content to the target audience.

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4. Definition and Theme Sharpening: After the theme is found, the researcher sharpens and defines the theme in more detail so that the findings obtained are more structured and easy to understand.
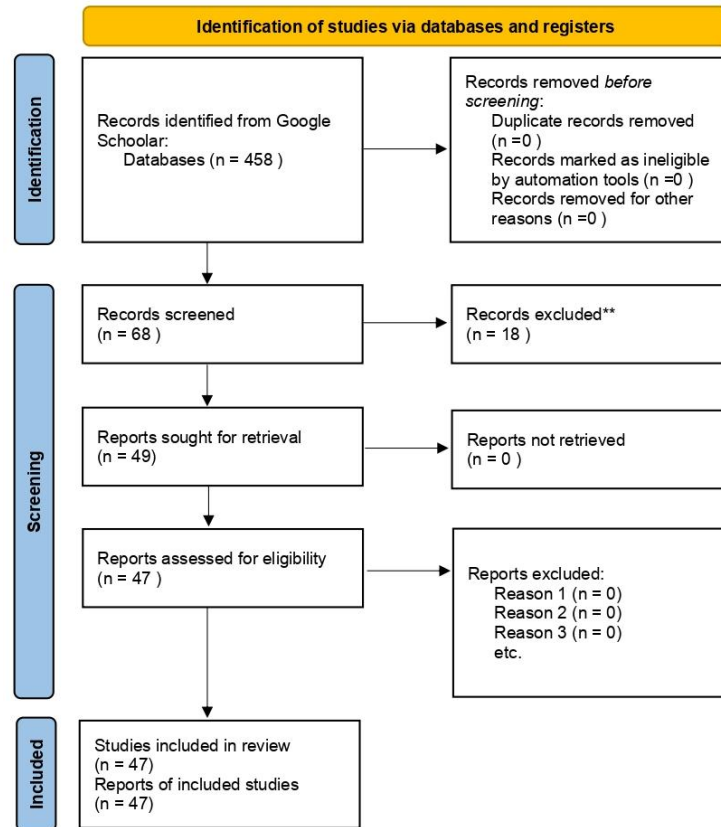

Figure 2. PRISMA flowchart from this study

The results of this literature search were carried out through Google Scholar, with a total of 458 records successfully identified. After the identification process, no records are deleted due to duplication, ineligibility by automated tools, or any other reason. Furthermore, 68 records were manually screened to assess relevance to the research topic. Of these, 18 records were issued because they did not meet the inclusion criteria. A total of 49 reports were processed for retrieval, and all reports were successfully retrieved without any problems. At the feasibility assessment stage, 47 reports were evaluated in depth and all met the criteria for inclusion in the systematic review. Thus, the study included 47 relevant studies for further analysis. This process demonstrates a systematic approach to identifying, screening and evaluating the literature to ensure only relevant studies are included in the review. With this approach, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of how brands are leveraging short video content to increase brand awareness on the TikTok platform, especially in reaching Generation Z.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to further explore the strategy of short video content in increasing brand awareness through digital marketing on TikTok in Generation Z. Based on the data collected, the following are the results and discussion of this study which is associated with 2 questions:

1. What are the effective short video content strategies in increasing brand awareness through TikTok in Generation Z?

TikTok's effective short video content strategy to increase brand awareness among Generation Z focuses on an authentic, creative, and trend-oriented approach. Generation Z tends to be more interested in visual content that is short, dynamic, and has a strong emotional appeal. Therefore, a successful strategy involves elements such as concise and memorable storytelling, the use of trending music, and strong visual elements to grab attention in the first few seconds. TikTok also supports personalized and spontaneous content, so brands need to create videos that are not too formal, but still communicate the brand message effectively.

Additionally, TikTok's algorithm based on user interaction history ensures that content relevant to the audience's interests has a greater chance of being included in the For You Page (FYP), which increases brand exposure. In this case, the success of a short video is measured by the number of engagements (e.g., likes, comments, and shares), as well as the ability of the content to be remembered by the audience. This algorithm allows brands to reach the right audience, without even having to have a large following in the beginning. In other words, videos that are creative and relevant to pop culture have greater viral potential, helping to strengthen brand awareness among Gen Z.

2. What is the role of influencer collaboration and hashtag challenges in brand awareness promotion strategies on TikTok?

Collaboration with influencers and the use of hashtag challenges are important strategies in increasing brand awareness on TikTok. Influencers on TikTok have a huge influence on Generation Z because they are considered more authentic and relatable. Brands that work with relevant influencers can tap into existing audiences, which then help increase brand visibility and credibility. Content promoted by influencers is easier to attract attention and get interaction from their followers, especially when the influencer is known to have styles and preferences that match the brand they represent.

Hashtag challenges are also a key element in marketing strategies on TikTok. Through this challenge, users are encouraged to recreate or participate in an activity by using a specific hashtag, which can create a viral effect. Challenges like these allow users to interact directly with brands, expand the reach of campaigns, and drive user engagement. When many TikTok users take up the challenge, TikTok's algorithm tends to increase the hashtag's visibility on FYP, which ultimately increases brand awareness among a wider audience.

By effectively leveraging influencer collaborations and hashtag challenges, brands can build stronger engagement with Generation Z and strengthen brand image more broadly and effectively on the TikTok platform.

4. CONCLUSION

This study explores the strategy of short video content in increasing brand awareness on TikTok in Generation Z, as well as the role of influencer collaboration and hashtag challenges in supporting this goal. The results show that creative, authentic, and trend-appropriate short video content has high potential to effectively increase brand awareness. The use of TikTok's algorithm that displays content according to user preferences on For You Page (FYP) further expands the brand's reach, allowing for viral content and broad interactions.

Collaborations with influencers, especially those with values and styles that align with the brand, have been proven to strengthen the brand's credibility and connectedness with Generation Z. Additionally, hashtag challenges allow users to actively participate in campaigns, creating deeper engagement and wider reach, which ultimately increases brand awareness. Overall, the short video content strategy on TikTok offers an effective way to reach Generation Z audiences with relevant and compelling brand messages. By combining engaging content, influencer collaboration, and

hashtag challenges, brands can build a strong and sustainable presence on TikTok, increasing brand awareness and loyalty among young users.

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