

Micro-Affiliate Persuasion Strategies in Banjar Cultural Communication within TikTok Affiliate Ecosystem in South Kalimantan

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

TikTok Affiliate; micro-affiliate; persuasion strategy; cultural communication; Banjar; influencer marketing

The development of the creator economy on social media has given rise to new digital marketing practices through the TikTok Affiliate program, where creators act as intermediaries for product promotion while earning commissions from sales. In practice, micro-affiliates rely not only on commercial promotional strategies but also utilize personal, cultural, and affective communication approaches to build rapport with their audiences. This study aims to analyze how micro-affiliate persuasion strategies are constructed within Banjar cultural communication within the TikTok Affiliate ecosystem in South Kalimantan. This study used a qualitative approach with content analysis of TikTok video content produced by five micro-affiliate creators actively promoting skincare products. Data were collected through observation of video content, digital documentation, and categorization of communication elements that emerged within the content, such as narrative form, use of local language, visual representation of the body, affective performance, and purchase strategies. The results indicate that the persuasive strategies used by micro-affiliates are formed through three main patterns. First, relational persuasion, manifested through narratives of personal experiences and the use of Banjarese language to create cultural rapport with the audience. Second, demonstrative persuasion, which involves using the creator's body as a visual medium to demonstrate the use and effectiveness of skincare products. Third, implicit economic persuasion, which displays pricing information or promotions without a direct call to purchase. The findings of this study indicate that micro-affiliates function not only as digital marketing agents but also as mediators of cultural communication, connecting digital consumption practices with local identities. Thus, TikTok Affiliate practices are not merely platform economic activities but also a communication process involving the production of cultural meaning within the social media space.

1. Introduction

The development of social media over the past decade has simultaneously reconfigured communication practices and economic activity. Digital platforms are no longer simply spaces for message exchange but also function as infrastructure for value production through content-based monetization mechanisms. TikTok, one of the short-form video platforms, demonstrates this transformation through its TikTok Affiliate system, which allows creators to earn commissions from transactions occurring through the product links they share. This phenomenon demonstrates a shift in the role of users from mere consumers of information to digital economic actors within the platform ecosystem (Srnicsek, 2017).

In this context, micro-affiliates—creators with relatively small followings—play a crucial role in product distribution, particularly in the beauty and skincare categories. Unlike macro influencers, micro-affiliates tend to build more personal and intimate relationships with their audiences. These relationships often resemble parasocial relationships, which are pseudo connections that feel close and intimate despite occurring in a mediated space (Horton & Wohl, 1956). In TikTok's environment, which prioritizes spontaneity and affective expression, this closeness is a key asset in building audience trust.

From a persuasive communication perspective, affiliate marketing practices can be understood as a form of communication designed to influence audience attitudes and behavior. Common strategies include scarcity appeals, value framing, and the use of personal testimonials, which are recognized in persuasion literature as techniques for increasing message credibility and urgency (Cialdini, 2009). In the context of social media, persuasion is no longer one-way, as in conventional advertising, but rather takes place in a dialogic and informal format that strengthens perceptions of authenticity (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

However, persuasive practices in the digital space cannot be separated from the cultural context in which they occur. Within the framework of cultural communication, messages are always constructed through systems of meaning that exist within a particular community (Hall, 1997). Language, symbols, and cultural expressions are not simply tools for conveying messages but also mechanisms for producing meaning and social identity. In the local context of Banjarmasin, the use of the Banjar language in TikTok Affiliate content represents cultural identity, strengthening a sense of community between creators and audiences.

Local languages serve as markers of social membership that build symbolic legitimacy. From a symbolic interactionist perspective, meaning is not inherently inherent in a message but is constructed through social interaction (Blumer, 1969). When micro-affiliates use phrases like "harum banar" or "kada rugi," the promotional message not only conveys product information but also activates a collective meaning system shared by the Banjar community. This process strengthens the effectiveness of persuasion because the audience feels they belong to the same social sphere as the creator.

Furthermore, in the context of digital media, affect plays a crucial role in the communication process. Papacharissi (2015) emphasizes that social media platforms operate through affective dynamics, where emotion and intimacy become part of the circulation of content. In the practice of TikTok Affiliate, emotional expression, relaxed speaking style, and local humor serve to reinforce persuasive messages. Affection does not stand apart from economic rationality but rather serves as a medium that facilitates consumption decisions in a format that feels natural and non-coercive.

Several previous studies on TikTok Affiliate have focused primarily on marketing effectiveness and consumer behavior. Meanwhile, studies integrating persuasive communication and cultural communication perspectives within a local context are relatively limited. However, as Couldry and Hepp (2017) emphasize, communication practices in a digitalized society always involve a process of constructing meaning tied to specific social and cultural contexts. Therefore, understanding affiliate marketing practices in Banjarmasin is not sufficient through the lens of digital marketing alone; it also requires an analysis of the accompanying local cultural dynamics. The globalization of platforms like TikTok does not necessarily erase local identities but rather opens new spaces for cultural expression in digital formats. Micro-affiliates in Banjarmasin utilize this global infrastructure to build communication rooted in local languages and symbols. The interaction between global platform logic and cultural communication practices shapes the construction of persuasive strategies within the TikTok Affiliate ecosystem. Based on this description, this study aims to analyze how micro-affiliate persuasive strategies are constructed within Banjarese cultural communication within the TikTok Affiliate ecosystem in Banjarmasin. This research not only identifies the persuasive techniques used but also explains how local cultural language and symbols function in building closeness, trust, and promotional effectiveness. Thus, this study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of persuasive communication studies in digital media while enriching the literature on cultural communication in the context of the platform economy.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a content analysis method to understand the persuasive strategies used by micro-affiliates in promoting skincare products on the TikTok platform. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to interpret the meaning, communication patterns, and message delivery strategies that emerge in digital content produced by creators.

Content analysis is used to identify and categorize communication elements that appear in video content, such as narrative form, communication style, use of local language, and how creators' direct audiences towards purchasing decisions. According to Krippendorff (2018), content analysis is a research method used to systematically and interpretively examine communication messages in various media forms.

In the context of this study, content analysis is used to understand how micro-affiliates construct persuasive strategies through a combination of personal experiences, visual representations of the body, and communication of local culture within the TikTok Affiliate ecosystem.

The object of this research is skincare product promotional content produced by micro-affiliate creators on the TikTok platform. This research focuses on creators who actively promote products through the TikTok Affiliate feature and are characterized as micro-creators with a relatively small following, but who actively interact with their audiences.

The unit of analysis in this study is the skincare promotional content videos uploaded by micro-affiliate creators. Each video is analyzed based on the communication elements present in the content, including narrative, language used, visual expression, and purchase promotion strategies.

The sample selection in this study used a purposive sampling technique, which involves deliberately selecting samples based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Patton, 2015).

The criteria for creators selected in this study included:

1. They actively produce TikTok content promoting skincare products.
2. They utilize the TikTok Affiliate feature, indicated by the presence of a product cart within their content.
3. They fall into the micro-affiliate category with a relatively small number of followers.
4. They have actively uploaded content within the last three months.
5. They use the Banjar language or demonstrate a close relationship with the local cultural context of South Kalimantan.

Based on these criteria, this study selected five micro-affiliate creators as research subjects. From each creator, several video content pieces were selected that represent communication patterns in skincare product promotion.

Research data was collected through non-participant observation of TikTok video content uploaded by the micro-affiliate creators who served as research subjects. Observations were conducted by directly observing the video content, the creators' narratives, and the visual elements appearing in the content.

In addition, researchers also conducted digital documentation by taking screenshots of videos, creator profiles, and information related to viewership, audience interaction, and affiliate features featured in the content.

The analysis process was conducted systematically through data categorization and interpretation, allowing the research results to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the communication strategies used by micro-affiliates within the TikTok Affiliate ecosystem.

3. Result and Discussion

This study analyzed skincare promotional content produced by five micro-affiliate creators on the TikTok platform. The five creators were selected based on specific criteria: actively producing skincare promotional content, utilizing the TikTok Affiliate feature, and demonstrating a close connection to the cultural context of South Kalimantan.

Table 1. Research Creator Profile

Creator Code	Creator Name	TikTok Account	Content Category	Character Content	Content Language	Dominant Product Content
K1	Cancergirl	@xxem____	Beauty & Skincare Review	Product usage experience narrative	Banjar & Indonesia	Skincare
K2	Fiahawaina	@fiahawaina	Beauty Content	Demonstration of using skincare products	Indonesia	Skincare
K3	Jannah'r	@Irrhaaa	Beauty & Lifestyle	Storytelling experiences and product reviews	Banjar & Indonesia	Skincare
K4	Acil Ratu Glowing Alami	@ratubanjar96	Skincare Review	Product usage testimonials and personal experiences	Banjar & Indonesia	Skincare
K5	Toko Ratnasari	@nhai1612	Beauty & Product Review	Product reviews and promotional and purchasing information	Indonesia	Skincare

The five creators analyzed in this study are micro-affiliates on the TikTok platform who actively produce promotional content for skincare products through the TikTok Affiliate feature. These creators were selected using a purposive sampling technique, considering several criteria: actively producing promotional content for skincare products, using the affiliate cart feature, and demonstrating a close relationship with the South Kalimantan region.

Some of the creators in this study also use the Banjar language in their content. This use of local language is a form of cultural communication that strengthens the closeness between creators and audiences from similar social and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the content produced by these creators exhibits a variety of communication strategies, ranging from narratives of personal experiences, product demonstrations, storytelling, to information-based product promotions.

To understand the communication patterns used by these creators, this study conducted a content analysis of several videos from each creator. Elements analyzed included content type, persuasive strategies, use of local language, affective performance, and forms of purchase invitations.

Table 2. Content Creator Analysis Coding

Kreator	Video	Jenis Konten	Strategi Persuasi	Bahasa	Representasi Visual	Afeksi/Kedekatan	Call to Action
K1	V1	Review skincare	Narasi pengalaman pribadi	Banjar	Demonstrasi wajah	High	Keranjang affiliate
K1	V2	Testimoni produk	Storytelling pengalaman	Banjar	Close-up produk	High	Implisit
K1	V3	Review produk	Persuasi relasional	Banjar	Penggunaan produk	High	Keranjang
K1	V4	Beauty tips	Narasi keseharian	Banjar	Demonstrasi wajah	High	Implisit
K2	V1	Tutorial skincare	Demonstrasi produk	Indonesia	Penggunaan produk	Medium	Keranjang
K2	V2	Review produk	Demonstrasi visual	Indonesia	Close-up produk	Medium	Keranjang
K2	V3	Beauty review	Informasi produk	Indonesia	Demonstrasi wajah	Medium	Implisit
K2	V4	Skincare routine	Demonstrasi	Indonesia	Penggunaan produk	Medium	Keranjang
K3	V1	Beauty review	Storytelling pengalaman	Banjar	Demonstrasi wajah	High	Keranjang
K3	V2	Storytelling	Soft selling	Banjar	Narasi keseharian	High	Implisit
K3	V3	Review produk	Persuasi relasional	Banjar	Demonstrasi produk	High	Keranjang
K3	V4	Konten hiburan	Humor + promosi	Banjar	Narasi visual	High	Implisit
K4	V1	Testimoni skincare	Narasi pengalaman	Banjar	Demonstrasi wajah	High	Keranjang
K4	V2	Review produk	Relational persuasion	Banjar	Penggunaan produk	High	Implisit
K4	V3	Storytelling	Pengalaman pribadi	Banjar	Demonstrasi produk	High	Keranjang
K4	V4	Beauty tips	Narasi keseharian	Banjar	Demonstrasi wajah	High	Implisit
K5	V1	Review produk	Informasi produk	Indonesia	Close-up produk	Medium	Keranjang
K5	V2	Promo produk	Persuasi ekonomi	Indonesia	Demonstrasi produk	Medium	Keranjang
K5	V3	Beauty review	Informasi + pengalaman	Indonesia	Demonstrasi wajah	Medium	Implisit
K5	V4	Promo skincare	Persuasi ekonomi	Indonesia	Close-up produk	Medium	Keranjang

The coding results show that the communication strategies used by creators not only focus on product promotion, but also combine personal narratives, affective performance, and the use of local languages to build closeness with the audience.

3.1 Presenting the Results

Creator 1 (K1) – Cancergirl (@xxem____)

An analysis of the content produced by the first creator shows that their communication strategy is dominated by narratives about personal experiences in using skincare products. In several videos analyzed, the creator not only shows the promoted product but also shares personal experiences after

using it. The narrative tends to take the form of light storytelling, linking product use to the creator's daily experiences.

The language used in K1's content is primarily Banjarese mixed with Indonesian, creating a more intimate and relatable communication experience for the local audience. The use of Banjarese not only serves as a communication tool but also as part of their cultural identity, strengthening the closeness between the creator and their followers.

In terms of visual representation, K1's content often features demonstrations of product use on the face, allowing the audience to directly see the product's texture and application. This approach strengthens the credibility of the promotional message because the product is not only explained verbally but also visually demonstrated. Furthermore, the level of affection in K1's content is high.

This is evident in their relaxed communication style, expressive facial expressions, and use of intonation resembling everyday conversation. Purchase calls are usually not explicitly conveyed, but rather through the presence of an affiliate cart in the video or through brief mentions of where to purchase the product.

Creator K1 exhibits a communication pattern dominated by narratives of personal experiences in using skincare products. In several videos analyzed, creators recount personal experiences after using a particular product and explain the benefits they experienced. Their communication style tends to be relaxed and uses everyday language. In some content, creators also use Banjarese, strengthening cultural closeness with the local audience.

This strategy reflects a form of relational persuasion, which seeks to build an emotional connection between creators and audiences through personal experiences. This approach makes promotional content feel more authentic and less like formal advertising. Furthermore, the affective performance displayed through facial expressions and vocal intonation creates a personal and intimate impression.

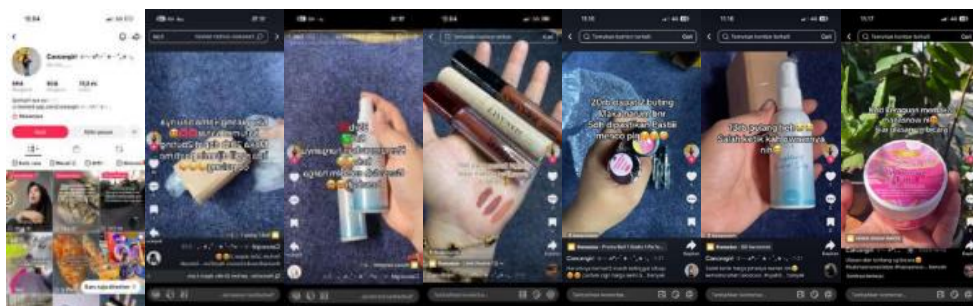


Figure 1 Creator 1 (K1): Cancergirl (@xxem___)

Creator 2 (K2) – Fiahawaina (@fiahawaina)

The content produced by the second creator demonstrates a communication pattern that emphasizes visual demonstrations of skincare product use. In several videos analyzed, the creator directly demonstrates the process of applying the product to the face, allowing viewers to see the product's texture, application method, and the results.

Unlike K1, which frequently uses Banjarese, K2's content primarily uses Indonesian, with a communication style that remains relaxed and easy for viewers to understand. The message conveyed in this content tends to be more informative, focusing on explaining the product's benefits and how to use it.

Visual representation in K2's content is also quite dominant, particularly through the use of close-ups of faces and products. This visual technique allows the product to be more clearly visible in the video, thereby capturing the audience's attention and reinforcing the promotional message.

The level of affection displayed in K2's content is moderate. The creator maintains a friendly and communicative expression, but the communication approach focuses more on conveying product

information than on personal storytelling. Invitations to purchase are usually made by mentioning the product basket or affiliate features available in the video.

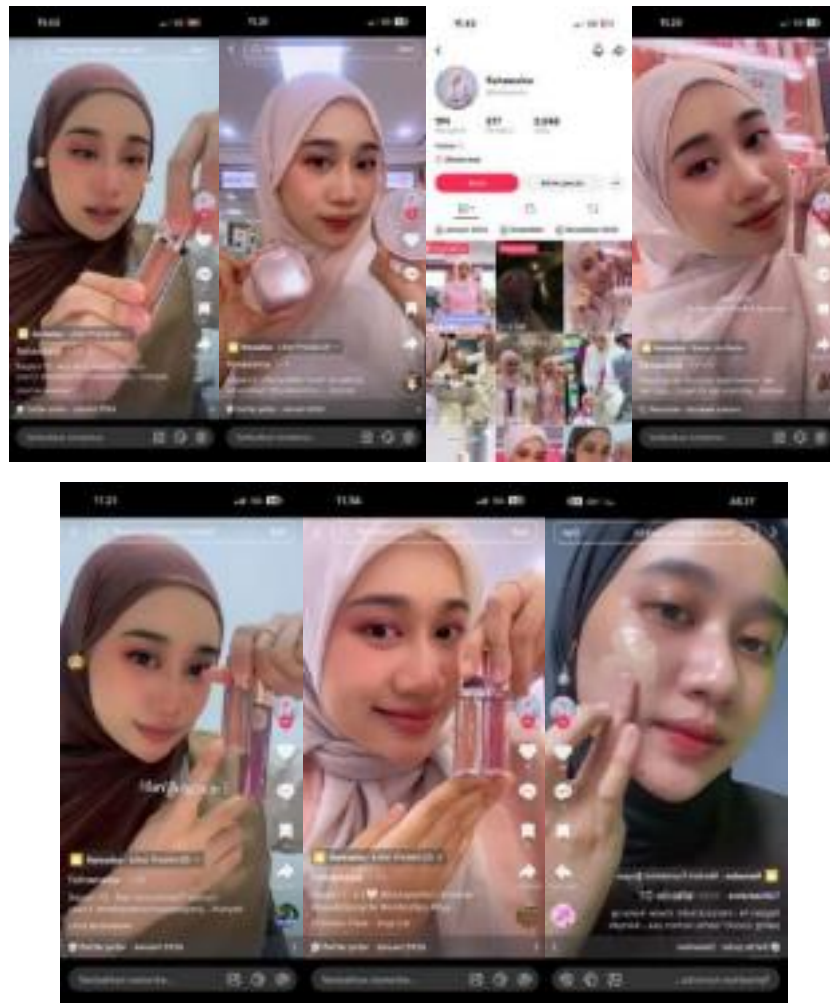


Figure 2 Creator 2 (K2): Fiahawaina (@fiahawaina)

Creator 3 (K3) – Jannah'r (@Irjhaaa)

The content produced by the third creator demonstrates a combination of personal storytelling and entertainment elements in conveying promotional messages. In several videos analyzed, the creators share lighthearted stories about their experiences using skincare products before introducing the products being promoted.

This approach creates a more subtle form of promotion, or soft selling, where the commercial message is not delivered directly but rather becomes part of the content's storyline. This way, the product promotion feels more natural and less like a formal advertisement.

The use of Banjarese in several parts of the video also strengthens the cultural closeness between the creator and the audience. The local language is used in casual conversation and in certain emotional expressions, making the content feel more authentic to audiences from the same region.

Visually, K3's content still clearly displays the products through demonstrations of use or product photography. However, the content's primary focus is on the narrative of the experience and emotional interaction with the audience. This is reflected in the high level of affection in the way the creators speak and interact with the camera.

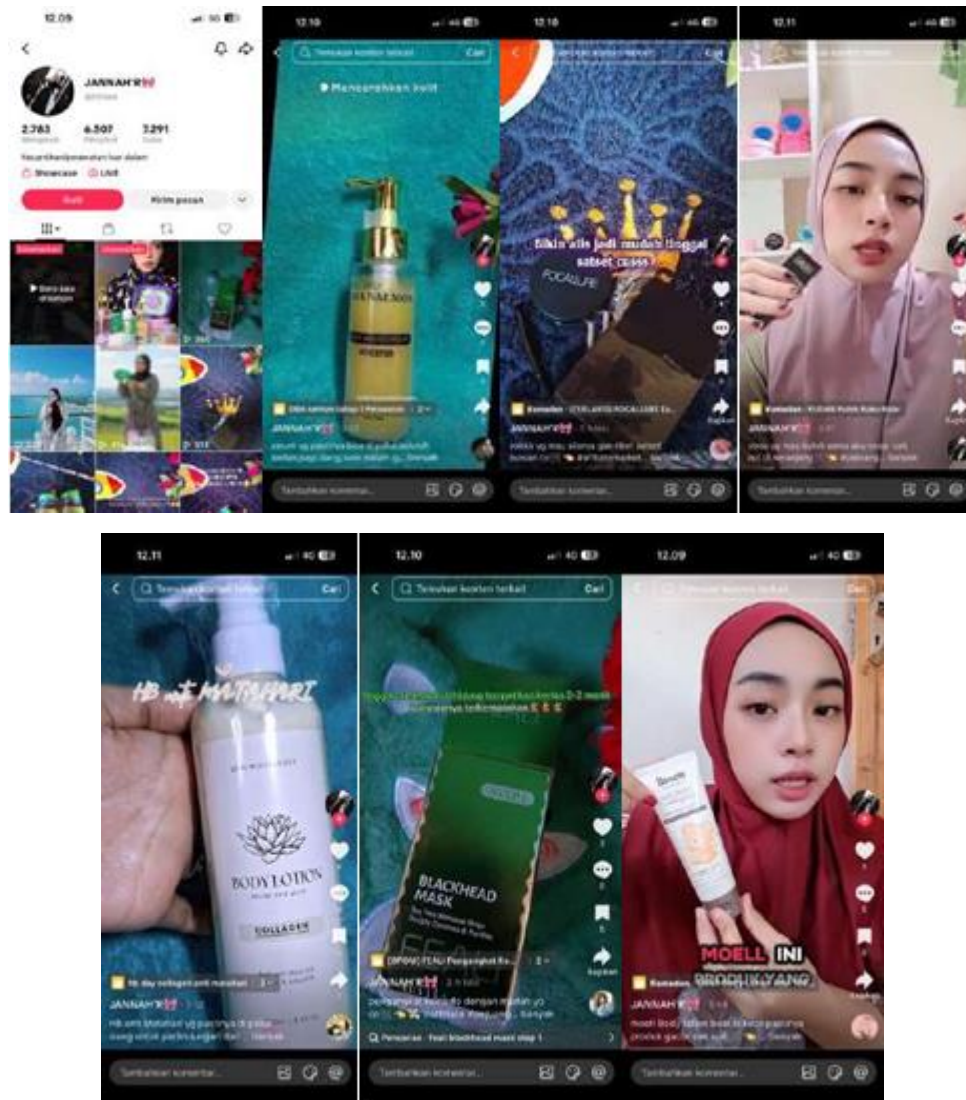


Figure 3 Creator 3 (K3): Jannah'r (@Irjhaaa)

Creator 4 (K4) – Acil Ratu || Glowing Alami (@ratubanjar96)

The fourth creator demonstrates a communication pattern that strongly emphasizes emotional connection with the audience through personal experiences in using skincare products. In several of the content analyzed, the creator shares personal experiences related to skin conditions and the process of using the products being promoted.

The language used in K4's content is primarily Banjarese mixed with Indonesian, creating a very local and personal feel. The communication style also resembles everyday conversation with friends or relatives, making the content feel more natural and less formal.

The visual representation in K4's content also features demonstrations of product use on the face, serving as visual evidence of the product's use experience. This approach reinforces the promotional message because the audience can directly see how the product is used.

The level of affection in K4's content is very high. The creator often displays strong emotional expressions, such as enthusiasm or satisfaction with the product being used. Calls to purchase are usually conveyed indirectly through the presence of an affiliate cart or by mentioning the product's benefits that the audience can gain.

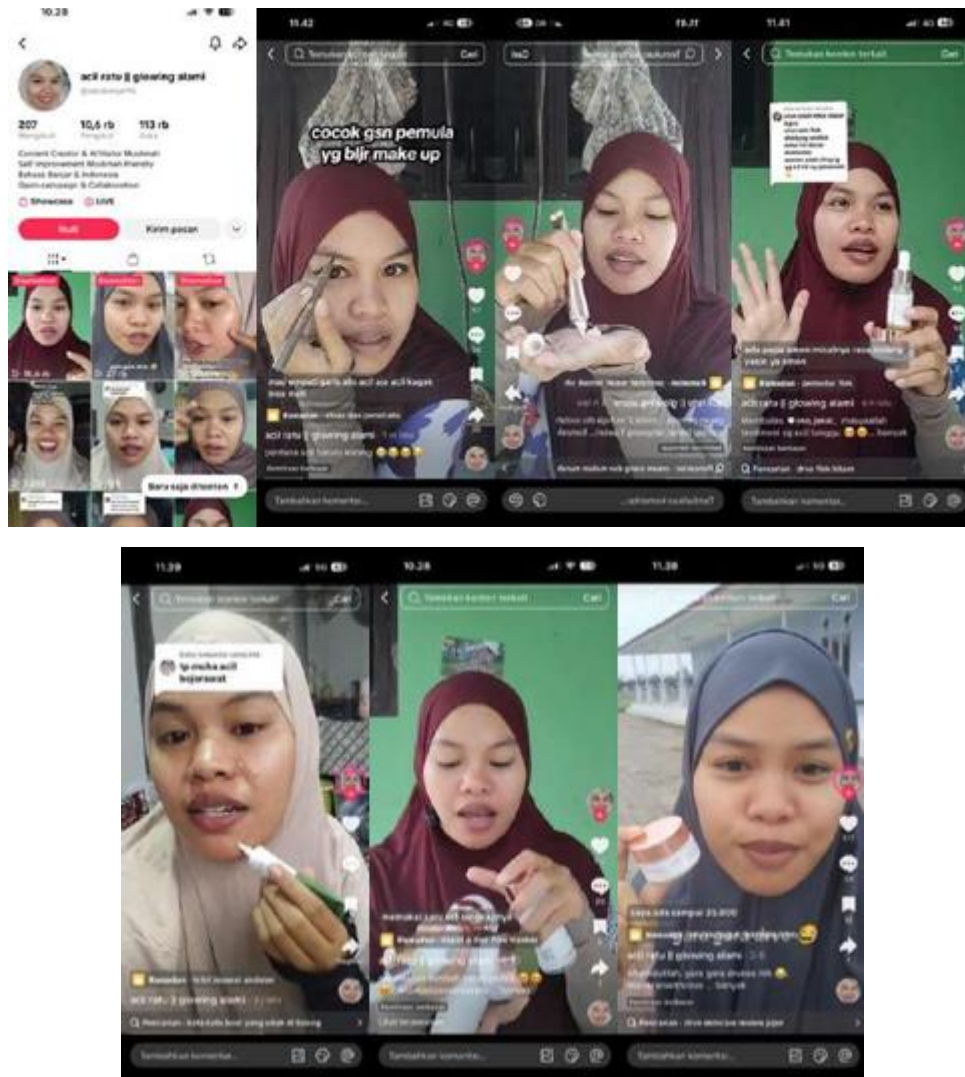


Figure 4 Creator 4 (K4): Acil Ratu || Glowing Alami (@ratubanj96)

Creator 5 (K5) – Toko Ratnasari (@nhai1612)

The content produced by the fifth creator exhibits a slightly different communication pattern compared to the other creators. In several videos analyzed, the content focuses more on conveying product information and promotional aspects such as pricing or special promotions.

The language used in K5's content is primarily Indonesian, with a fairly direct communication style in explaining the products being promoted. Unlike other creators who often use personal storytelling, K5's content emphasizes product information that can help the audience understand the product's function and benefits.

The visual representation in K5's content still clearly displays the product through close-ups and demonstrations of use. However, the content primarily focuses on informative aspects rather than narratives of personal experiences.

The level of affection displayed in this content is moderate. The creator maintains a friendly and communicative expression, but the communication approach is more oriented towards product promotion. Invitations to purchase are usually conveyed through mentions of affiliate carts or promotional information available in the video.

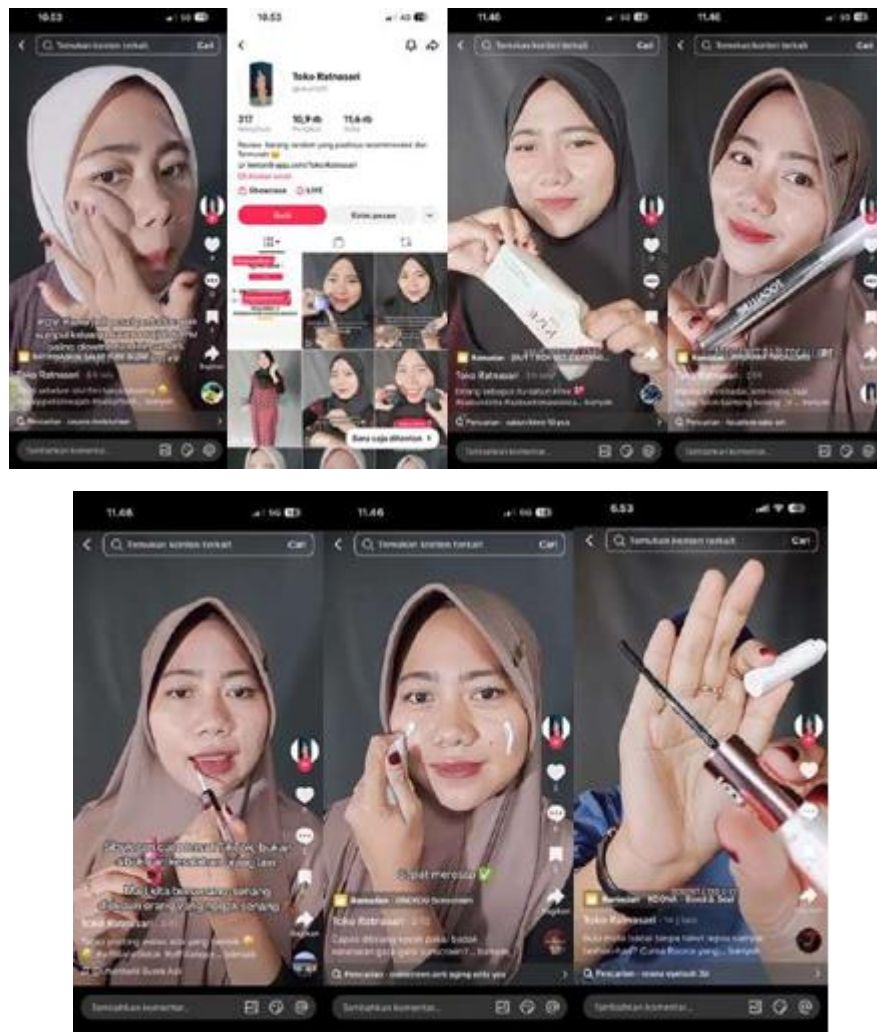


Figure 5 Creator 5 (K5): Toko Ratnasari (@nhai1612)

Comparison of Persuasion Strategies Between Creators (K1–K5)

A comparative analysis reveals that the five creators in this study exhibited varying communication strategies in promoting skincare products through TikTok Affiliate. Although all creators fall into the micro-affiliate category, their communication patterns were not entirely uniform.

Creators K1 and K4 demonstrated a strong tendency to use personal narratives as their primary persuasive strategy. The content produced by these two creators featured numerous stories about their experiences using the products in their daily lives. This approach created a more authentic and personal communication experience, allowing audiences to feel an emotional connection with the creators.

Meanwhile, creators K2 tended to use a more demonstrative approach, where product promotion was conducted through explanations of product functions and visual demonstrations of how to use them. This strategy emphasized the informative aspect of the content, allowing audiences to more clearly understand the product's benefits.

On the other hand, creator K3 demonstrates a communication pattern that combines elements of storytelling and entertainment in delivering promotional messages. Product promotions are not always delivered directly, but rather become part of the narrative built into the video. This approach demonstrates a form of soft selling, a promotional strategy that is conveyed less explicitly.

Creator K5 has a slightly different communication pattern than the other creators. The content they produce emphasizes product information and economic promotional aspects, such as pricing or available promotions. This approach demonstrates a more direct orientation toward the commercial aspects of product promotion.

Despite the variations in communication strategies, all creators consistently utilize the affiliate cart feature as the primary mechanism to direct audiences towards product purchases. Based on an analysis of content from K1 to K5 creators, this study found that micro-affiliate persuasion strategies in the TikTok Affiliate ecosystem are formed through the interaction of several key communication elements.

First, narratives of personal experiences are one of the most dominant persuasive strategies in skincare promotional content. Through personal experiences, creators can build credibility and audience trust in the products they recommend. These experiences are often linked to everyday situations, making promotional messages feel more relevant to the audience.

Second, the visual representation of the creator's body plays a crucial role in demonstrating how to use skincare products. The creator's body serves as a demonstration medium, allowing the audience to directly see the product application process and the results it displays.

Third, communicating local culture through the use of the Banjar language strengthens the relationship between creators and audiences. The local language creates a cultural connection that makes content feel more authentic to audiences from the same region.

Fourth, TikTok's platform mechanisms, through its affiliate and product basket features, act as infrastructure that connects digital communication with economic activity. Thus, product promotion in TikTok content is not only a communication practice but also part of the digital economic ecosystem.

This synthesis of findings suggests that micro-affiliate persuasion strategies are shaped not only by product promotion goals but also by relational communication practices and the cultural context that emerges in digital content production.

Platform Political Economy Perspective

The findings of this study can be further understood through a political economy of communication perspective, which emphasizes the relationship between media, power, and economic structures in digital content production (Mosco, 2009). In the context of TikTok Affiliate, creators function not only as individuals who produce content but also as actors involved in the platform economy system.

According to Mosco (2009), digital media is part of the economic structure that organizes the production and distribution of communication messages. In the TikTok ecosystem, the platform provides the technological infrastructure and monetization mechanisms that enable creators to gain economic benefits through content production activities.

This also aligns with the concept of digital labor proposed by Fuchs (2014). In the digital economy, content production activities by creators can be understood as a form of digital labor that generates economic value for both the platform and the creators themselves. Through product promotional content, creators generate traffic, audience attention, and potential economic transactions that become sources of income for various parties within the platform ecosystem.

Furthermore, the TikTok Affiliate phenomenon can also be understood through the concept of platform capitalism proposed by Srnicek (2017). In this economic model, digital platforms function as mediators connecting various economic actors, such as companies, creators, and consumers. TikTok Affiliate enables creators to act as intermediaries, connecting commercial products with audiences through social media content.

However, the communication practices of micro-affiliates are not solely commercial in nature. As seen in this study, creators often build emotional connections with audiences through narratives of personal experiences and the use of local languages. This phenomenon can be explained through

the concept of visibility labor proposed by Abidin (2016), a form of digital labour in which creators must continuously produce content that presents themselves personally to remain visible and relevant in the social media ecosystem.

Thus, the practice of TikTok Affiliate can be understood as a cross between digital labour, personal communication strategies, and the platform economy. Creators not only promote products but also build social relationships with audiences, which are the foundation of successful persuasive strategies in social media content.



Figure 6 Persuasion strategy model

Based on the analysis of content from K1–K5 creators, this study formulated a conceptual model of micro-affiliate persuasion strategies within the TikTok Affiliate ecosystem, as shown in Figure 6. The conceptual model in Figure 6 demonstrates that micro-affiliate persuasion strategies within the TikTok Affiliate ecosystem are formed through the interaction of three main dimensions: relational communication, visual representation of the creator's body, and the platform economy. Relational communication is built through narratives of personal experiences, the use of the local Banjar language, and emotional closeness with the audience. Meanwhile, the visual representation of the creator's body serves as a demonstration medium for product use, strengthening the credibility of promotional messages.

Conversely, the platform economy dimension demonstrates how the TikTok Affiliate feature and product basket serve as digital infrastructure connecting creator communication with monetization activities. The interaction of these three dimensions demonstrates that promotional practices on TikTok are not only a digital marketing strategy but also a form of digital labour and identity production within the platform economy ecosystem.

3.2 Create a Discussion

Research findings indicate that micro-affiliate persuasion strategies in the TikTok Affiliate ecosystem rely not only on direct product promotion but also through relational, visual, and cultural communication practices. Analysis of content from creators from K1 to K5 shows that skincare product promotions on TikTok are not delivered as conventional advertisements, but rather are packaged through narratives of personal experiences, demonstrations of product use, and emotional interactions with audiences.

One of the key findings of this study is the dominance of narratives of personal experiences in skincare promotional content, particularly among creators from K1, K3, and K4. In this content, creators not only explain product functions but also relate product use to their daily experiences. This strategy makes promotional messages feel more authentic and believable to audiences. This

phenomenon aligns with the concept of relational labor in the digital creator economy, where creators build emotional connections with audiences as part of their digital work practices. Through narratives of personal experiences, creators build closeness that allows audiences to view product recommendations as part of interpersonal communication, rather than simply commercial messages.

In addition to narratives of personal experiences, this study also found that the visual representation of creators' bodies plays a crucial role in persuasive strategies. In much of the content analyzed, creators show their faces directly to demonstrate the use of skincare products. This visual demonstration allows audiences to see the product's texture, application method, and the results on the creator's skin. Thus, the creator's body serves as a visual medium that strengthens the credibility of the promotional message.

This practice can be understood through the concept of visibility labor proposed by Abidin (2016), which explains that social media creators need to continuously present themselves in digital spaces to maintain audience attention. In the context of TikTok Affiliate, the creator's body becomes part of a communication strategy that serves not only to attract attention but also to provide visual evidence of the product usage experience.

The findings of this study also indicate that several creators use Banjarese in their content, particularly creators from K1, K3, and K4. This use of local languages creates a cultural closeness between creators and audiences from similar social backgrounds. Local languages in digital content serve not only as a means of communication but also as a form of representation of cultural identity within the social media space.

This phenomenon demonstrates that communication practices on global social media platforms like TikTok remain influenced by local cultural contexts. Digital creators often adapt global content formats by incorporating local cultural elements to make them more relevant to their audiences. Thus, TikTok Affiliate content serves not only as a platform for product promotion but also as a space where local cultural identities are produced and represented in digital communication.

From a political economy of communication perspective, TikTok Affiliate practices also demonstrate how digital platforms create new economic ecosystems for creators. Mosco (2009) explains that digital media is part of the economic structure that organizes the production and distribution of communication messages. In the context of TikTok, the platform provides the technological infrastructure and monetization mechanisms that enable creators to gain economic benefits through content production.

This relates to the concept of digital labour proposed by Fuchs (2014), who views content production activities on social media as a form of digital work that generates economic value. Creators in the TikTok Affiliate ecosystem not only produce entertainment content or personal communication, but also generate traffic, audience attention, and potential economic transactions through product promotion.

The findings of this study indicate that micro-affiliates actively utilize the affiliate cart feature as a mechanism to connect personal communication with digital economic activity. However, the call to purchase in this content is often implicit. Creators often mention product usage experiences or benefits before directing audiences to available purchase options.

This phenomenon can also be explained through the concept of platform capitalism proposed by Srnicek (2017). In the platform economy, technology companies create ecosystems that connect various economic actors, including creators, product companies, and consumers. TikTok Affiliate serves as a mechanism that allows creators to act as intermediaries between commercial products and audiences. Thus, micro-affiliates function not only as content creators but also as intermediaries in the platform's economic chain. They connect products with audiences through communication strategies that combine personal experiences, visual demonstrations, and cultural proximity.

Overall, this research shows that micro-affiliates' persuasive strategies in the TikTok Affiliate ecosystem are formed through the interaction of three main dimensions: relational communication, visual representation of the body, and the platform's economic logic. These three dimensions interact in digital content production, creating a form of promotion that differs from conventional advertising.

In other words, product promotion in TikTok Affiliate is not only a digital marketing activity but also a communication practice that involves the production of identity, social relationships, and economic dynamics within the social media space.

4. Conclusion

This study aims to analyze how micro-affiliate persuasion strategies are constructed within Banjar cultural communication within the TikTok Affiliate ecosystem in South Kalimantan. Through a content analysis approach to video content produced by five micro-affiliate creators (K1–K5), this study demonstrates that skincare product promotion practices on TikTok function not only as digital marketing activities but also as a form of relational communication involving cultural, affective, and platform economic logic.

The results indicate that the persuasive strategies employed by micro-affiliates are not delivered through explicit promotional channels like conventional advertising but rather are constructed through various more personal and contextual communication practices. One of the most dominant strategies is the use of personal experience narratives to explain the use of skincare products. Through personal experiences, creators build credibility and audience trust in their product recommendations.

These narratives are often linked to everyday experiences, making promotional messages feel more authentic and easily understood by the audience. In addition to narratives of personal experiences, this study also found that visual representations of creators' bodies play a crucial role in reinforcing promotional messages. Creators' bodies are used as demonstration media to directly demonstrate how to use skincare products and the results they display on the skin. This visual approach allows audiences to gain a more concrete understanding of the promoted products, while simultaneously enhancing the credibility of the content.

The research findings also indicate a local cultural communication dimension within TikTok Affiliate content, particularly using the Banjar language in several of the videos analyzed. The use of local language as a communication strategy strengthens the bond between creators and audiences from similar cultural backgrounds. Thus, product promotion practices on TikTok not only reflect digital marketing strategies but also serve as a space for the representation of local cultural identity on social media. Furthermore, the presence of the TikTok Affiliate feature and product baskets demonstrates how communication activities on social media are connected to the platform's economic logic. Creators act not only as content producers but also as intermediaries connecting commercial products with audiences through monetization mechanisms provided by the platform. In this context, micro-affiliates can be understood as actors within the digital economy ecosystem who leverage personal communication to generate potential economic transactions.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the persuasive strategies of micro-affiliates in TikTok Affiliate are formed through the interaction of three main dimensions: relational communication, visual representation of the body, and platform economics. These three dimensions interact in digital content production, creating a form of promotion distinct from conventional advertising. These findings contribute to digital communication studies by demonstrating that influencer marketing practices in social media are influenced not only by marketing strategies but also by the dynamics of cultural communication and the platform's economic structure. Therefore, micro-affiliates in TikTok Affiliate can be understood not only as product promotion agents but also as communication mediators connecting digital consumption practices with local cultural identities.

This study still has limitations, particularly the number of creators analyzed and the research's limited focus on the skincare product category. Therefore, future research could expand the scope of the analysis by involving more creators, more diverse product categories, and using other methodological approaches, such as interviews with creators or audiences, to gain a deeper understanding of the communication dynamics within the TikTok Affiliate ecosystem.

5. Acknowledgement

The authors would like to express her sincere appreciation to Universitas Lambung Mangkurat (ULM), particularly the Department of Communication Science, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP ULM), for the institutional support that enabled the completion of this research. The author also extends her gratitude to all participants and TikTok content creators in South Kalimantan who were willing to be included as research samples and contributed to the data collection process. Appreciation is further addressed to reviewers and proofreaders for their constructive comments and valuable suggestions, which have significantly enhanced the quality of this paper.

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