

Optimizing the Utilization of Free Social Media through Affiliate Marketing Training to Improve Digital Entrepreneurship Literacy of SMA N 1 Getasan

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Abstrack

The rapid development of digital technology and the high use of social media among students have created new opportunities for digital entrepreneurship. However, the use of social media by students is still predominantly consumptive and has not been optimized for generating economic value. This community service activity aims to enhance students' digital entrepreneurial literacy and skills through affiliate marketing training utilizing free social media platforms at SMA N 1 Getasan. The method employed in this program was participatory training based on practical approaches, including lectures, discussions, demonstrations, and hands-on practice, supported by evaluation through pre-test and post-test. The results indicate a significant improvement in students' understanding of affiliate marketing concepts as well as their ability to create promotional content and integrate affiliate links into social media platforms. Furthermore, the level of student participation and enthusiasm was notably high throughout the training sessions. This program proved to be effective in shifting students' social media usage from consumptive behavior to more productive and economically valuable activities. Therefore, this initiative contributes positively to improving students' digital entrepreneurial literacy and provides opportunities for them to generate independent income at an early stage.

Keywords: Affiliate Marketing, Social Media, Digital Entrepreneurship, Training, Community Service

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology and internet penetration has fundamentally reshaped social interaction patterns, particularly in economic and marketing domains. Social media platforms have transcended their original communicative function to become strategic instruments for business activities, including digital marketing, venture creation, and entrepreneurial learning (Jim et al., 2024; Suib et al., 2024). Research demonstrates that secondary school-aged students can effectively capitalize on social media for both venture creation and informal learning, engaging in self-directed experiential learning cycles while running social media-based businesses (Jim et al., 2024). This phenomenon is particularly significant as teenagers are increasingly recognized not merely as consumers but as active economic participants targeted through digital channels (Stockman, 2022).

Educational institutions and programs have responded by integrating digital entrepreneurship training, encompassing social media marketing, content creation, and online advertising into curricula (Nasirudin et al., 2023; Suib et al., 2024). Studies confirm that such digital entrepreneurship education enhances students' soft skills and fosters entrepreneurial spirit (Suib et al., 2024). Furthermore, entrepreneurship education through mentorship develops youth self-esteem, self-confidence, and opportunity recognition. However, scholars caution that entrepreneurial education for youth must be critically examined, as ideological promises may not always align with transformative outcomes (Rajak & Dolan, 2021).

Nevertheless, the convergence of digital platforms and entrepreneurial pedagogy presents meaningful opportunities for high school students to develop practical digital economy competencies from an early age (Jim et al., 2024; Suib et al., 2024).

Affiliate marketing represents a performance-based digital marketing model in which individuals partner with businesses to promote products or services through unique affiliate links, earning commissions for each successful sale or lead generated (Afandi, 2023; Wijaya et al., 2024). This model has gained significant traction with the growth of the internet; notably, Amazon popularized the practice by enabling websites and bloggers to place links to products in exchange for advertising fees (Younus & Mutiarin, 2024). Affiliate partners can be individuals or companies leveraging online channels such as blogs, websites, or social media platforms (Afandi, 2023; Wijaya et al., 2023).

The advantages of affiliate marketing—including low investment costs, expanded market reach, and accessibility—make it particularly suitable for beginners (Afandi, 2023; Wijaya et al., 2024). Digital platform companies utilize affiliate marketing strategies to strengthen partnerships with third parties and optimize promotional activities (Wijaya et al., 2023). For educational contexts, integrating digital entrepreneurship training that encompasses affiliate marketing, social media marketing, and content creation equips students with practical digital competencies (Fadillah et al., 2024; Mubarak, 2023). Programs such as IMNU's digital training for Islamic youth demonstrate how affiliate marketing concepts can be taught alongside marketplace utilization and social media skills (Mubarak, 2023). Furthermore, research confirms that digital entrepreneurship education cultivates creative thinking, problem-solving, and digital literacy among students (Fadillah et al., 2024), reinforcing affiliate marketing's suitability as an introductory model for developing digital entrepreneurship literacy among high school students.

Today's high school students, as digital natives, exhibit remarkably high levels of social media engagement across platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp (Abdullah et al., 2024; Maunula & Lähdesmäki, 2022). Literacy practices relevant to pupils naturally encompass audiovisual texts in social media channels including TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, as well as digital gaming environments (Maunula & Lähdesmäki, 2022). Similarly, platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter are recognized as tools with potential for both learning and promotional activities in educational settings (Abdullah et al., 2024). However, research consistently indicates that students' digital engagement remains predominantly oriented toward entertainment and communication rather than productive, economically valuable activities (Hossain et al., 2023; Maunula & Lähdesmäki, 2022).

This disparity between technology access and productive utilization constitutes a significant skills gap. Studies reveal that despite high digital media consumption, students' actual digital literacy—encompassing critical, analytical, and productive competencies—remains underdeveloped (Abdullah et al., 2024; Hossain et al., 2023). Research in Bangladesh, for instance, demonstrates that while digital platform usage is widespread, meaningful digital media literacy competencies require deliberate educational intervention (Hossain et al., 2023). Furthermore, scholars note that pupils' existing literacy practices and interests are frequently ignored in formal education, and literacy is "surprisingly rarely" taught in digital learning environments (Maunula & Lähdesmäki, 2022). Teachers in Malaysia similarly face challenges where knowledge about productive digital learning and business education applications remains suboptimal among educators and students alike (Abdullah et al., 2024).

This gap underscores the urgent need for structured educational interventions that redirect students' existing digital fluency toward economically productive activities, including digital entrepreneurship and marketing literacy (Abdullah et al., 2024; Hossain et al., 2023). Without deliberate pedagogical strategies, the potential of students' technological familiarity

remains largely untapped, confined to passive consumption rather than active value creation (Hossain et al., 2023; Maunula & Lähdesmäki, 2022).

As a high school institution, SMA N 1 Getasan plays a strategic role in equipping students with competencies relevant to current developments, including in the field of digital entrepreneurship. Based on initial observations, most students lack a sufficient understanding of the concept of affiliate marketing and how to utilize free social media as an effective marketing tool. Therefore, a structured and applicable training program is needed to improve students' knowledge and skills in this area.

This community service program aims to provide affiliate marketing training using free social media to SMAN N 1 Getasan students. This training is expected to improve digital literacy, foster an entrepreneurial spirit, and provide alternative income opportunities for students to earn their own income. Furthermore, this activity is expected to encourage a shift in social media usage patterns from consumptive to productive and economically valuable. Through a practice-based training approach, students are not only provided with theoretical understanding but also guided in creating promotional content, understanding digital marketing strategies, and managing affiliate links effectively. Therefore, this activity is expected to have a real impact in improving student competency and supporting the creation of a young generation that is adaptive, creative, and ready to face the challenges of the future digital economy.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This community service activity was conducted at SMAN N 1 Getasan, targeting eleventh and twelfth grade students interested in utilizing social media. The method used in this activity was participatory training, combining lectures, discussions, demonstrations, and hands-on practice. The activity implementation consisted of several steps. First, the preparation phase included coordination with the school, identifying participant needs, and developing training materials. Second, the implementation phase began with a pre-test to gauge students' initial understanding of affiliate marketing and digital marketing. Next, material covered the basic concepts of affiliate marketing, selecting an affiliate platform, and marketing strategies using free social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp. In the next phase, participants were given demonstrations on creating affiliate accounts, creating simple promotional content, and inserting affiliate links. Participants then practiced directly under the guidance of the community service team. Finally, a post-test and evaluation were conducted to measure the improvement in understanding and the effectiveness of the training.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION



Picture 1. Group Photo of student

The results of this activity indicate that free social media-based affiliate marketing training is an effective approach to improving students' digital entrepreneurship literacy. This

aligns with the characteristics of the younger generation, who are highly familiar with digital technology, making the practice-based learning approach more easily accepted and applied. The increased student understanding was driven not only by the theoretical delivery of the material but also by the interactive and applicable training methods. Participants' active involvement in hands-on practice enabled them to gain real-world experience in conducting digital marketing activities, thus strengthening their conceptual understanding.

Furthermore, the use of free social media as a marketing tool was a crucial factor in the success of this activity. With no financial barriers, students could immediately practice marketing strategies without requiring significant financial investment. This provided an inclusive opportunity for all students to engage in digital entrepreneurship activities. However, several challenges were encountered during the implementation of the activity, such as limited training time and varying levels of students' initial understanding. Therefore, follow-up mentoring activities were necessary to ensure the ongoing development of the acquired skills.

Overall, this community service activity made a positive contribution to improving students' competencies in digital marketing and affiliate marketing. In the future, similar programs can be developed with a wider scope and integration with the entrepreneurship curriculum in schools, so as to be able to create a entrepreneurship ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

The community service program, which included free affiliate marketing training utilizing social media at SMA N 1 Getasan, has been successful and has had a positive impact on students. This program has proven effective in improving students' understanding of the basic concepts of affiliate marketing and developing practical skills in utilizing social media as a digital marketing tool. Evaluation results indicate an increase in students' digital entrepreneurship literacy, as evidenced by their ability to create promotional content, understand the use of affiliate links, and recognize economic opportunities from digital activities. Furthermore, the high level of student participation and enthusiasm during the training indicates that the material provided is relevant to their needs and interests.

This training also successfully encouraged a shift in social media usage patterns from primarily consumptive to more productive and economically valuable. Thus, this activity not only provides knowledge but also opens up opportunities for students to begin developing financial independence from an early age. However, to achieve optimal results, follow-up is needed in the form of ongoing mentoring and the integration of digital entrepreneurship materials into school learning activities. This is crucial so that the skills acquired by students can be continuously developed and consistently applied in the future.

Overall, this community service activity provides a real contribution in supporting the development of students' digital competencies and preparing a young generation that is adaptive, creative, and ready to face the challenges of the digital economy.

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