# STRATEGIC USE OF DIGITAL MARKETING TO BOOST BRAND AWARENESS IN CREATIVE AGENCIES: THE CASE OF ALICYART STUDIO, JAKARTA

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## Abstract

Alicyart Studio, a creative agency based in Jakarta, Indonesia has been experiencing low brand awareness on its Instagram account. This purpose of this study is to find strategic recommendation to enhance Alicyart Studio's brand awareness using digital marketing. There several factors on why Alicyart Studio is experiencing this issue are inconsistent posting schedule, the absence of paid digital advertising, and an unclear marketing communication. The low brand awareness affects Alicyart Studio's revenue because it limits Alicyart Studio's ability to attract new potential clients and compete in Jakarta's creative agency market. This research aims to identify the key factors that contribute to the low brand awareness, as well as finding strategic digital marketing approach that is suitable to be implemented by Alicyart Studio or other small creative agencies in Jakarta. An interrupted time series using quasi-experimental research design was conducted to evaluate Alicyart Studio's Instagram performance and changes in the audience perception during the pre-treatment (baseline) and post-treatment periods. The experiment lasts for four weeks to test which content pillars (functional, emotional, educational, and agile) has the highest performance and each pillar was tested for one week. The key performance indicators include observing the number of reaches, engagement, follower growth, and profile visits. In addition, mixed-method research was conducted by obtaining quantitative and qualitative data. The online survey was conducted twice during both periods with 150 respondents, and is analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis and cross-tabulation. Qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interview targeting Alicyart Studio's existing clients, followers, and potential clients during the post-treatment period and were analyzed using thematic analysis. The results show that the educational and functional content pillars are the pillars with the highest performance, while emotional pillar act as a complementary to build brand's trust. On the other hand, agile content has the lowest impact on Alicyart Studio's brand awareness since its primary function was only to stay relevant with the current trends. During the implementation of the treatment, this study applied integrated marketing communication, content pillar strategy, and paid digital advertising to improve Alicyart Studio's brand awareness.

*Keywords: brand awareness, creative agency, social media marketing, content strategy, digital marketing.*
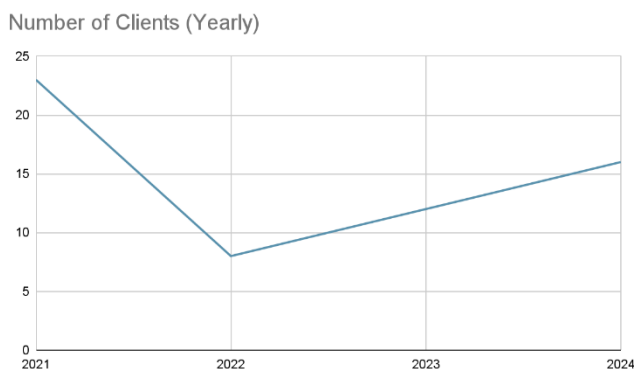
## INTRODUCTION

Digital marketing has been evolving on a global scale and businesses started to shift their marketing strategies. Relying solely on traditional media does not work anymore, brands need to appear on online platforms as well, particularly social media. By partnering with a creative agency, businesses can create a strong online presence and drive growth in the digital era (Pratiwi et al., 2023). This is where creative agencies started seeing the opportunity to enter the market due to the high demand for marketing and design services. Alicyart Studio, a creative agency based in Jakarta, Indonesia, was one of the creative agencies that saw the opportunity and high demand for design services. In 2021, Alicyart Studio officially became a creative agency account filled with several freelancers with different backgrounds, such as graphic designers, copywriters, UI/ UX designers, and the team continues to grow to this day. There was a significant growth in the creative agencies' business in Jakarta, and the competition is getting more intense. Alicyart Studio specializes in social media management, and they have worked with brands across different business sectors, such as internet provider companies, fashion and beauty brands, the F&B sector, and many more. Since the establishment of

Alicyart Studio as a creative agency, it has completed over 600 creative projects for both local and international clients. During the first 2 years, Instagram was the top main client acquisition channel. However, since Alicyart Studio's digital marketing efforts was low in 2023 and 2024, the main acquisition channel shifted to word of mouth. Alicyart Studio faced a problem, which was low brand awareness. At that time, the team hadn't noticed this problem until they started to realize that the number of new clients was decreasing significantly in 2022 due to the rebranding of Alicyart Studio, as the team only focuses on making designs for rebranding, instead of seeking potential clients. At that time, Alicyart Studio was too focused on fulfilling client projects and expanding its services, which caused it to neglect its brand. This issue has directly impacted Alicyart Studio's growths and revenue.

**Figure 1. Number of Clients (Yearly)**



*Source: Alicyart Studio (2025)*

Since this issue is crucial for Alicyart Studio's sustainability, they need to focus on increasing their visibility to remain competitive in the creative agency industry. It will be easier for Alicyart Studio to attract new clients if they have strong brand awareness. This leads to several research questions: *What are the key factors that affect the low brand awareness of Alicyart Studio on social media?, What is the most effective digital marketing strategy to increase brand awareness in the creative agency industry, like Alicyart Studio?, and Which digital marketing tools and channels are suitable to improve Alicyart Studio's online presence and visibility?*

## LITERATURE REVIEW
### Digital Marketing Theory
There are several ways to gain potential customers and turn them into loyal ones, one of which is marketing and promotion through digital media (Hadiyati et al., 2020). Instagram is one of the social media platforms that has successfully transformed marketing into a new level, where brands are able to create visually appealing content to enhance its brand awareness and customer engagement (Blazeska, Klimoska, & Trajkov, 2024). According to Aleh (2020, as cited in Blazeska, Klimoska, & Trajkov, 2024), the existence of social media affects consumer's purchasing decisions by 71%, which highlight the importance of digital marketing. Besides its ability to increase brand awareness, it also plays an important role in the audience's purchase decisions. Digital marketing offers flexibility which is suitable for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with limited budget, as they could set their desired marketing budget while targeting the right audience.

### Brand Awareness Theory
Brand awareness should be maintained because it connects both consumers and brands, where social media act as a tool that could help the purchase journey to be seamless (Blazeska, Klimoska, & Trajkov, 2024). Besides a seamless purchase journey, social media also enable businesses to shape consumers' attitude, gather feedback and recommendation, and increase sales (Algharabat et al., 2018; Kapoor et al., 2018; Kaur et al., 2018; Lal et al., 2020, as cited in Dwivedi et al., 2021). To remain competitive in the market, businesses should have a high level of brand awareness to be the top of mind of the audience. An effective digital marketing could expand the reach of businesses and enhance the brand's visibility, which could later increase the brand awareness (Pratiwi et al., 2023).

## Social Media Marketing

Digital platforms are important for businesses, especially if it is used effectively. It could create a strong engagement with the audiences and allow businesses to enhance their competitiveness in the market (Pratiwi et al., 2023). Social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook allow businesses to share engaging content, interact directly with consumers, and manage campaigns. There are over 170 million people in Indonesia who use their social media daily, and Instagram is being the most frequent accessed social media platform used by millennials and Gen Z (Datareportal, 2023). Since Instagram's interface is user-friendly and it could reach a wide number of audiences, it is a powerful tool that could foster meaningful connections with the audience (Blazeska, Klimoska, & Trajkov, 2024). Instagram is effective for businesses in general however, for businesses in the creative industry, it is more effective because of the main platform's focus on visuals. Instagram could support design presentation, storytelling, and portfolio showcase, which act as the key elements in marketing for creative agencies.

## Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)

Integrated marketing communications is one of the key elements that companies could implement to build long-term customer relationships, and businesses could estimate which tools and promotional mix to use before delivering messages to their customers (Blazheska, Ristovska, & Klimoska, 2021). In the digital era, consumers are exposed to a lot of information from several channels simultaneously. Therefore, delivering a clear brand message is becoming one of the most important factors. IMC is the answer to how companies can be competitive by implementing good communication with their customers in the long run (Blazheska, Ristovska, & Klimoska, 2021).
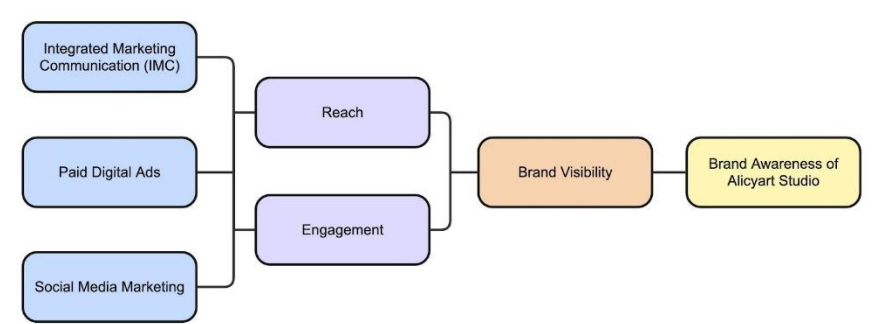
## AISAS Model

AISAS is one of the frameworks that can be used to understand the consumer's behavior. There are 5 stages in the AISAS model, which include Attention, Interest, Search, Action, and Share. According to Dutta et al. (2024), Meta Ads Manager can help brands reach their desired audiences and also support the "Attention" and "Share" at the same time. It is possible that the number of "Share" is bigger than "Attention" due to word of mouth and recommendation or referral from previous consumers, since AISAS is not a sequence.

## Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates how a combination of digital marketing-related theories can be applied to address the issue faced by Alicyart Studio, which is low brand awareness. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), paid digital advertising, and social media marketing are the independent variables that is used to increase the number of reach and engagement for Alicyart Studio's Instagram account. Improvements in reach and engagement could improve the brand's visibility, which will also enhance Alicyart Studio's brand awareness.
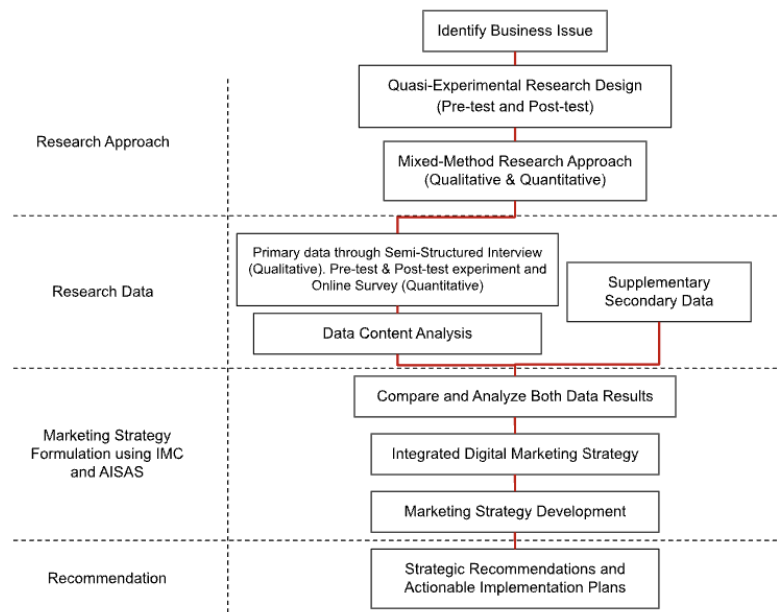
**Figure 2. Conceptual Framework**



*Source: Author (2025)*

## RESEARCH METHOD
### Data Collection Methods

**Figure 3. Research Design Process**



*Source: Author (2025)*

This research employs a mixed-method approach using both qualitative and quantitative data to examine the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies to enhance Alicyart Studio's brand awareness. Quantitative data were obtained from Instagram performance data were collected using Instagram Insights and online survey that was conducted twice during the pre-treatment and post-treatment period. According to Malhotra, Nunan, and Birks (2017, p. 418, Table 14.2), studies evaluating TV, radio, print, or online advertising require a minimum of 150 respondents. This research applies quasi-experimental design as well to discover the effectiveness of digital advertising and content pillars on brand awareness, the category of online advertising studies is considered the most relevant. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with six participants representing different stakeholder groups: existing clients, Instagram followers, and potential clients of Alicyart Studio. The interviews were conducted after the treatment period and were analysed using thematic analysis. The study also adopts a quasi-experimental research design, specifically an interrupted time series (ITS) approach, which compares data from the pre-treatment (baseline) and post-treatment periods. The pre-treatment relies on organic posts, while the post-treatment phase ran for four weeks.

**Baseline Period Instagram Performance (Pre-Treatment)**
During the baseline period (27 July - 10 August 2025), Alicyart Studio's Instagram performance was relatively low because of its limited number of reach and engagement. Alicyart Studio divided its content pillar into 4; Functional, Emotional, Educational, and Agile with different purposes. However, the implementation during the baseline period was not effective because Alicyart Studio divides its content into this percentage: 66.7% functional, 11.1% emotional, 22.2% educational, and agile (depending on the trend). Posting different pillars within a period is not effective because of the inconsistency, which makes it hard to measure which type of content that performed better and which did not.
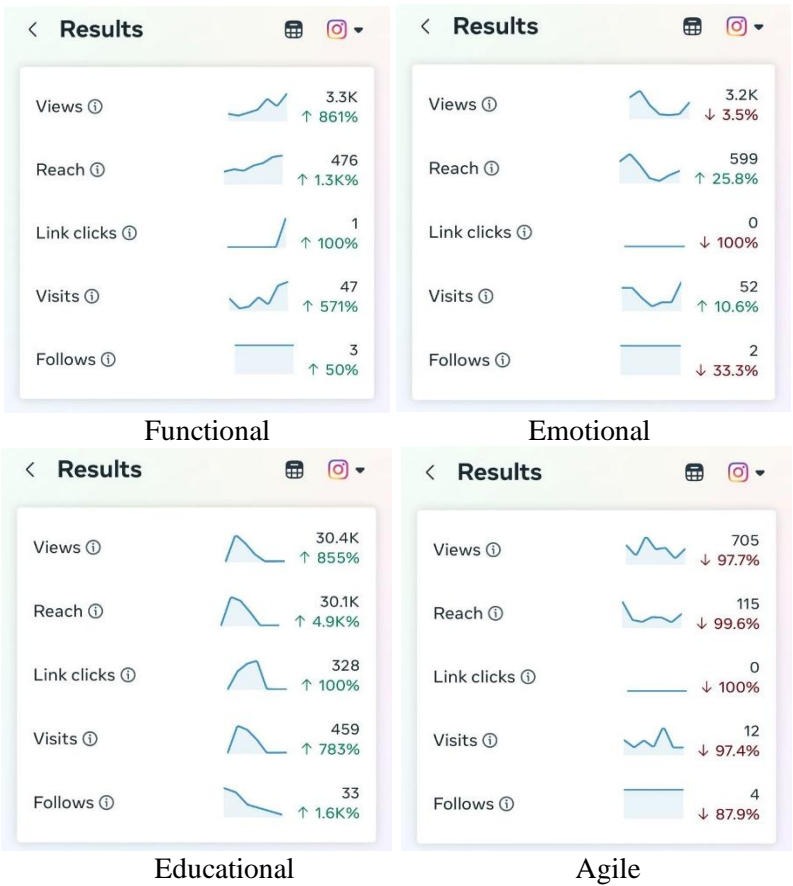
**Table 1. Alicyart Studio's Instagram Performance (Baseline Period)**

| Indicators | Performance |
|---|---|
| Total Reach | 130 accounts |
| Total Views | 285 views |
| Engagement Rate (ER) | 1.28% |
| Top Locations (Followers) | Jakarta (50.5%), Bandung (7.8%), Tangerang (2.4%) |
| Dominant Age Range | 25 - 34 years old |
| Gender Distribution | Female (63.1%), Male (36.9%) |

*Source: Alicyart Studio(2025)*

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Figure 4. Instagram Insight (Post-Treatment)**



Functional



Emotional



Educational



Agile

*Source: Alicyart Studio(2025)*

The four content pillars were tested to see which pillar perform better than the others and each content pillar is tested for one week, resulted in a four-week treatment period. The experimental results demonstrate that structured content planning has significantly improved Alicyart Studio's digital performance. Among the four content pillars tested, the educational content pillar produced the strongest results across all key performance indicators, including reach, engagement, follower growth, and profile visits. Functional content pillar was also performing well because it showcased Alicyart Studio's portfolio, which reinforce professionalism and validating Alicyart Studio's capability. The emotional content pillar would be great for complementary content because it contributes positively to build trust with the audience. However, agile content showed the weakest performance among all content pillars due to its function to maintain relevance with ongoing social media trends rather than drive sustained engagement. Based on these findings, each content pillars have its own function and it should complement one another, rather than relying on a single content pillar alone.

**Table 2. Likert Scale Results (Post-Treatment Period)**

| No. | Statement | Theory | Mean Score | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I remember Alicyart Studio's message during the treatment period, which provides creative solutions to elevate your brand presence | IMC | 4.40 | Agree to Strongly Agree. The audience perceived Alicyart Studio's messages as clear, relevant, and memorable, which indicates effective message delivery during the treatment period. |
| 2. | I recognize Alicyart Studio's visual identity (logo/colors/typograph) when looking at the content/ads | IMC | 4.41 | Agree to Strongly Agree. The audience demonstrated a high level of visual recognition, suggesting consistent application of Alicyart Studio's brand identity across content and advertisements. |
| 3. | Alicyart Studio is professional and trustworthy, as seen on their Instagram profile | IMC | 4.50 | Strongly Agree. The audience perceived Alicyart Studio as professional and credible, indicating that the content strategy successfully strengthened trust and brand image. |

*Source: Online Survey, Post-Treatment Period (2025)*

The treatment was considered successful because it succeeds to reinforce Alicyart Studio's brand image and trust perception. Based on the Likert Scale from the post-treatment online survey, Alicyart Studio gained high mean scores which shows a positive outcome. The strategy that was implemented is successful to strengthen Alicyart Studio's message clarity, visual recognition, and perceived professionalism. Majority of the respondents (97.3%) also stated that they were interested to contact Alicyart Studio regarding its services after viewing its Instagram content during the treatment period. These findings support the role of structured content planning and consistent brand communication in enhancing brand awareness and credibility on social media.

**Table 3. Thematic Coding Results**

| Coding Groups | Codes | Occurrences |
|---|---|---|
| Business Credibility in the Creative Agency Industry | Portfolio from previous projects | 8 |
| | Experience with diverse clients | 3 |
| | Professional visual presentation | 5 |
| Decision Factors in Choosing a Creative Agency | Professionalism | 6 |
| | Credibility | 7 |
| Reasons to Engage with Creative Agency on Instagram | Active social media presence | 8 |
| | Trend-based and up-to-date | 6 |
| | Educational value | 5 |
| Drivers of Trust and Recommendation | Transparency of the work process | 3 |
| | Proof of competence | 4 |

*Source: Semi-Structured Interview, Post-Treatment Period (2025)*

Qualitative findings from semi-structured interviews reinforced the quantitative results. There are several important factors that could shape the brand's credibility and trust, which are portfolio showcase, consistent posting schedule, professional visual presentation, and evidence of real client work. This finding offers important managerial implications, as Alicyart Studio previously allocated its content composition as follows: 66.7% functional, 11.1% emotional, 22.2% educational, and agile (depending on the trend). However, based on the treatment, instead of focusing on functional and emotional content, Alicyart Studio should shift its focus to create educational and functional, as it is the highest performing contents. Since Alicyart Studio has limited resources and budget constraints, small creative agencies should focus and prioritize their creative efforts and budget on content pillars that could deliver higher performance outcomes, thereby optimizing resource efficiency and strategic impact. Overall, the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative results confirms that the treatment supported by integrated marketing communication and paid digital advertising has successfully enhanced Alicyart Studio's brand visibility, awareness, audience perception, and engagement intention. The survey results (pre- and post-treatment), Instagram metrics, and semi-structured interview insights strengthens the credibility of the research findings and act as the foundation for the proposed business solutions and strategic recommendations.

**CONCLUSION**
Based on the results discussed, there are several key conclusions based on the questions:
1. **What are the key factors that affect the low brand awareness of Alicyart Studio on social media?**
   Based on the findings, the low brand awareness that was faced by Alicyart Studio on its social media account was not caused by a misaligned target market. However, it was caused by the inconsistent posting schedule, the absence of

paid digital advertising, and a lack of structured marketing communication. Since Alicyart Studio was too focused on handling design needs for its clients, it neglected its own social media account. The treatment has successfully increased Alicyart Studio's brand awareness with the use of IMC and paid digital advertising, supported by a consistent posting schedule.

2. **What is the most effective digital marketing strategy to increase brand awareness in the creative agency industry, like Alicyart Studio?**

   The most effective digital marketing strategy for increasing brand awareness in the creative agency industry is the implementation of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). Based on the quasi-experiment it shows that the content pillar strategy has improved brand visibility and audience engagement during the post-treatment period. By knowing the performance of each content pillar, it helps Alicyart Studio to prioritize producing the best-performing pillar due to resource limitations and budget constraints. The Educational and Functional content pillar emerged as the top performing pillar, as it shows Alicyart Studio's credibility and professionalism. The emotional content pillar acts as a complementary role to strengthen brand trust, while agile content performance was the weakest due to its short-term relevance, following the trend.

3. **Which digital marketing tools and channels are suitable to improve Alicyart Studio's online presence and visibility?**

   Since Alicyart Studio targets young professionals who live in urban areas, the suitable digital marketing tools and channels to improve Alicyart Studio's online presence and visibility are through Instagram. Instagram was the most chosen platform by the respondents to find trusted services, and the content format that the respondents prefer is reels and carousel posts, rather than Instagram stories. After knowing the high-performing content pillar and content format, paid digital advertising should be prioritized for educational and functional content pillars to gain a higher number of reach and visibility, which maximizes the effectiveness of promotional efforts. Overall, this finding concludes that improving brand awareness for small creative agencies does not always relate to expanding their target market or being active on multiple social media platforms, but rather optimizing their resources and budget toward highest-performing content pillar, such as educational and functional content, supported by a structured IMC strategy.

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