

SWOT Analysis of Zero-Click Ecosystem Utilization in Enhancing Brand Awareness

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Abstract

This study examines the contribution of digital marketing strategies that emphasize instant visibility and the use of artificial intelligence through the implementation of a Zero-Click Ecosystem in enhancing brand exposure and the accuracy of brand communication. The findings indicate that the integration of a digital ecosystem accelerates and simplifies the process of reaching consumers directly. The level of effectiveness is influenced by changes in search engine algorithms and the intensity of competition in the digital space. Clickless interaction patterns limit direct data ownership while increasing dependence on external platforms, thereby creating risks for the sustainability of marketing strategies. The theoretical findings confirm a shift in the conception of visibility from a traffic-oriented focus toward adaptive capacity in response to changes in search result structures and the utilization of data-driven technologies. The complexity of non-linear digital consumer journeys requires an integrated conceptual framework that combines technological, behavioral, and strategic dimensions, with SWOT analysis proving effective in interpreting the dynamics of the digital environment. Practical implications point to the formulation of strategies that prioritize content quality, personalization, diversification of digital channels, and consistency of brand exposure. Directions for future research include empirical testing of the relationship between clickless visibility and long-term brand performance, as well as expanding the research context across different industry sectors.

Keywords: Zero-Click Ecosystem; Digital Marketing; Instant Visibility; Artificial Intelligence; Brand Exposure.

1. INTRODUCTION

Transformation in the digital marketing landscape has become increasingly evident with the emergence of the Zero-Click Ecosystem, an ecosystem that enables consumers to access information, engage in interactions, and complete transactions seamlessly without switching platforms (Sharma & Dhiman, 2023). The presence of this ecosystem creates a holistic and efficient marketing experience while positioning brands directly in front of consumers, thereby increasing exposure and the potential for brand recognition (Pramayanti, 2022). This shift in consumer behavior requires companies to adjust their marketing strategies by moving away from a sole focus on website traffic toward enhancing visibility and brand presence across search engines and other digital platforms (Thacker, 2023).

Recent digital marketing trends highlight the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI), social commerce, video commerce, and personalized content (Yanto & Aprilian, 2023). The Zero-Click Ecosystem offers strategic opportunities for companies, yet it also presents challenges, as many consumer interactions conclude with instant search results without clicks, commonly referred to as zero-click searches (Pham, 2023). Empirical

Article info

Received 20 Februari 2026

Revised 23 Februari 2026

Accepted 26 Februari 2026

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studies indicate that this phenomenon affects conventional metrics such as click volume and click-through rates, while simultaneously contributing to indirect brand awareness through instant visibility on search engine results pages (Razak et al., 2023).

Previous studies have tended to focus on technical platform aspects or partial user behavior analyses, resulting in the absence of a comprehensive examination of internal and external factors that determine the effectiveness of this ecosystem in enhancing brand awareness (Sekarsari, 2023). Limited research on the application of SWOT analysis to the Zero-Click Ecosystem in Indonesia has created a significant research gap, given that much of the existing literature remains centered on developed countries and global trends (Gozi et al., 2023).

Brands require an in-depth understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with this ecosystem to formulate effective and adaptive marketing strategies (Gunawan et al., 2024). This study is directed toward identifying the internal and external factors influencing the implementation of the Zero-Click Ecosystem, while also providing strategic recommendations to optimally enhance brand awareness and serve as a reference for brands in leveraging emerging digital marketing trends (Yesawen & Ady, 2026).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Zero-Click Ecosystem

Zero-Click Ecosystem defined as a digital ecosystem that enables consumers to obtain information, engage in interactions, and make decisions directly within a single platform without the need for additional clicks or switching to other websites. The development of search engines and digital platforms that provide instant answers has encouraged more concise and efficient patterns of information consumption. This concept positions brands at the initial point of consumer search and accelerates the delivery of marketing messages (Sharma & Dhiman, 2023).

2.2 Relationship Between Zero-Click Ecosystem and Digital Marketing

The relationship between the Zero-Click Ecosystem and digital marketing is reflected in a shift in marketing strategy orientation from merely increasing traffic to strengthening brand visibility and exposure. Indicators of digital marketing success are no longer solely based on the number of clicks, but on a brand's ability to appear relevant and informative in search results and digital platforms. The phenomenon of zero-click searches demonstrates that instant exposure can build brand awareness even without generating direct website visits (Fishkin, 2022).

The utilization of data-driven technologies and artificial intelligence further reinforces the role of the Zero-Click Ecosystem in digital marketing practices. Platform algorithms increasingly prioritize contextual, personalized, and information-rich content, encouraging marketers to emphasize message quality rather than click volume. This approach confirms that the Zero-Click Ecosystem represents a strategic transformation in digital marketing, oriented toward consistent exposure and the strengthening of brand awareness within a dynamic digital environment (Thacker, 2023).

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach supported by SWOT analysis to examine the internal and external factors shaping the implementation of a Zero-Click Ecosystem in enhancing brand awareness. The approach allows for a systematic understanding of organizational strengths and limitations alongside external opportunities and challenges, while offering rich insights into how brands experience, interpret, and respond to this emerging digital environment. Data are primarily obtained through semi-structured and informal interviews with marketing managers, digital strategists, and e-

commerce practitioners who have applied the Zero-Click Ecosystem in practice, using snowball sampling until informational saturation is reached. Secondary sources, including internal company documents, digital marketing reports, and academic literature, are used to complement and validate the primary findings.

Data reliability is strengthened through source and methodological triangulation by integrating interview data with observation and document analysis. The data are then examined through thematic analysis aligned with the SWOT framework, involving iterative coding and categorization into strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, resulting in a coherent and empirically grounded understanding of strategic considerations within a Zero-Click Ecosystem–based digital marketing context.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

Based on the interview results with several informants, a number of perspectives were identified and categorized into strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the use of the Zero-Click Ecosystem to support the enhancement of brand awareness among consumers. The following table presents the interview findings analyzed using the SWOT method:

Table 4.1 SWOT Analysis

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brands gain direct exposure to consumers. 2. AI and personalized content enhance the relevance of information received by users. 3. Brands appear more dominant in the digital environment due to instant visibility. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consumer interactions are difficult to monitor because most searches end without clicks. 2. Ecosystem implementation requires adequate digital resources and capabilities. 3. Brands have limited capacity to address challenges in digital marketing strategies.
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brands can appear across multiple platforms, expanding audience reach. 2. Opportunities to strengthen brand image and build consumer trust. 3. Integration with modern digital marketing trends such as video commerce and social commerce 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intense competition and changes in search engine algorithms can reduce content visibility. 2. Risk of consumer fatigue and information overload. 3. Dependence on third-party platforms

Source: (Processed Data, 2026)

4.1.1 Strengths

The Zero-Click Ecosystem provides brands with direct exposure to consumers, enabling faster brand recognition and more effective initial engagement with audiences. The use of artificial intelligence and personalized content enhances the relevance of information delivered to users, positioning brands more prominently within the digital environment. This condition is supported by screenshots from the researcher's

observations, as illustrated through the Google platform, which has already implemented the Zero-Click Ecosystem.

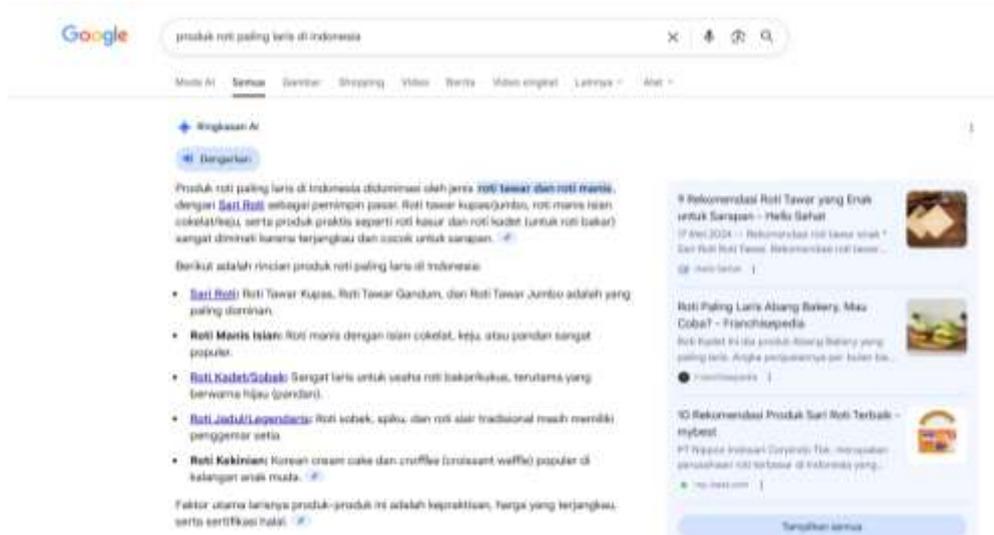


Figure 4.1 Google Screenshot Illustrating the Implementation of the Zero-Click Ecosystem
 Source: (Google.com, 2026)

Based on observational data, it can be seen that when consumers search for bakery products, relevant brands immediately appear in Google search snippets, resulting in direct exposure to brand names. This finding highlights the strength of the Zero-Click Ecosystem, as brands are presented to consumers at the initial stage of the search process. Evidence supporting this strength is also provided by Ye et al. (2021), who state that the Zero-Click Ecosystem enables direct product exposure to consumers.

4.1.2 Weaknesses

Difficulties arise in monitoring consumer interactions because most searches end without measurable clicks using traditional metrics. This ecosystem requires sufficient technical capabilities and digital resources, causing brands with limited capacity to face significant challenges. The following section presents a screenshot from Google Search Console on a webpage that utilizes the Zero-Click Ecosystem.



Figure 4.2 Screenshot of Google Search Console from an Account Implementing the Zero-Click Ecosystem.
 Source: (Google.com, 2026)

The use of the Zero-Click Ecosystem is shown to reduce the number of recorded clicks despite high impression levels. This condition may be considered a weakness, as it

complicates the analysis of consumer (viewer) behavior, given that page performance may appear weak and be perceived as lacking user interest. In practice, this assumption is not necessarily accurate, as the Zero-Click Ecosystem can make pages more attractive by simplifying the information search process for audiences. This finding is consistent with the study by Fubel et al. (2023), which demonstrates that various Zero-Click features, such as featured snippets, significantly influence organic clicks and can reduce click-through rates (CTR), a primary metric traditionally used to assess consumer behavior in search activities.

4.1.3 Opportunities

This ecosystem enables brands to appear across a wide range of digital features and platforms, including featured snippets, knowledge panels, and social commerce, thereby substantially expanding audience reach. Such potential creates opportunities to strengthen brand image and build consumer trust. Contemporary digital marketing trends, particularly video commerce and social commerce, further enhance the potential for integrating the Zero-Click Ecosystem into omnichannel marketing strategies. The following screenshot illustrates how product content can appear across multiple platforms.

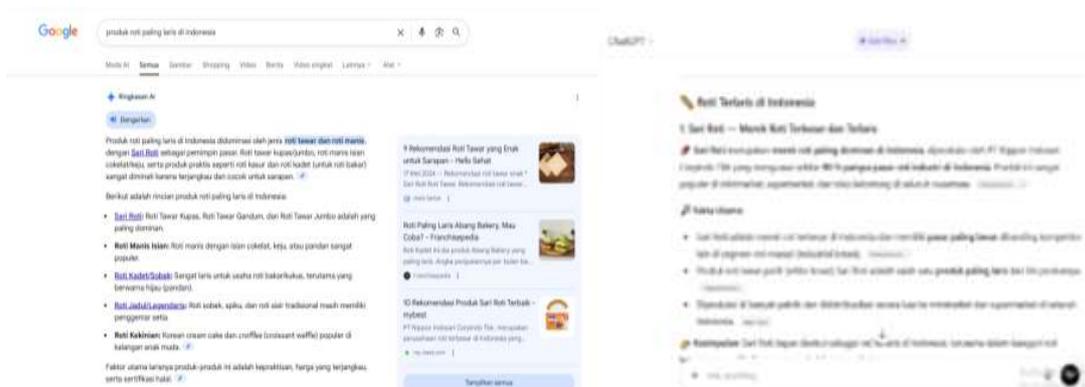


Figure 4.3 Screenshot of Google and ChatGPT
Source: (Google.com & ChatGPT, 2026)

Based on the observations conducted, the content presented within the Zero-Click Ecosystem also appears across other platforms. These observational findings are consistent with the study by Sholiha et al. (2023), which states that digital marketing has a significant influence on brand promotion and brand positioning in the digital era, including the role of social media and omnichannel strategies in reaching consumers more broadly. This evidence supports the results of the present study.

4.1.4 Threats

The primary threats arise from intense competition and frequent changes in search engine algorithms, both of which can affect the visibility of brand content. Consumers who experience information overload or fatigue from instant content may reduce the effectiveness of brand exposure. Dependence on third-party platforms and AI technologies also poses risks related to brand control over marketing strategies and consumer data. According to a survey by MetricsRule (2025), 32% of websites experienced a loss of organic traffic due to algorithm changes. MetricsRule (2025) also highlights the level of SEO competition, as shown in the following data:

Table 4.2 Content Density for Popular Keywords

Content Density Indicator	Average
Number of competing pages for one main keyword	1,200+ pages
Average content length on the first page (word count)	1,800–2,500 words
Average domain authority of first-page results	High
Average backlinks of first-page results	300–1,000 backlinks

Source: (MetricsRule, 2025)

The massive level of content density indicates that SEO competition is not limited to the quantity of content alone, but also involves content quality and the structure of digital information management. This condition is reflected in the high volume of pages addressing similar topics and the limited keyword space available for optimization, which further narrows opportunities to gain audience visibility. The findings from MetricsRule (2025) reinforce the results of Patil and Gala (2023), who reported a significant decline in organic traffic following search engine algorithm updates. Such algorithmic changes directly affect the distribution of content visibility on search engine results pages and signal increasing competitive pressure for brands seeking to maintain their ranking positions.

4.2 Discussion

SWOT analysis indicates that brand strength lies in the ability to reach consumers directly through an integrated digital ecosystem. The use of artificial intelligence and content personalization enhances information relevance, making brand visibility more prominent and accelerating brand recognition processes. Key weaknesses arise from limitations in monitoring consumer behavior due to the increasing prevalence of zero-click searches, along with the demands for technological readiness and team competence. These conditions create challenges for brands with limited capacity sustaining digital marketing strategies.

Opportunities continue to expand alongside the growth of digital platforms that enable broader audience reach across multiple channels. Consistent exposure supports the strengthening of brand image and consumer trust. Threats stem from intense competition, frequent changes in search engine algorithms, information fatigue, and dependence on third-party platforms, all of which may reduce the effectiveness of digital marketing efforts. Based on these conditions, several strategic recommendations can be formulated as follows.

4.2.1 SO Strategy (Strengths–Opportunities)

This strategy emphasizes leveraging internal capabilities to capture opportunities within a dynamic digital ecosystem. The optimization of artificial intelligence and content personalization is directed toward expanding cross-platform audience reach, including video commerce and social commerce, which have been shown to enhance the effectiveness of data-driven marketing communication. The advantage of instant visibility is utilized to strengthen brand image and build consumer trust through the delivery of relevant and strategically valuable content (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

4.2.2 WO Strategy (Weaknesses–Opportunities)

WO approach uses external opportunities as instruments to overcome internal limitations. Enhancing human resource competencies and strengthening digital infrastructure are positioned as essential prerequisites for managing increasingly complex modern marketing ecosystems. The use of public data and digital platform analytics features supports the understanding of consumer behavior patterns amid the dominance

of zero-click interactions, which characterize contemporary digital search behavior (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

4.2.3 ST Strategy (Strengths–Threats)

ST strategy directs internal advantages as adaptive mechanisms to address external pressures. The application of artificial intelligence and visibility advantages is aimed at building sustainable content differentiation within highly competitive environments and amid dynamic search engine algorithm changes. This approach enables brands to maintain relevance and digital presence despite rising information saturation and competitive intensity (Patil & Gala, 2023).

4.2.4 WT Strategy (Weaknesses–Threats)

WT strategy focuses on risk mitigation through controlling internal weaknesses and anticipating external threats. Marketing channel diversification is implemented to reduce dependence on a single digital platform that is vulnerable to policy and algorithm changes. Strengthening data governance and consumer privacy protection becomes a strategic priority to maintain public trust and minimize risks arising from limited resources and third-party platform dominance (Kumar et al., 2020).

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

The findings indicate that digital marketing approaches emphasizing instant visibility and the use of artificial intelligence play a critical role in enhancing brand exposure and the accuracy of message delivery. The integration of digital ecosystems within the Zero-Click Ecosystem enables faster and more direct consumer reach, although effectiveness remains influenced by search engine algorithm dynamics and high competitive intensity. Limited data ownership due to the dominance of zero-click interactions and dependence on external platforms emerges as a major challenge to sustaining digital marketing strategies.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

The study extends digital marketing theory by highlighting a shift in the meaning of visibility from traffic generation toward adaptive capability in response to changes in search result structures and data-driven technologies. Increasingly non-linear digital consumer journeys require strengthened conceptual frameworks that integrate technological, behavioral, and strategic factors. SWOT analysis proves relevant for understanding the interaction between internal capabilities and dynamic digital environmental pressures.

5.3 Practical Implications

Practical implications emphasize the need to adjust marketing strategies toward content quality, personalization, and digital channel diversification. Strengthening brand presence no longer relies solely on click acquisition, but on consistent exposure and informational value delivered to consumers. Enhancing human resource competencies, responsible data management, multichannel strategies, and the adoption of the Zero-Click Ecosystem are strategic steps in responding to algorithm changes and market competition.

5.4 Future Research Directions

Opportunities for future research include empirical testing of the relationship between clickless visibility and long-term brand performance using quantitative or longitudinal approaches. Expanding research contexts across different industry sectors may yield more comprehensive insights into the effectiveness of artificial intelligence–

based digital marketing strategies. Incorporating consumer behavior and digital trust variables may further enrich analysis and strengthen future scholarly contributions.

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