



The Effect of Content Marketing and Live Streaming Host on the Digital Branding of the Tiktok Account of National Institute of Technology Malang

Meisyah Putri ¹, Sri Indriani ², Nur Adilla ³

¹ National Institute of Technology Malang; Kec. Lowokwaru, Kota Malang, Jawa Timur 65152
e-mail : 2219023@scholar.itn.ac.id

² National Institute of Technology Malang; Kec. Lowokwaru, Kota Malang, Jawa Timur 65152
e-mail : indri000@yahoo.com

³ National Institute of Technology Malang; Kec. Lowokwaru, Kota Malang, Jawa Timur 65152
e-mail : nuradilla@lecturer.itn.ac.id

* Corresponding Author : Meisyah Putri

Abstract: Purpose: This study aims to analyze the effect of content marketing and host live on digital branding of the TikTok account of Institut Teknologi Nasional Malang. The research focuses on examining both partial and simultaneous influences of these variables in strengthening the institution's digital brand image. **Research Methodology:** This research was conducted at National Institute of Technology Malang using a quantitative approach. Data were collected through a survey using structured questionnaires distributed to followers of the ITN Malang TikTok account. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling with a total of 130 respondents. The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression, t-test, F-test, and coefficient of determination (Adjusted R²) with SPSS version 23 software. **Results:** The results show that content marketing has a positive and significant effect on digital branding. Host live also has a positive and significant effect on digital branding. Simultaneously, content marketing and host live significantly influence digital branding, with an Adjusted R² value of 0.581, indicating that 58.1% of digital branding variation is explained by both variables. **Conclusions:** The study concludes that effective content marketing and professional host live activities on TikTok play an important role in strengthening the digital branding of Institut Teknologi Nasional Malang. The integration of high-quality content and interactive live streaming creates a stronger brand image in the digital environment. **Limitations:** This study is limited to one educational institution and one social media platform, namely TikTok, which may restrict the generalization of the findings. **Contribution:** This research contributes to the field of digital marketing and branding by providing empirical evidence on the role of content marketing and live streaming in building digital branding in higher education institutions. The findings can be used as a reference for educational organizations in developing effective digital communication strategies

Keywords: Content Marketing; Host Live; Digital Branding; TikTok Marketing; Digital Communication

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1. Introduction

TikTok has become one of the most influential social media platforms in the digital communication and marketing landscape [35]. The rapid development of digital technology has transformed how organizations interact with audiences, shifting from conventional media to digital platforms to deliver information and promotional messages [29]. This transformation requires organizations to adapt their marketing and communication strategies through digitalization to remain competitive and relevant [9].

The increasing complexity of digital marketing has made audiences more selective in receiving information, encouraging organizations to develop engaging and persuasive communication strategies [9]. Social media has emerged as a primary channel for digital communication and marketing activities [33]. In 2025, global social media users reached over 5.2 billion people, representing approximately 63.9% of the world's population (Data Reportal, 2025). The continuous growth of social media usage reflects its role not only for entertainment but also for education, communication, and transactional activities [15]. Among various platforms, TikTok has shown the most significant increase in user engagement [30].

Indonesia ranks as the second-largest TikTok user base globally, with individuals aged 17–24 representing the dominant user group [19]; [43]. This demographic trend positions TikTok as a strategic digital space for reaching younger audiences effectively [5]. The platform's innovative features, including live streaming, TikTok Shop, affiliate marketing, and algorithm-based content distribution through the For You Page (FYP), have transformed TikTok into an integrated digital ecosystem that supports real-time interaction and marketing communication [8].

From the perspective of Integrated Marketing Communication theory, organizations must manage communication channels in a consistent and synergistic manner to build strong brand perceptions (Kotler & Keller, 2006, as cited in [25]). This theory emphasizes that effective marketing communication is not determined by a single medium but by the integration of various communication tools. Educational institutions have increasingly adopted TikTok as part of their digital communication strategies to enhance institutional visibility and engagement.

National Institute of Technology Malang utilizes its official TikTok account to share campus information, academic activities, and institutional culture through interactive and visually engaging content. This practice represents the implementation of integrated digital communication in the digital environment (Kotler & Keller, 2006, as cited in [25]). Through consistent content delivery and audience interaction, TikTok functions not only as a publication medium but also as a strategic communication tool for building institutional digital branding [17].

Digital branding focuses on shaping institutional identity and public perception in online environments [22]; [28]. In the context of higher education, digital branding plays a crucial role in attracting audience attention, encouraging engagement, and building institutional credibility. Integrated digital communication through TikTok therefore becomes an essential component in strengthening the modern and informative image of educational institutions [23].

Content marketing is one of the key factors influencing digital branding effectiveness. It represents a strategic digital marketing approach that utilizes short-form videos to deliver informative and valuable messages to audiences [36]. Engaging, accurate, and easily understood content can create positive audience perceptions toward institutions [37]. Through content marketing, educational institutions can consistently communicate institutional values and identity [16].

In addition to content marketing, live streaming hosts play an important role in digital branding by facilitating real-time interaction with audiences. Hosts function as communicators who deliver information clearly and build trust through direct engagement [41]. This role is further supported by [1], who state that live hosts serve as a bridge between content presentation and audience perception, strengthening brand image in digital spaces [11].

Previous studies on content marketing and live streaming hosts have predominantly focused on commercial, e-commerce, and product promotion contexts. While these studies demonstrate the effectiveness of short-form video content and live hosts in influencing consumer behavior, limited research has examined their combined influence on digital branding within educational institutions [21]. Furthermore, most studies analyze content marketing and live streaming hosts separately, indicating a research gap in understanding their simultaneous impact on institutional digital branding. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the effect of content marketing and live streaming hosts on TikTok digital branding, using National Institute of Technology Malang as the research object.

2. Preliminaries or Related Work or Literature Review

2.1. Integrated Marketing Communication Theory

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is a strategic approach that integrates all forms of marketing communication to ensure message consistency in building brand image Kotler & Keller, 2006, as cited in [25]. This approach combines various communication tools such as advertising, promotion, public relations, and direct marketing while maintaining message alignment across all media platforms, including digital channels. Through this integration, organizations are able to create a unified communication narrative that strengthens public perception of the brand [31].

IMC is also described as a continuous managerial process aimed at coordinating all marketing communication elements within an integrated system (Shrimp, 2008, as cited in [25]). This process involves message development, appropriate media selection, and evaluation of communication effectiveness to achieve organizational objectives. In the digital transformation era, IMC extends beyond message delivery to fostering interaction and emotional engagement with audiences. Social media plays a crucial role as a two-way communication channel that enables direct, participatory, and responsive interactions between organizations and audiences, thereby enhancing brand trust and engagement [7].

Furthermore, coordinated communication across multiple channels is a fundamental element of IMC, as every public interaction with a brand contributes to shaping brand perception and image (Kotler & Keller, 2006, as cited in [25]). This integrated approach supports the strengthening of brand equity through increased brand awareness, positive brand image development, and long-term brand loyalty. Therefore, IMC focuses not only on promotional messaging but also on building meaningful and consistent communication experiences across various platforms.

In the context of this study, IMC theory is highly relevant in explaining how coordinated digital communication strategies contribute to institutional digital branding through content marketing and live streaming hosts on TikTok. These practices represent the application of IMC principles in social media environments, where organizations deliver consistent messages while facilitating interactive engagement. By integrating short-form video content and real-time live sessions, National Institute of Technology Malang strengthens its digital brand image on TikTok. Thus, IMC provides a conceptual framework for understanding the influence of content marketing and live streaming hosts on digital branding in this research.

2.2. Content Marketing

Content marketing is a strategic digital marketing approach that focuses on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain audiences Kotler et al., 2016, as cited in [28]. In the context of TikTok, content marketing involves the production of short-form videos, tutorials, product showcases, and educational content designed to capture user attention and build emotional connections with audiences. This strategy is not limited to commercial businesses but is also highly relevant for educational institutions in strengthening digital branding [4].

Consistent publication of high-quality content, such as educational videos and institutional success stories, has been shown to increase engagement and enhance institutional reputation (Yusran & Ismail, 2025). Well-designed content enables institutions to communicate their values effectively and create positive audience perceptions. Content marketing therefore serves as a key pillar in digital branding strategies within higher education environments [6].

The effectiveness of content marketing depends on the quality and relevance of the content presented. According to Karr (2016, as cited in (yah et al., 2024), content marketing aims to generate positive brand engagement by delivering meaningful content that attracts audience interest. In this study, content marketing is measured using indicators proposed by Oisina (2022, as cited in [20], which include accuracy, value, clarity, accessibility, consistency, and relevance. These indicators reflect the extent to which TikTok content effectively informs, engages, and resonates with target audiences.

2.3. Live Streaming Hosts

Live streaming hosts play a crucial role in facilitating two-way communication and building audience trust during live broadcast sessions. Zhao Baoguo and Wang Yunfeng (as cited in [41] emphasize that hosts are responsible for creating engaging real-time interactions that

enhance audience participation and credibility. Similarly, [38] highlight the role of live hosts in fostering emotional closeness, engagement, and audience trust toward institutions.

In the context of educational institutions, live streaming hosts function not as sales promoters but as institutional representatives who deliver academic information, introduce campus environments, and create positive communication experiences for audiences [13]. Through professional and interactive communication, hosts contribute to strengthening institutional digital branding on social media platforms [18].

The quality of live streaming hosts is measured through several key indicators related to communication effectiveness. Based on Zhao Baoguo and Wang Yunfeng (as cited in [41]), these indicators include professionalism, interactivity, credibility, and attractiveness. Professionalism reflects the host's ability to deliver information clearly and appropriately, while interactivity refers to real-time engagement with audiences. Credibility indicates the level of audience trust in the host's information, and attractiveness represents the host's ability to capture and maintain audience attention [3]. Effective hosts combine logical message delivery with emotional engagement to enhance communication outcomes [24].

2.4. Digital Branding

Digital branding refers to a brand management strategy that utilizes digital platforms to build and maintain brand identity and visibility in a consistent manner. According to [27], digital branding involves the process of developing and controlling brand identity and presence in digital environments, including internet-based interactions, mobile applications, and media content. This strategy employs digital channels such as social media, websites, mobile applications, and digital advertising to effectively communicate brand messages to target audiences.

In the digital era, consumers are no longer passive recipients of marketing communication but actively participate in shaping brand perceptions through online interactions. [27] emphasize that brands must engage in two-way communication and maintain transparency to build emotional connections and trust with audiences. Meaningful digital interactions and relevant content play a crucial role in strengthening brand relationships and enhancing brand image in online environments.

The effectiveness of digital branding is influenced by various factors, including content creativity, understanding of consumer behavior, and the strategic use of digital analytics [27]. In addition, strong brand identity has become increasingly important in digital spaces, where audiences seek brands with clear values and purpose. Consistent communication of these values across digital platforms contributes to stronger brand recognition and audience loyalty.

In this study, digital branding is measured through audience perceptions of institutional image and identity in digital environments. Based on [22], digital branding is assessed using three main indicators: brand positioning, brand identity, and brand personality. Brand positioning refers to how the institution is perceived and differentiated in the digital space, particularly through TikTok content [2]. Brand identity reflects the clarity and consistency of institutional values, vision, and characteristics communicated digitally. Brand personality represents the emotional and psychological traits associated with the institution as perceived by audiences, influencing engagement and brand attachment.

2.5. Research Gap and Hypotheses

Previous studies have highlighted the important role of digital communication strategies in strengthening digital branding across various industries and platforms. Research by [39] demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between content marketing and digital branding, indicating that creative and relevant content contributes to stronger brand perception in digital environments. Similarly, [26] found that live hosting activities significantly influence digital branding by enhancing audience interaction and emotional engagement. Supporting these findings, [24] also confirmed the positive impact of live hosts on digital branding, particularly in influencing consumer decisions.

Although existing studies have examined content marketing and live streaming features in commercial and consumer product contexts, limited research has focused on their application within higher education institutions, particularly on short-video platforms such as TikTok. Moreover, few studies have simultaneously analyzed the combined effects of content marketing and host live activities on institutional digital branding. Therefore, this study aims

to fill this research gap by investigating how content marketing and host live features on TikTok influence the digital branding of Institut Teknologi Nasional Malang.

Based on the theoretical framework and previous empirical findings, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Content marketing on ITN Malang’s TikTok account has a significant effect on digital branding.

H2: Host live activities on ITN Malang’s TikTok account have a significant effect on digital branding.

H3: Content marketing and host live activities simultaneously have a significant effect on digital branding.

3. Proposed Method

This study employed a quantitative associative research design to examine the influence of content marketing and host live activities on the digital branding of the TikTok account of Institut Teknologi Nasional Malang. A preliminary observation of the TikTok account and informal interviews with the university’s public relations team were conducted to gain an initial understanding of content creation practices, live hosting activities, and digital branding strategies implemented on the platform.

A survey method was used as the primary data collection technique to obtain quantitative data from a broad audience of TikTok users. This approach was selected due to its effectiveness in reaching respondents and empirically testing relationships between variables [32]. The population consisted of individuals who followed, viewed, or interacted with the official TikTok account of ITN Malang, including students and the general public.

The sampling technique applied was non-probability purposive sampling, as the exact population size could not be determined [32]. Respondents were selected based on specific criteria: being at least 17 years old, actively using TikTok, and having viewed or interacted with short video content or live streaming sessions on ITN Malang’s TikTok account. With a total of 13 indicators, this study obtained 130 respondents.

Data were collected using a structured online questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The instrument was developed based on relevant theories and previous studies to ensure content validity. A four-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1) was used without a neutral option to minimize central tendency bias [32]. Screening questions were included to ensure respondents met the research criteria, and data cleaning was conducted to remove incomplete or invalid responses.

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 23. Statistical procedures included validity and reliability tests to assess instrument feasibility, classical assumption tests (normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and linearity), and multiple linear regression analysis. Hypothesis testing was conducted using partial t-tests to evaluate individual effects, F-tests to examine simultaneous effects, and the coefficient of determination (Adjusted R²) to assess the explanatory power of the regression model [14].

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the direction and magnitude of the influence of Content Marketing and Host Live on Digital Branding. According to [14], multiple regression aims to predict the dependent variable based on changes in independent variables and to assess causal relationships among variables. In this study, the analysis was used to evaluate the contribution of Content Marketing and Host Live in explaining variations in Digital Branding.

Table 1. Multiple Linear Regression Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.528	.201		2.629	.010
Content_Marketing	.480	.089	.468	5.361	.000

Host_Live	.354	.089	.349	4.001	.000
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Table 1 shows Processed Data Regression

The regression equation is expressed as follows:

$$\text{Digital Branding} = 0.528 + 0.480 (X_1) + 0.354 (X_2)$$

The constant value of 0.528 indicates that when Content Marketing and Host Live are assumed to be zero, Digital Branding remains at a baseline level. The positive and significant coefficient of Content Marketing (B = 0.480; Sig. = 0.000) indicates that improvements in content quality significantly enhance Digital Branding. Likewise, Host Live shows a positive and significant effect (B = 0.354; Sig. = 0.000), suggesting that effective live hosts contribute to strengthening brand perception.

Based on the standardized coefficients, Content Marketing ($\beta = 0.468$) has a more dominant influence compared to Host Live ($\beta = 0.349$). This implies that high-quality and relevant digital content plays a greater role in shaping Digital Branding than live hosting performance alone. However, the combination of both strategies provides a more optimal impact on strengthening digital brand image.

Overall, the results confirm that Content Marketing and Host Live positively and significantly influence Digital Branding, with Content Marketing as the dominant factor.

4.2. Partial Hypothesis Testing (t-test)

The partial effect test (t-test) was conducted to examine the individual influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable, assuming other variables remain constant. According to [14], the t-test is used to evaluate the significance of regression coefficients in determining whether each independent variable has a significant effect on the dependent variable. In this study, the t-test was applied to assess the partial effects of Content Marketing and Host Live on Digital Branding, with a significance level of 0.05.

Table 2. Results of Partial Significance Test (t-test)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.528	.201		2.629	.010
Content_Marketing	.480	.089	.468	5.361	.000
Host_Live	.354	.089	.349	4.001	.000

Table 2 shows Processed Data Significance Test

The results indicate that Content Marketing has a t-value of 5.361, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.656, with a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05). This demonstrates that Content Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Digital Branding. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that Content Marketing influences Digital Branding is accepted.

Furthermore, Host Live shows a t-value of 4.001, which is also greater than the t-table value of 1.656, with a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05). This result confirms that Host Live has a positive and significant effect on Digital Branding. Thus, the hypothesis regarding the influence of Host Live on Digital Branding is accepted. Overall, the partial test results confirm that both Content Marketing and Host Live individually have significant positive effects on Digital Branding.

4.3. Simultaneous Hypothesis Testing (F-test)

The simultaneous effect test (F-test) was conducted to determine whether all independent variables in the regression model jointly have a significant effect on the dependent variable. According to [32], the F-test in multiple linear regression analysis is used to examine the overall significance of the regression model by comparing the explained variance with the unexplained variance (residual).

In this study, the F-test was applied to evaluate the combined influence of Content Marketing and Host Live on Digital Branding. The decision criterion states that the hypothesis is accepted when the F-value is greater than the F-table value and the significance level is less than 0.05.

Table 3. Results of Simultaneous Significance Test (F-test)

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.813	2	5.907	90.334	.000 ^b
	Residual	8.304	127	.065		
	Total	20.117	129			

Table 3 shows Processed Data Simultaneous Significance Test

Based on the F-test results, the calculated F-value is 90.334, which is greater than the F-table value of 3.92, with a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05). According to the decision criteria proposed by [32], this indicates that the independent variables jointly have a significant effect on the dependent variable.

Therefore, it can be concluded that Content Marketing and Host Live simultaneously have a significant influence on Digital Branding. These findings suggest that the regression model is statistically feasible and appropriate for explaining the relationship between the independent variables and Digital Branding.

4.4. Coefficient of Determination

The coefficient of determination is used to measure the extent to which independent variables are able to explain variations in the dependent variable within the regression model. According to [14], the coefficient of determination evaluates how far the independent variables can explain the changes in the dependent variable, either partially or simultaneously. In this study, the Adjusted R² value was applied to assess the explanatory power of Content Marketing and Host Live on Digital Branding.

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination Results (Adjusted R²)

	Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1		.766 ^a	.587	.581	.25571

Table 4 shows Processed Data Coefficient of Determination Results

Based on Table 4, the Adjusted R² value is 0.581, which falls within the range between 0 and 1. A value closer to 1 indicates a stronger explanatory power of the independent variables toward the dependent variable.

The result indicates that Content Marketing and Host Live collectively explain 58.1% of the variation in Digital Branding, while the remaining 41.9% is influenced by other variables not included in the research model.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the regression model demonstrates a relatively strong explanatory capability and is considered appropriate for analyzing the effect of Content Marketing and Host Live on Digital Branding.

4.5. Discussion

This study aims to analyze the effects of Content Marketing (X1) and Host Live (X2) on Digital Branding (Y) of the TikTok account of Institut Teknologi Nasional (ITN) Malang, both partially and simultaneously. The discussion focuses on interpreting the statistical findings to explain the relationships, directions of influence, and significance levels of each independent variable toward the dependent variable.

The analysis employed multiple linear regression, partial significance tests (t-test), simultaneous significance tests (F-test), and the coefficient of determination (Adjusted R²). These statistical methods were used to examine the role of content marketing and host live activities in shaping the digital branding performance of ITN Malang’s TikTok account. All data analyses were conducted using SPSS version 23.

4.5.1 Effect of Content Marketing on Digital Branding

The results of the partial hypothesis testing (t-test) indicate that Content Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Digital Branding of ITN Malang’s TikTok account. This is

evidenced by a t-value of 5.361, which exceeds the critical t-value of 1.656, and a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), accompanied by a positive regression coefficient.

These findings suggest that higher quality content marketing delivered through short-form TikTok videos contributes significantly to strengthening ITN Malang's digital branding. Informative, relevant, creative, and consistently presented content enhances positive audience perceptions regarding the institution's identity and image in the digital environment. Short video content enables institutions to communicate their values, academic programs, and campus activities in an engaging and visually appealing manner, which increases brand visibility and recognition.

This result aligns with the findings of [12], who reported that short-form video content on TikTok significantly increases brand engagement and visibility. Similarly, [39] found a positive relationship between content marketing and digital branding outcomes.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings support the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) theory, which emphasizes the importance of message consistency and content integration in building strong brand images. In this context, content marketing functions as a primary communication channel that delivers institutional messages through visual storytelling, thereby reinforcing brand positioning, brand identity, and brand personality of ITN Malang in a cohesive manner.

4.5.2 Effect of Host Live on Digital Branding

The results of the partial hypothesis testing also reveal that Host Live has a positive and significant effect on Digital Branding. The t-value for Host Live is 4.001, which is greater than the critical t-value of 1.656, with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) and a positive regression coefficient.

This indicates that the role of live hosts in conveying information, facilitating direct interaction, and establishing two-way communication with audiences contributes significantly to enhancing ITN Malang's digital branding. A professional, engaging, and credible host acts as a brand representative who can build emotional connections and trust with viewers. Live streaming allows audiences to ask questions in real time, receive immediate responses, and experience a more personalized form of communication.

These findings are consistent with the study conducted by [26], which demonstrated that live streaming positively and significantly influences branding performance. Additionally, [38] emphasized that live hosts play a crucial role in increasing audience engagement and trust.

Within the IMC framework, host live activities serve as active communicators that strengthen brand messages through real-time interaction, creating more authentic and immersive communication experiences. This interactive communication process enhances audience involvement and fosters emotional bonds, which are essential components in building strong digital branding.

4.5.3 Simultaneous Effect of Content Marketing and Host Live on Digital Branding

The simultaneous hypothesis testing (F-test) confirms that Content Marketing and Host Live jointly have a significant effect on Digital Branding. The obtained F-value of 90.334 exceeds the critical F-value of 3.92, with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.581$) indicates that both independent variables explain 58.1% of the variation in Digital Branding, while the remaining 41.9% is influenced by other factors outside the research model.

These results demonstrate that ITN Malang's digital branding is not shaped by a single communication strategy, but rather by the combined influence of high-quality content marketing and effective live host interactions. Content marketing delivers structured and visually appealing messages, while host live sessions enhance engagement through real-time communication and emotional connection.

This finding supports previous studies by [42] and [40], which concluded that the integration of content marketing and live streaming significantly contributes to brand image development. Theoretically, this strengthens the IMC concept that emphasizes the integration of multiple communication elements to build consistent and strong brand perceptions. In this study, content marketing serves as an informative and visual communication medium, while host live activities reinforce brand messages through interactive experiences. The synergy between these strategies enhances the effectiveness, consistency, and competitiveness of ITN Malang's digital branding on TikTok amid increasingly intense digital competition.

5. Conclusions

5.1. Conclusion

This study examined the effects of Content Marketing and Host Live on the Digital Branding of the TikTok account of Institut Teknologi Nasional (ITN) Malang. Based on the results of multiple linear regression analysis, partial and simultaneous hypothesis testing, and discussion, several conclusions can be drawn.

First, Content Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Digital Branding. The statistical results indicate that the t-value of 5.361 exceeds the critical value of 1.656, with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This finding demonstrates that high-quality content delivered through TikTok short videos characterized by accuracy, relevance, clarity, value, and consistency contributes substantially to strengthening ITN Malang's digital brand identity, positioning, and institutional image.

Second, Host Live also has a positive and significant influence on Digital Branding. The obtained t-value of 4.001 is greater than the critical value of 1.656, with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This result indicates that the professionalism, interactivity, attractiveness, and credibility of live hosts enhance emotional connections with audiences, increase trust, and reinforce positive digital brand perceptions through real-time engagement.

Third, the simultaneous analysis confirms that Content Marketing and Host Live jointly exert a significant effect on Digital Branding. The F-value of 90.334 exceeds the critical F-value of 3.92, with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the Adjusted R^2 value of 0.581 indicates that both variables explain 58.1% of the variation in Digital Branding. This suggests that an effective digital branding strategy requires the integration of high-quality content marketing and interactive live communication.

Overall, the findings imply that TikTok serves as an effective digital marketing communication platform when content marketing strategies are combined with engaging live host interactions to strengthen the digital branding of higher education institutions.

5.2. Limitation

Despite providing valuable insights, this study has several limitations. First, the research focused solely on the TikTok platform of ITN Malang, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other institutions or social media platforms. Second, the study examined only two independent variables, namely Content Marketing and Host Live, while other factors such as audience engagement, brand awareness, visual quality, trust, and algorithmic exposure may also influence digital branding outcomes.

Additionally, this study employed a quantitative approach using questionnaire-based data, which may not fully capture the deeper perceptions, motivations, and experiences of audiences when interacting with digital content and live streaming activities.

5.3. Suggestion

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several recommendations can be proposed. First, ITN Malang should continue to utilize TikTok as a strategic digital communication platform by consistently delivering informative, relevant, and high-value content to maintain and strengthen its digital brand image.

Second, content marketing management should be conducted sustainably by focusing on message clarity, creativity, audience relevance, and consistency to better meet the needs of prospective students and the general public.

Third, the institution is encouraged to enhance the quality of Host Live sessions by providing training and institutional knowledge to hosts, enabling them to communicate more professionally, interactively, and convincingly with audiences.

For future research, scholars are advised to incorporate additional variables such as engagement rate, brand awareness, trust, visual aesthetics, or audience loyalty to gain a more comprehensive understanding of digital branding formation. Employing qualitative or mixed-method approaches may also provide deeper insights into audience perceptions and behavioral responses.

Finally, future studies may expand the research scope by examining other educational institutions or different social media platforms to allow comparative analysis and broader contributions to digital marketing communication research.

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