Social Media Marketing Strategies in Islamic Higher Education: An Analysis of Engagement and Brand Post on Instagram and X

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ABSTRAK

Institusi Pendidikan Tinggi Keislaman (PTK) didorong untuk terlibat dalam aktivitas pemasaran sebagai respons terhadap tingginya tingkat persaingan dalam perekrutan mahasiswa, baik di dalam sektor PTK maupun dalam lanskap pendidikan tinggi secara umum. Media sosial telah berkembang menjadi sarana komunikasi pemasaran yang signifikan dan berpengaruh terhadap keputusan mahasiswa dalam memilih program studi di PTK. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana media sosial menjadi alat dalam promosi PTK. Data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini meliputi jumlah pengikut media sosial, tingkat interaksi, serta jumlah unggahan dari lima universitas Islam terkemuka di Indonesia berdasarkan pemeringkatan UniRank tahun 2021. Pengolahan data dilakukan menggunakan perangkat analisis media sosial yaitu FanpageKarma. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menyajikan analisis isi terhadap unggahan media sosial pada platform Instagram dan X yang diklasifikasikan berdasarkan kategori unggahan merek (*brand post categories*). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa universitas-universitas terkemuka secara efektif memanfaatkan berbagai platform media sosial, seperti Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, dan YouTube. Secara khusus, Instagram dan X diidentifikasi sebagai dua platform yang dikelola paling aktif. Temuan penelitian mengindikasikan bahwa dalam konteks pemasaran media sosial melalui Instagram dan Twitter, peningkatan jumlah konten yang dibagikan berkorelasi positif dengan jumlah reaksi, komentar, dan *share* yang dihasilkan. Lebih lanjut, analisis isi pada Instagram dan X menunjukkan bahwa kategori *Functional Brand Post* merupakan kategori unggahan yang paling dominan di antara lima institusi Pendidikan Tinggi Keislaman terbaik di Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Higher Education (IHE) plays several important roles in economic development (Sonita, 2021), fostering pluralism and propagation of Islam (Asmuni, 2024). IHE has characteristics such as a prominent and explicit focus on the spiritual aspect of knowledge, research, and all forms of discourse. The spiritual dimension is interwoven into the educational experience, highlighting the significance of recognizing and embracing the divine presence in all areas of study. Although its unique characteristics in the curriculum content, and have the divine vision and mission, negative stigmatization still exists. For example, in Indonesia stigmas of Islamic education include irrelevant curriculum (Riadi, et.al, 2021), limited infrastructure and resources, inequality of access and quality of education, the quality of teaching and research

that needs to be improved, and low relevance to the needs of society (Alam and Tharaba, 2023), that make IHE becomes the second choice after the General Higher Education among prospective students, especially the State run institutions (Juhaidi, 2024).

This article aims to analyze the social media usage by top 5 Indonesian IHE/Islamic universities as marketing communication activities. The top 5 institutions (based on rank released by UniRank in 2020) are Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (UMM), Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS), Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY), Universitas Islam Negeri Malang (UIN Malang) and Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII).

Based on data from the Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture (2019) and Indonesia Ministry of Religious Affairs (2021), there are 4.621 universities in Indonesia, and only 19% are IHE/Islamic universities. Even so, only 9% of the total students in Indonesia are IHE students. This makes the competition between Islamic universities in Indonesia even tighter considering that they have to compete for the same market niche as other state universities. In this context, the selection of the five best Islamic Higher Education institutions (IHE)—namely UMM, UMS, UMY, UIN Malang, and UII—as research subjects is based on their positions within the top five. This status makes them suitable trendsetters or role models that are highly active in utilizing social media. By analyzing these five universities, the study can reveal digital marketing communication patterns that are effective and adaptive, particularly for prospective students who are currently active in selecting campuses through social media or online platforms.

This situation urges IHE to conduct promotional or marketing communication activities, because there was a significant direct effect of the marketing, Islamic branding, and word of mouth on decisions of prospective students. IHE marketing and branding strategies positively and significantly influence interest in entering higher education institutions. To attract and reach prospective students, IHE are advised to package information through online media, such as the values, uniqueness, and innovation of services offered, so that the target consumers

feel as part of the institution (Abdullah and Nento, 2024).

One of the channels for marketing communication is social media. In general, social media can be an effective and efficient medium of digital marketing compared to traditional marketing. Higher education uses social media because students and college students spend more time on the internet, and public uses the internet to find educational institutions, as well as parents have started to conduct assessments of school or college based on its website and online presence. Students explore and compare institutions based on their online presence (Munadi, 2021). Marketing content on social media should be packaged in an attractive way, without exaggeration and should be conveyed properly. The type of social media platforms often used in educational marketing are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, LinkedIn, and Websites (Rukaeni, et.al, 2021).

Indonesian IHE are more active in social media especially to build brand equity, compared with General Higher Education. More internet users indirectly affect the ease of public acceptance of information online (Juhaidi, 2024). In the current digital era, the higher education sector has entered a digital era, with online activities becoming the primary gateway for implementing their marketing strategies. The behavior of prospective students has begun to shift, and they tend to be more active in seeking and selecting information using social media, especially when choosing a university. It's important to understand that we are still in an era where Islamic universities are often the second choice for prospective students. Therefore, Islamic universities must work extra hard to build their image through digital marketing strategies.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the digital marketing communication patterns of the top five universities, specifically those that are expected to become trendsetters and role models for other Islamic universities in utilizing social media for marketing strategies in this digital age.

The previous work on social media usage by IHE shows top post content on the Instagram and Facebook platforms where three content categories dominate. The three categories are

Experiential Brand Post, Brand Resonance, and Brand Community. Experiential Brand Posts, with the highest number of content categories, present content that stimulates the audience's sensory and behavioral responses by using photos or videos related to situations on campus (Utami, et.al, 2024). This current study investigates how the top five Islamic universities in Indonesia, as ranked by UniRank in 2021, utilize social media for institutional marketing purposes. Consequently, the primary objective of this research is to analyze the social media marketing practices employed by these five universities.

LITERATUR REVIEW

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing consists of the attempt to use social media to persuade consumers that one's company, products and/or services are worthwhile. Social media marketing is marketing using online communities, social networks, blog marketing and more (Neti, 2011).

There are so many statistics on how the use of social media has a full impact on the development of marketing of a product or service. Research conducted by Mashable (2010), for example, shows that 56% of consumers say they are likely to recommend a brand to a friend after becoming a fan on Facebook. Furthermore, 77% of consumers say they interact with brands on Facebook primarily by reading posts and updates from the brand. A 2011 study by ReadWriteWeb showed that when the National Restaurant Association adjusted consumers who used social media including applications, Twitter, Facebook, FourSquare, UrbanSpoon, and others, it not only got more consumers, but even those consumers were more likely to come back (Saravanakumar & Suganthalakshmi, 2012).

Significantly different from conventional marketing strategies, Social Media Marketing (SMM) offers three distinct advantages. First, it provides a window for marketers to not only present products/ services to customers but also to listen to customer complaints and suggestions. Second, it makes it easier for marketers to identify various peer groups or influencers among various groups, which in turn

can become brand followers and help the organic growth of a brand. Third, all of this is done at almost zero cost (compared to conventional customer outreach programs) because most social networking sites are free (Neti, 2011).

Another definition explains that there are several elements that must appear in social media marketing. There are so many statistics on how the use of social media has a full impact on the development of marketing of a product or service. Social media marketing is an interdisciplinary and cross-functional concept that uses social media (often in combination with other communications channels) to achieve organizational goals by creating value for stakeholders (Felix et al., 2017).

Brand Post Category

Brand post is an essential element of a brand's presence on social media (Lipsman in Tafese, 2017). Brand post is the main vehicle used by a brand to maintain its communication with customers. Tafesse & Wien (2017) have categorized brand posts into 12 categories. These categories can be used to inspire brand post ideas, and brand owners can evaluate which categories they use frequently and/ or rarely, and which categories can drive higher and/ or lower levels of audience engagement.

Table 1.
Brand Post Categories

No	Category	Definitions
1.	*Emotional brand post*	The purpose is to arise audience's emotional aspects. Usually contains words that are full of emotion, inspiring stories, jokes to arise affective responses such as happiness and trivialization (did you know).
2.	*Functional brand post*	The purpose is to expose the company function and services. Usually promoting the benefit of the product and or services according to work, quality, reach, design, and style. The common themes are product reviews, awards, product function.
3.	*Educational brand post*	The purpose is to inform and assist audiences to get new skills or get new knowledge about the trend and development towards the industry. The common themes such as tips and tricks, instruction, and article

4.	*Brand resonance*	The purpose is to influence consumer behaviour by exposing product identity, brand image, brand personality, brand association, and brand products. Common themes: symbol, tagline, character, photo product, and history.
5.	*Experiential brand post*	The focus is to increase the sensory response and audience behaviour. The common themes: images, sound, product launching, festival, and event
6.	*Current event*	This category appears in the particular time such as national holidays, religious moment, new year eve, and the anniversary of the organization.
7.	*Personal brand post*	These brand posts center around consumers' personal relationships, preferences and/ or experiences. These brand posts typically invoke personally meaningful themes, such as family, friendship, personal anecdotes or future plans to initiate deeply personal conversations with consumers. Common themes: friends, family, personal preferences, anecdotes and future plans
8.	*Employee brand post*	These are brand posts about employees. Employee brand posts present employees' perspective on a range of issues, such as employees' technical expertise, their managerial philosophies, or their personal interests, hobbies and worldviews
9.	*Brand community*	These brand posts promote and reinforce the brand's online community. These brand posts foster a sense of community identification and engagement with the community, by recruiting new community members, as well as encouraging participation from existing members Common themes: encouraging fans to become members of the brand's online community, acknowledging fans (e.g. mentioning their name, tagging them), using/ soliciting user-generated content.
10.	*Customer relationship*	These brand posts solicit information and feedback about customers' needs, expectations and experiences. These brand posts seek to deepen the impact of customer relationships on social media channels by encouraging customer feedback, reviews and testimonies Common themes: customer feedback, customer testimony and customer reviews and customer services

(Source: Tafesse & Wien (2017))

Tafesse and Wien (2017) classify brand posts into various strategic categories with distinct objectives, ranging from Emotional brand posts designed to evoke affective responses from the audience to Functional brand posts that highlight institutional functions, quality, and accolades. Additionally, the Educational category focuses on providing new insights, Brand resonance aims to strengthen brand identity and image, and Experiential posts emphasize sensory experiences through events or product launches. Communication is further established through contextual moments in Current events, personal approaches in Personal brand posts, and the highlighting of staff expertise through Employee brand posts. Finally, these strategies encompass building group loyalty via Brand communities and gathering customer feedback to deepen interaction through the Customer relationship category. This study uses Fanpage Karma to analyze institutional digital strategies by facilitating content classification based on 12 branded post categories. Using Fanpage Karma, the method measures follower growth, post frequency, and user engagement levels. This study systematically maps the relationship between specific content types and related audience engagement metrics obtained from the platform.

METODOLOGI

Research Design
The objective of this study is to conduct an analysis and comparison of the social media activities and content disseminated by the official accounts of the top five Islamic universities in Indonesia, as ranked by UniRank, across platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. To facilitate the monitoring and collection of social media activities from the selected institutions, this study uses a qualitative research method with content analysis on social media using a tool known as Fanpage Karma. Although the initial data collection covered four platforms (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube), this study specifically focuses on Instagram and Twitter.

This software functions as a web monitoring tool that enables the identification of important topics and trends across various

industries by utilizing data sourced from social media platforms. Fanpage Karma was selected for its capability to deliver accurate data presentations and facilitate comparative analyses across multiple accounts simultaneously. As a leading social media marketing tool, Fanpage Karma assists researchers in gathering data and evaluating engagement metrics associated with the social media accounts under investigation.

The data collection process initiates with the use of the analysis feature, wherein the names of the social media accounts to be scrutinized are inputted. Subsequently, the timeframe for data retrieval is established to align with the anticipated duration of the study. The tool automatically compiles data from each account, encompassing metrics related to engagement rates, posting schedules, and the most effective content exhibiting the highest engagement rates within the designated timeframe.

The data amassed by Fanpage Karma is subsequently exported into an xls file format. Following this, the data undergoes processing, analysis, and categorization into tables based on the respective social media platforms. This categorization yields preliminary data regarding follower counts, content types, and overall engagement levels. Upon completion of the content analysis for each social media platform, the data is prepared for presentation, allowing for a comparative examination of usage and interaction across the various platforms.

Content analysis is performed by selecting the top posts that exhibit the highest Engagement Rate (ER), which is defined as the total interactions generated between the published content and the audience. The engagement rate serves as a critical metric for assessing the performance and effectiveness of social media content. It is particularly significant as it not only indicates the success of the content but also measures its impact on the audience. The methodology for calculating the engagement rate varies across different social media platforms. For Instagram and Facebook, the ER is computed by dividing the total interactions (likes, comments, saves, shares) by the actual number of followers, then multiplying by 100%. A higher ER suggests that the content is more relevant and engaging to the account's

followers. The content with the highest ER reflects the posts that garnered the most likes, shares, comments, and views during the specified period, indicating a greater level of audience appreciation and popularity on social media platforms. The analysis encompasses content from February 2020 to February 2021.

Data collection was conducted on social media platforms including Instagram, Facebook, X, and YouTube, focusing on the UniRank designation of the world's leading Islamic university. While initial data collection encompassed four platforms, this study focuses specifically on Instagram and Twitter for in-depth analysis, as they exhibited the most significant levels of management activity. This analysis encompassed selected content and user interactions during the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically from February 2020 to February 2021, due to the high use of social media during the period. The study's population consists of the top Islamic universities as ranked by UniRank in 2021. UniRank aims to evaluate the popularity of Islamic universities through its website, employing various criteria for its rankings. These criteria include the requirement that the universities be accredited by a recognized national or local accreditation body, offer a range of educational programs from undergraduate to postgraduate levels (including master's and doctoral degrees), and implement a direct or face-to-face teaching and learning system.

The population targeted by this research is the best Islamic universities in Indonesia according to the UniRank ranking in 2020. UniRank attempts to create a ranking of the best Islamic universities in Indonesia to address the popularity of Islamic higher education on its website. The best criteria according to this ranking are that they are accredited by national or local accreditation bodies, manage study programs at various levels; from undergraduate to postgraduate, as well as higher education institutions that conduct face-to-face teaching and learning activities. The research sample was taken from 5 of the best Islamic universities in Indonesia namely:

1. Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (UMM)
2. Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY)

3. Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS)
4. Universitas Islam Negeri Malang (UIN Malang)
5. Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII)

Research Limitations

The data under consideration pertains exclusively to the year 2020- 2021, a period marked by the Covid-19 pandemic, during which there was an increase in the use of social media in each university's promotional activities. The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2021) documented a 3.2% reduction in enrolment for 2021 in comparison to 2020. Cumulatively, this decline, when factored with the previous year's enrolment drop, resulted in an overall decrease of 6.5% relative to pre-pandemic levels, representing the most significant decline in the past half-century. Furthermore, lower-middle-income countries experienced a reduction in applicants of up to 20% (UNESCO National Commissions, 2021).

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was highly significant, limiting promotional activities for several universities and leading to the maximized use of social media during that period. During the Covid-19 period, social media become the suitable marketing communication channel for Islamic higher education as a substitute for classic promotional tools such as brochures, pamphlets, banners, exhibitions, and oral information (Rukaeni, etl.al., 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Researchers took several indicators as comparative data in this study. The first indicator was taken from the various social media channels managed by higher education institutions. The results of this study show that the top 5 best Islamic universities in Indonesia actively use various social media channels as promotional tools, namely Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. The intensity of content uploads from the universities shows that there is at least one piece of content uploaded per day, except for YouTube, which has a lower content upload intensity of once a week. On Instagram, all universities categorize themselves as higher education institutions and include their website in their bio. Some universities have added additional information to their bios, such as UIN Malang which includes a phone number, email, and YouTube link, as well as UMM and UMS which provide information on new student admissions.

An interesting aspect can be seen from the number of followers on each managed social media platform. Followers or fans refer to people who have liked or followed posts on social media over a certain period. If someone has followed a certain social media account, it means that the latest content uploaded on the followed social media account will appear on their social media feed, allowing them to stay more up to date with the information shared on social media by the colleges they follow. Just like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have their own terms, namely Fans for Facebook, Subscribers for YouTube, and Followers for Instagram and Twitter. By liking, following, and subscribing, the audience will automatically receive the latest information and increase the number of followers on each platform.

Table 2.
Numbers of Followers, Reactions, Posts All Platform.

Islamic Higher Education	Followers Facebook	Followers Instagram	Followers Twitter	Followers YouTube	Other social media
Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII)	32.757	73.853	12.730	17.1K	Linked In, Line
Universitas Islam Negeri Malang (UIN Malang)	16.939	29.049	22.145	11.9K	Linked In,
Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (UMM)	9.931	79.101	17.231	37.7K	Linked In, Line, Whats App, Telegram. TikTok

Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS)	19.484	39.035	2.567	11.2K	Linked In,
Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY)	18.819	58.070	27.143	6.74K	Linked In, TikTok

(Source: Data collection period 1 February 2020-1 February 2021)

The table 2 shows that Universitas Islam Indonesia is the university with the most followers on Facebook (32.757 followers) compared to other universities, such as Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (19.484 followers), Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (18.819 followers), and Universitas Islam Negeri Malang (16.939 followers). Meanwhile, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang is the university with the lowest number of followers on Facebook with a large difference compared to other universities, namely 9.931 followers.

On the X channel, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta has the most followers (27.143 followers) which is then followed by the X account of Universitas Islam Negeri Malang (22.145 followers), Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (17.231 followers), and Universitas Islam Indonesia with 12.730 followers. Meanwhile, the last position is occupied by Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta which only has 2.567 followers.

On the Instagram channel, the Instagram account of the University of Muhammadiyah Malang is the university account with the most followers among the other 4 universities, namely 79.101 followers. The second position is occupied by the Islamic University of Indonesia with 73.853 followers, followed by the Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta (58.070 followers), and the Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta (39.035 followers). Meanwhile, the last position is occupied by the State Islamic University of Malang with the fewest followers, namely 29.049.

The next channel, namely YouTube, shows that the account of the University of Muhammadiyah Malang is the university account with the most followers (subscribers) (37.700++ followers) followed by the Islamic University of Indonesia (17.100++ followers), the State Islamic University of Malang (11.900++ followers), the Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta (11.200++ followers), and the Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta which occupies the position of the YouTube account with the fewest followers, namely 6.400++ followers.

Based on the assessment of the followers of the social media channels of the universities, there are several other interesting things that were found. Instagram is the social media channel that is most followed by the audience for the universities that are the samples of this study.

The researcher also found that in addition to the 4 social media above, the universities also manage other social media channels that play a role in building interaction and image, namely LinkedIn, Line, WhatsApp, Telegram, and TikTok. Based on table 1, it can also be seen that the University of Muhammadiyah Malang is the university that manages the most diverse social media channels. By looking at the data above, it can be concluded that Instagram and X are the top channels in terms of the number of followers and the most active management among all platforms. For this reason, this study will focus more on the analysis of these two platforms.

1. Instagram Content Analysis

All universities have implemented their own strategies on Instagram. Starting from categorizing social media accounts specifically as educational institutions, listing official websites in the bio, to specifically writing telephone numbers, emails, and YouTube links as done by UIN Malang. UMM and UMS also implement similar things by adding website links for new student registration. From the table below, UMM has the highest number of followers, followed by UII and UMY. In its management, during the period from February 2020 to February 2021, UII made the most posts, totalling 531 posts. In second place is UMS with 516 posts, and UMY with 407 posts. The existing trend shows that the more posts that are made, the more total reactions (comments, shares, likes) will be received.

Table 3.
Instagram Data of Top 5 Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia

Universities	Followers	Total Reaction, Comments, Shares	Number of Post	Comment	Likes
UII	73.853	832.439	531	19.912	812.527
UIN Malang	29.049	269.978	252	4.382	265.596
UMM	79.101	888.221	516	11.193	877.028
UMS	39.035	516.697	407	3.821	512.876
UMY	58.070	543.298	381	8.871	534.427
TOTAL	279.108	3.050.633	2.087	48.179	3.002.454
AVERAGE	55.822	610.127	417	9.636	600.491
MIN	29.049	269.978	252	3.821	265.596
MAX	79.101	888.221	531	19.912	877.028
STD DEVIASION	21625.6746	252811.946	113.376805	6519.67006	247804.096

(Source: Data collection period 1 February 2020-1 February 2021)

This research also analyses posts represented through the 5 best posts from the Top 5 Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia. The indicators for the best posts are taken from content with the highest engagement rate percentage during the period of February 2021 to February 2022. Engagement rates themselves mean that the content has generated the highest number of likes, shares, comments, saves, and views by the audience compared to other content within the same time frame. The more interactions generated from a content, the more it shows that the content is becoming more popular because it successfully answers the needs of the audience on social media.

Diagram 1.
Content Analysis Top 5 Islamic Higher Education in Instagram
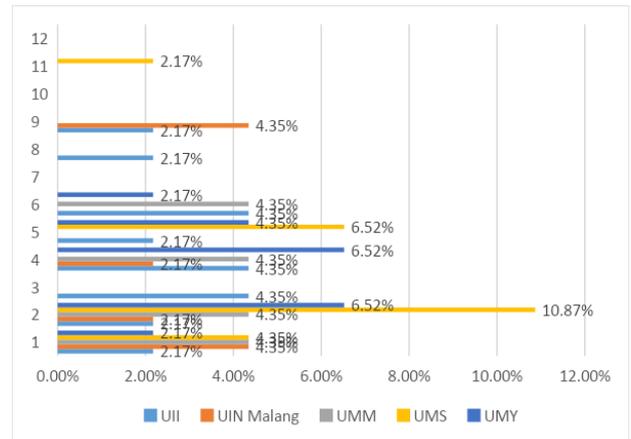
(Source: Data collection period 1 February 2020-1 February 2021)

A total of 25 best uploads from each channel were selected and analysed by grouping the uploads into 12 categories of social media brand posts from Tafesse and Wien. Of the 12 categories (number 1-12 on the left indicates the categories of brand post), UII has the most category variations using categories 1-9 with a fairly even distribution in each category. There are even several categories such as Educational Brand Post and Employee Brand Post that only appear in UII's Instagram content. The use of these various categories seems quite effective in attracting interaction from the audience. This can be seen from the highest number of comments achieved by UII. Meanwhile, the categories that were not used at all in the Instagram content of the top 5 Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia were the Personal Brand Post, Customer Relationship, and Sales Promotion categories.

Based on the analysis, the most widely used category on Instagram is the Functional Brand Post category. This second category is the category that appears in all the best posts of the top 5 Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia. This category even seems to dominate various posts in several universities such as UMS and UMY. In this category, universities show many achievements and awards that have been achieved. In addition, content that uses this category is also used to provide information related to university performance and services during the pandemic such as graduation, new

student admissions, and new student orientation periods which are carried out online and offline.

The category that is often used by the top 5 Islamic Higer Education on the Instagram platform is Functional Brand Post. This category discusses the functions and services of the company. Usually, this type of brand post promotes the benefits of the company's products and services according to the criteria of performance, quality, affordability, design, and style. UMS uses this type of brand post the most (10.87%) by containing content related to announcements related to the university, achievements, and graduations.

2.   X Content Analysis

Table 4.
*X Data of Top 5 Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia*

Universities	Fans	Total Reaction, Comment, Shares	Number of Post	Likes
UII	12.730	11.726	1.145	8.522
UIN Malang	22.145	1.115	237	805
UMM	17.231	10.607	1.182	8.937
UMS	3.121	57	7	48
UMY	27.143	17.943	1.336	12.545
TOTAL	70.913	41.448	3.907	30.857
AVERAGE	14.182,6	8.289,6	781,4	6.171,4
MIN	1.273	57	7	48
MAX	27.143	17.943	1.336	12.545
STD DEVIASION	11.507,403	7.576,57421	611,623495	5.479,30007

(Source: Data collection period 1 February 2020-1 February 2021)

The table 4 shows the social media X follower data from the Top 5 Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia. The table indicates that the most followers are held by UMY with 27.143 followers, followed by UIN Malang with 22.145 followers, UMM with 17.231 followers, UII with 12.730 followers, and UMS with 3.121 followers. Researchers also analysed the best social media posts on x from the 5 best Islamic universities in Indonesia. The indicators for the best posts were taken from content with the highest engagement rate percentage during the period of February 2020 to February 2022. The researchers found that the social media account with the highest engagement rate was UII, with a percentage of 0.27%, followed by UMS with a percentage of 0.7%. From the table above, it can

also be seen that on the X platform, on average, the more posts a higher education account has, the higher the total reactions (which consist of shares and comments) it receives over the course of a year. The same phenomenon occurs with the number of likes. The more posts, the higher the number of likes received. The number of shares, comments, and likes are determinants of engagement rates or how much the content created can attract the audience to get involved with that content.

Diagram 2.
Content Analysis Top 5 Islamic Higher Education in Twitter
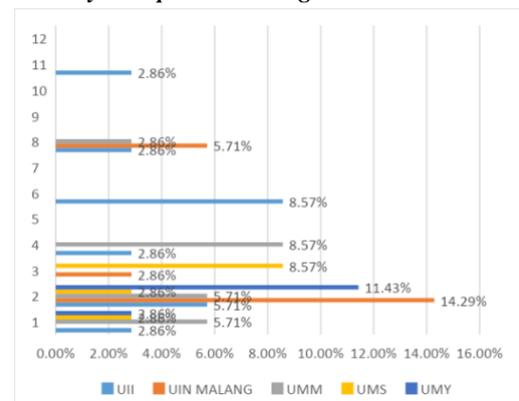
(Source: Data collection period 1 February 2020-1 February 2021)

In conducting the content analysis, researchers took 5 best contents from each university with the highest engagement rates. After getting 25 best contents, researchers categorized the existing posts according to the 12 brand post categories by Tafesse & Wien. Of the 12 existing brand post categories, UII has the most category variations that are evenly distributed. There are even several categories such as Current Event and Cause-related brand posts that only appear in UII's X content. The use of these various categories seems quite effective in attracting interaction from the audience. This can be seen from the engagement rate obtained by UII, which is 0.27%, the highest among the others. Of the 12 existing categories, there are several types of categories that are not used at all in the X content of the 5 universities. These categories are the Experiential Brand Post, Personal Brand Post, Brand Community, Customer Relationship, and Sales Promotion categories. When compared to the brand post categories that are not used on the Instagram platform, the brand post categories that are not used on the X platform have a greater number. Interestingly, there are 3 categories of brand

posts that are not used by the top 5 Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia, both on Instagram and Twitter, namely Personal Brand Post, Customer Relationship, and Sales Promotion.

In X, the most widely used category is Functional Brand Post with a large percentage of 38.8%, followed by the Emotional Brand Post category at 13.88%, and Brand Resonance at 11.11%. The Functional Brand Post category appears to dominate posts in several universities such as UIN Malang and UMY. In this category, universities present many achievements and awards that have been achieved. In addition, content that uses this category is also used to provide information related to the performance and services of universities during the pandemic such as graduation, new student admissions, and new student orientation periods which are carried out online and offline. Meanwhile, the Emotional Brand Post category is often found in content owned by UMM, UII, UMS, and UMY.

Essentially, this study emphasizes that the interpretations provided are limited to the analyzed content and are not intended to be generalized to a broader context. The analysis of the results is based exclusively on the content within a specific data collection period, with data presentation standards consistent with the conditions on the date the data samples were collected. Given the dynamic and fluctuating nature of social data and the media used, this study is limited to the period from February 2020 to February 2021 to ensure the accuracy and validity of the findings at the time of the study was conducted.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that this study shows evidence of the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies, but only at administrative and informative level. It has not shown a relational level. The implemented strategies have proven highly effective in building authority and trust through the dominance of the functional post brand. This information-sharing approach is highly relevant to the needs of prospective students during the pandemic, as they are more inclined to seek information through social media rather than direct sales promotions.

The results consistently show a positive correlation between post volume and user engagement (likes, comments, and shares). This demonstrates that effective social media management on Instagram and X values activity-based visibility.

While current strategies are functionally effective in attracting new followers, they lack the ability to build long-term emotional connections. Current PTK marketing remains one-way, necessitating a transition to a two-way dialogue to strengthen brand loyalty among prospective students and alumni.

The absence of categories like Experiential Brand Post, Personal Brand Post, Brand Community, Customer Relationship, and Sales Promotion suggests that these institutions haven't fully utilized social media's potential to foster long-term emotional connections. Current marketing approaches are still dominated by functional aspects, even though modern marketing dynamics demand a two-way dialogue to foster stronger brand loyalty among prospective students and alumni

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