

## Marketing Strategies of Independent Musicians on Tiktok to Introduce Their Works and Enhance Personal Branding

R. Suryanti Ismail<sup>1</sup>, Marissa Silooy<sup>2</sup>

Universitas Kristen Indonesia Maluku, Indonesia<sup>1,2</sup>

### CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Name : R. Suryanti Ismail  
E-mail: yantiismail1877@gmail.com

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### ABSTRACT

TikTok provides broad opportunities for independent musicians to promote their songs and strengthen their personal branding without the support of major record labels. This study aims to analyze the role of marketing strategies on TikTok in providing positive impacts for these musicians. Using a qualitative approach with a case study method, data were collected through observation of relevant TikTok accounts and online interviews with independent musicians who actively use the platform. The results indicate that independent musicians utilize various creative strategies to expand their audience reach, including collaborating with other content creators, producing visually engaging videos with high-quality audio, and consistently uploading content that aligns with TikTok's algorithm dynamics. In conclusion, these strategies effectively enhance audience engagement and support the development of independent musicians' public image, confirming TikTok's positive role as a viable marketing platform outside the major label system.

**Keywords:** Independent Musicians, TikTok, Musical Works, Personal Branding

### ABSTRAK

TikTok sebagai platform digital yang berkembang pesat memberikan peluang luas bagi musisi independen yang berkarya tanpa dukungan label rekaman besar untuk memperkenalkan karya musik mereka sekaligus membangun citra diri di hadapan publik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran strategi pemasaran melalui platform TikTok dalam membantu musisi independen mempromosikan karya musik serta memperkuat personal branding mereka. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi terhadap akun TikTok yang relevan dan wawancara daring dengan musisi independen yang aktif menggunakan platform tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa musisi independen memanfaatkan berbagai strategi kreatif untuk memperluas jangkauan audiens, seperti melakukan kolaborasi dengan kreator konten lain, memproduksi video yang menarik dengan kualitas audio yang baik, serta secara konsisten mengunggah konten yang sesuai dengan dinamika algoritma TikTok. Kesimpulannya, strategi-strategi tersebut terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan keterlibatan audiens dan mendukung pengembangan citra publik musisi independen, menegaskan peran positif TikTok sebagai platform pemasaran yang layak di luar sistem label besar.

**Kata kunci:** musisi independen, TikTok, karya musik, personal branding

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has brought fundamental changes to the way musicians create, introduce, and distribute their works to the public. The advancement of internet technology and internet-based communication media has accelerated the growth of social media platforms, including TikTok, which enables users to easily share information, communicate, and create content (Novitasari et al., 2024). (Wulandari et al., 2025) noted that one of the most significant shifts in the marketing sector is the transition from conventional image-building methods toward digital strategies that focus on social media platforms. In this context, TikTok has emerged as a powerful platform through its short-video format and dynamic algorithm system that allows content to spread widely and rapidly.

The presence of TikTok provides new opportunities for independent musicians to introduce their songs without relying on contracts with major record labels. According to (MR Alifiardy, HP Santosa, 2022), the use of digital media by independent musicians is primarily intended for communication and promotional activities as well as for building and maintaining their personal image among audiences. By combining creative content ideas, adapting to popular trends, and actively interacting with followers, independent musicians are able to strengthen their identity and expand their audience reach in the digital space.

This phenomenon can be observed through the emergence of many songs that suddenly become viral on TikTok, receiving significant public appreciation and even challenging the dominance of mainstream music markets. Furthermore, (Rachmadayanti et al., 2021) explain that TikTok is a short-video sharing platform that has reached 2 billion downloads and more than 1 billion monthly active users. With such vast potential, many companies are increasingly utilizing the platform in an effort to make their products go 'viral' through TikTok's algorithm. Therefore, mastering effective marketing strategies on TikTok becomes essential for musicians in order to remain relevant and competitive in the music industry. Similarly, (Dewi et al., 2023) explain that the emergence of TikTok functions as a digital marketing strategy and a medium for building a brand, as the platform has the ability to influence the behavior of its followers. A brand itself is an intangible asset; however, its impact is significant in shaping and strengthening a trademark.

This study aims to explore how marketing strategies implemented by independent musicians on TikTok can support the promotion of their musical works and the development of their personal identity in the digital era. The main focus of this research is to analyze the impact of TikTok marketing strategies on the success of musical works and the formation of musicians' personal branding.

The objective of this study is to identify and analyze the extent to which marketing strategies on TikTok contribute to shaping and strengthening public perceptions of the original works of independent musicians. This effort is expected to help expand their listener base and reinforce their presence in the highly competitive digital music industry. Producing musical works alone is not sufficient; achieving success in the music industry also requires adequate infrastructure and marketing strategies so that the music that has been produced can reach and be enjoyed by the public.

Currently, many musicians have chosen to produce and promote their works through the independent (indie) route. The term 'indie,' which stands for 'independent,' according to the Indonesian

Dictionary (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia/KBBI), refers to being free, autonomous, or self-reliant. When associated with a band, an indie band refers to a group that operates independently, managing its own funding and covering all expenses—from production and marketing to distribution (Jati et al., 2021).

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

According to (MR Alifiardy, HP Santosa, 2022), a marketing strategy can be defined as a series of planned tactical steps aimed at introducing and promoting musical works to potential audiences. This effort is intended to build public awareness, stimulate interest, and encourage appreciation of the music so that the audience reach can be expanded and the musician's popularity can significantly increase. In the current digital era, marketing strategies are increasingly focused on optimizing social media platforms, utilizing digital technologies, and creating innovative and creative content to establish more effective interactions with target audiences.

Independent musicians, often referred to as indie musicians, are artists who manage all stages of music production independently, starting from songwriting and recording to promotion and distribution, without the support of major record labels. According to (Fawaid, 2022), the term "indie" does not refer to a specific genre of music but rather to the decision of musicians or bands to produce their works independently. This approach reflects artistic independence, as musicians do not rely on large recording companies in the music industry.

In the contemporary digital era, social media has become one of the most effective tools for independent musicians to introduce their works to the public. One of the most influential platforms is TikTok. (Rochmaniah et al., 2025) explained that TikTok is a relatively new social media platform that has gained significant popularity since its introduction by ByteDance, a Chinese technology company, in 2016. The platform allows users to create, edit, and share short-form videos with a variety of creative effects and background music. By combining audio and visual elements, this platform has attracted significant attention, particularly among younger audiences, and has greatly influenced social interactions in the digital era.

This widespread influence provides significant opportunities for independent musicians to promote their creative works to a broader audience. In line with this idea, (Anggarini, 2021) defines personal branding as a systematic process of building an individual's image, where a person and their career journey are shaped into a unique and recognizable brand identity. Personal branding plays a crucial role for independent musicians in promoting themselves on social media, as a strong identity can clearly express their creative character.

The synergy between well-implemented marketing strategies, the optimization of digital platforms such as TikTok, and the development of strong personal branding becomes a key factor in the success of independent musicians in popularizing their works. (Faisal et al., 2025) emphasized that the advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed the

structure of production, distribution, consumption patterns, and marketing strategies within the music industry.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative research method in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the marketing strategies used by independent musicians on the TikTok platform. This approach was selected because it enables researchers to explore social phenomena and creative expressions of musicians in utilizing digital media as a tool to promote their works and strengthen their personal identity.

The focus of this research lies in the digital marketing strategies implemented by independent musicians through TikTok. The research subjects consist of independent musicians who actively use TikTok features to introduce their musical compositions to the public. Data collection was conducted through virtual observations of relevant TikTok accounts and online interviews with selected musicians.

The research process was carried out over a period of three months, covering stages such as data collection, data interpretation, and the formulation of conclusions based on the findings obtained during the study. Observations were conducted on the digital profiles of musicians who regularly share their musical works, while interviews were conducted to explore their experiences, strategies, and challenges in promoting their music through TikTok.

In addition, the researcher also utilized supporting references such as academic journals, scientific articles, and other relevant literature to strengthen the analytical framework of the study.

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques, including data reduction, data presentation in descriptive narrative form, and the drawing of conclusions based on patterns identified from observations and interviews. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, this study applied source and method triangulation by comparing information obtained from multiple data sources.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The results of this study indicate that independent musicians use TikTok as a fundamental platform to introduce their musical compositions through various types of engaging and accessible content. Based on observations, musicians frequently share snippets of their latest songs, recordings from studio sessions, behind-the-scenes production stories, and creative challenge videos using their original audio tracks.

One example can be seen from the TikTok account of the music group Biru Baru, which uploaded a video of their performance at the Pestapora festival. In the video, the audience can be seen enthusiastically singing along to the lyrics, which creates an attractive and engaging digital presence for the group. Content like this successfully attracts public attention because it

combines spontaneity, entertainment value, and a sense of personal closeness between musicians and their audience.

Another crucial factor that determines the likelihood of content appearing on the TikTok For You Page (FYP) is the use of trending hashtags, appropriate upload timing, and consistency in producing content. Several musicians acknowledged that TikTok significantly contributed to the increase in the number of listeners and the broader distribution of their songs, especially due to the platform's algorithm that allows content to reach new audiences who may not yet follow their accounts.

From a personal branding perspective, the findings show that independent musicians build their identity by highlighting distinctive characteristics in their content. This uniqueness may appear through their musical style, communication style, or consistent visual identity presented to the audience. Musicians who maintain these distinctive characteristics tend to be more easily recognized and remembered by audiences.

Furthermore, active interaction with followers—such as replying to comments, collaborating on videos, and inviting audiences to participate in creative challenges—plays an important role in strengthening emotional connections with listeners. This relationship ultimately creates positive perceptions of the musician's personality and musical abilities, which contributes to strengthening their digital reputation.

In terms of marketing effectiveness, the combination of originality in content ideas, adaptability to trends, and musical performance skills becomes the key factor behind successful promotion. Many musicians reported that popularity gained through TikTok directly increased their music streams on other digital platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube.

Some musicians even received new collaboration opportunities, partnership offers, and invitations to perform at events after gaining recognition through TikTok. These findings confirm that TikTok has evolved into an effective marketing platform that is not only cost-efficient but also capable of rapidly expanding audience reach for artistic works.

## **CONCLUSION**

The analysis of marketing strategies used by independent musicians on TikTok demonstrates that this short-video platform plays a significant role in expanding the distribution of musical works for artists who operate independently without record label support. TikTok provides a broad creative space where musicians can promote their works without major barriers while benefiting from a rapid and extensive content distribution system.

The findings emphasize that promotional success on TikTok largely depends on musicians' ability to produce authentic content consistently and adapt to evolving trends and audience interactions. Various types of content—such as song previews, behind-the-scenes recordings,

and spontaneous creative moments—have proven effective in attracting audience attention and increasing engagement levels.

Personal branding also plays a vital role in the marketing strategies of independent musicians. Musicians who successfully communicate their unique identity, maintain consistent visual presentation, and interact effectively with audiences tend to be more easily recognized and remembered by the public. A strong personal identity can strengthen credibility, expand the fan base, and open opportunities for collaborations and other economic benefits.

This study also found that viral popularity on TikTok often contributes to increased performance on other digital music platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music, and YouTube. This indicates a mutually beneficial relationship between short-video content popularity and the broader development of musicians' careers.

For future research, it is recommended that studies involve a larger number of musicians from different regions and musical genres to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of marketing strategies used by independent musicians. Future studies may also apply quantitative methods, such as surveys or statistical data analysis, to measure the impact of TikTok marketing strategies on indicators such as listener growth, follower increases, and audience conversion to music streaming platforms.

Further research could also compare the effectiveness of TikTok with other digital platforms such as Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, or Spotify Clips. Additionally, future studies may examine the long-term influence of TikTok on the career development of independent musicians, including aspects such as brand sustainability, changes in consumer preferences, and monetization opportunities through collaborations with brands or record labels.

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