



## Digital Business Communication using TikTok Live Streaming

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### Abstract

*Live streaming popularized by TikTok, is one of the most widely used forms of business communication. Live streaming involves direct interaction between the broadcaster (the user broadcasting live) and the audience. TikTok live streaming allows broadcasters to share content in real time and interact with viewers through comments, emoticons, and other features. This research is a qualitative-research using phenomenological techniques, where researchers analyze data scattered on the Internet and interviews with sources who have direct experience with TikTok live streaming. This research aims to find out the phenomenon of digital business communication using the TikTok live streaming platform. The results of the study concluded that 1) digital business communication using TikTok live streaming is an effective and efficient marketing medium in explaining product information in real time, which can attract viewers (consumers) to establish communication about the product, so it can influence consumer buying interest to make online purchases; 2) digital business communication using live streaming increases the level of consumer satisfaction with the quality of the products they buy; 3) digital business communication using live streaming can reduce the risk of fraud compared to digital businesses that only rely on photos, comments and videos; 4) live streaming digital business communication has the concept of traditional face-to-face communication, the difference is that if in traditional communication it is done face-to-face, live streaming communication in business is done in real-time and the audience can see the broadcaster's (seller's) gestures of the broadcaster (seller), while the seller only sees the audience (consumer) through comments, emoticons, and other features.*

**Keywords:** *Digital Business Communications; live streaming; TikTok live streaming*

### Abstrak

Live streaming dipopulerkan oleh TikTok yang banyak dimanfaatkan untuk Komunikasi bisnis digital. Komunikasi melalui live streaming melibatkan interaksi langsung antara penyiar (pengguna yang melakukan siaran langsung) dan penonton. Live streaming TikTok memungkinkan penyiar untuk berbagi konten secara real-time dan berinteraksi dengan penonton melalui komentar, emoji, dan fitur-fitur lainnya. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan teknik fenomenologi, dimana peneliti melakukan analisis data yang tersebar di internet dan wawancara dengan narasumber yang memiliki pengalaman langsung dengan TikTok Live Streaming. Penelitian ini memiliki tujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana fenomena komunikasi bisnis digital yang menggunakan platform TikTok live streaming. Hasil penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa 1) komunikasi bisnis digital menggunakan TikTok live streaming menjadi media pemasaran yang efektif dan efisien dalam menjelaskan informasi produk secara real-time yang dapat menarik penonton (konsumen) untuk menjalin komunikasi mengenai produk tersebut sehingga dapat mempengaruhi minat beli konsumen untuk melakukan pembelian online; 2) komunikasi bisnis digital menggunakan live streaming meningkatkan tingkat kepuasan konsumen akan kualitas produk yang dibelinya; 3) komunikasi bisnis digital menggunakan live streaming dapat mengurangi risiko penipuan dibandingkan dengan bisnis digital yang hanya mengandalkan foto, komentar dan video; 4) Komunikasi bisnis digital live streaming memiliki konsep komunikasi tradisional tatap muka, perbedaannya jika dalam komunikasi tradisional dilakukan face to Face, komunikasi live streaming dalam bisnis dilakukan secara real-time dan penonton dapat melihat gerak gerik penyiar (Penjual) sedangkan penjual hanya melihat reaksi penonton (konsumen) melalui komentar, emoji, dan fitur lainnya.

Kata kunci: komunikasi bisnis digital; live streaming; *TikTok live streaming*

## INTRODUCTION

The use of digital technology is widespread in various spheres of life which can have both positive and negative effects (Dobryakov, Kasa, and Sukhostavskaya 2021). Digital technology is



used by business people to support business operations such as searching for supply chain data, product development, marketing or promotion, online sales, communication and customer service. According to (Harahap 2022), many business people use digital technology to attract buyers through the ease of service facilities for their products. Technological advancement promotes various innovations (Sumitha K et al. 2021). According to (Soemarwoto, 2020), digital technology transformation will accelerate the digital economy which can lead to economic independence and support national development. The digital economy is a pillar of the economy that can bring small and medium entrepreneurs to be more creative in business ventures. Digital technologies used by entrepreneurs include e-commerce and social media.

E-commerce is electronic-based that uses Internet and computer networks to conduct various personal and commercial trading activities (Sumitha K et al. 2021). E-commerce was originally in the form of a web where marketing communication was only in the form of images and consumer comments as the mainstay in marketing products. However, e-commerce has developed and expanded features associated with social media so that e-commerce is not limited to trading platforms but also as a communication or community tool that can be used as social media.

Social media is an online platform that allows users to interact or communicate (Paramita, Susanti, and Pambudi 2023). According to (Herlina, Destriana Widyaningrum, and Giovanni Theotista 2023), social media is an online platform that allows users to interact, share content, and connect with others virtually. Communicating through social media involves sending messages, sharing various types of content such as text, images, and videos, and participating in public or private interactions. Popular social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube, and many others. Social media is experiencing rapid development with its various features. Based on (Annur 2023), regarding the survey of the Ministry of Communication and Information and Katadata Insight Center (KIC):

Table 1: Top reasons for using social media 2020 & 2021

No	Name	Value / Percent
1	Help with communication	78,6
2	Use for friends/family	64,3
3	Follow friends activities	35,4
4	Meet new people	19,5

Based on Table 1, social media is the main reason for daily communication and interaction. Social media has changed from only communicating through comments, messages, and videos, which are one-way communication and not real time, to social media that can communicate in real time with the live streaming feature originally developed by TikTok in 2016.

TikTok is a social media platform that allows users to create, share and watch short videos. TikTok is indirectly included in the classification of e-commerce platforms because TikTok has experienced integration or expansion in several shopping features such as the "TikTok Shop" feature allows users to link products that are traded with their short videos. In general, TikTok focuses on video content integrated with elements of traditional e-commerce platforms as a platform that has a specific purpose on buying and selling products or services online and in general TikTok is known as a social media platform. TikTok's live streaming feature allows users to broadcast live from their accounts resulting in deeper engagement between content creators



and viewers. The live streaming feature allows for two-way communication. This makes TikTok a tool for business marketing (Paramita et al. 2023)

Digital business communication means providing up-to-date information about a business (Zhang Qin et al. 2021). Digital business communication refers to the use of digital technologies and online platforms to communicate between companies, employees, and other stakeholders using electronic means of communication such as email, instant messaging, video conferencing, and social media to enable more efficient business operations, optimize collaboration, and reduce geographical barriers. The goals of digital business communication include making business processes more effective and efficient such as saving operational costs ranging from business premises, marketing and human resources and having a wide range of market share opportunities because digital technology is able to bring business into the realm. Therefore, business communication is important because it plays a major role in business processes such as planning, directing, coordinating and managing existing resources to achieve business goals (Venkatesh, Thong, and Xu 2016). Therefore, this digital communication is very important in running a business, so business people need to ensure security and privacy in a more effective and trustworthy digital environment (Lopatovskiy and Dubych 2022).

The phenomenon of businesses using the TikTok live streaming platform is different from e-commerce businesses. Initially, e-commerce only conducted digital business communication using content in the form of pictures, videos, messages and other comments to consumers. But at this time, digital business communication has penetrated into content in the form of live streaming where sellers and buyers can communicate directly in the live streaming. Digital communication through live streaming is a transformation of social media and e-commerce, giving birth to direct communication in real time. The purpose of this research is to find out how the transcription of digital business communication integration is based on data and literature review, and how the digital business communication phenomenon of TikTok live streaming platform becomes a digital business communication trend based on traditional communication.

Digital technology has become popular and has developed rapidly in recent years (Nidoy 2023). Digital technology is widely used by business people to support more effective and efficient activities that can increase profits (Martínez-Caro, Cegarra-Navarro, and Alfonso-Ruiz 2020). Many business people use digital technology to support business ventures (Andry, Herlina, and Rianto 2023). Digital technology has a significant impact on human behavior in general and the economy, which can bring great opportunities for those who take advantage of technological developments to improve social life and business performance such as creating added value when using digital technology (Shah et al. 2023). Thus, the development of digital technology plays a very important role in supporting a country's economy. Digital technology can support economic growth in Indonesia up to 11% from 2019 to 2020 (Herlina, Loisa, and T. D. Mulyana 2021). Digital technology plays a very important role in various aspects of human life and the development of society. The main role of digital technology in life:

- a. Access to information: Digital technology provides quick and easy access to a wide range of information. Through the Internet, one can search and get information about news, knowledge, education and many other things within seconds.
- b. Communication: Digital technology is changing the way we communicate. emails, text messages, instant messaging applications, social media and other communication platforms allow us to quickly connect with people around the world.
- c. Business Development: Digital technologies offer new opportunities for business



development. E-commerce, digital marketing, business analytics and online platforms allow companies to reach a wider market, interact with customers and streamline operations.

- d. Education and learning: Digital technologies have changed the approach to education. Online learning, digital educational resources, online course platforms and virtual reality technology have opened up more flexible and affordable learning opportunities.
- e. Digital Divisions: Digital technologies have created digital divides in society. There is a digital divide between those with technological access and skills and those without.
- f. Media and entertainment: Streaming platforms, news websites, social media and other online content enable the consumption of media and entertainment in various forms, from videos to music, podcasts and news.
- g. Innovation and Invention: Digital technologies are driving innovation and new discoveries in a variety of fields, including science, technology, health and energy.
- h. Individual empowerment: Digital technologies empower individuals to create content, share ideas and engage in global dialogue. Social media and content sharing platforms enable everyone to become a "producer" of content.
- i. Work transformation and remote working: Digital technologies have changed the way we work and enabled remote work. We can collaborate online, access documents from anywhere, and hold meetings via video conferencing.

E-commerce has become a part of life in the 21st century due to its involvement in the business world, which continues to experience innovative features that support online commerce (Munoz, Holsapple, and Sasidharan 2023). According to (Balamurugan 2018), e-commerce is growing very fast and is becoming a global phenomenon that provides convenience, flexibility, and accessibility. E-commerce provides many benefits with a wide range of products that can be reviewed in terms of lower costs, availability of goods and time and cost savings (Sathyapriya and Manochithra 2020). According to (Balamurugan 2018), online shopping can be done through smartphones which have proven to be a major influence in the world of commerce. Masyarakat has a more flexible time when doing online shopping anywhere and anytime, moreover with a wide selection of products, prices and promotions will influence consumers to shop online (Herlina, Loisa, and T. M. S. Mulyana 2021). Almost 70% of people's income comes from transactions in e-commerce this is because the development of the Internet is accelerating so e-commerce will play a very important role in the 21st century (Balamurugan 2018). E-commerce stands for electronic commerce which functions as a forum for buying and selling activities conducted electronically over the Internet. E-commerce is a place for buying and selling goods and services related to websites or directly from online shopping platforms (Jain, Malviya, and Arya 2021). E-commerce is where the buying and selling of products or services through online platforms such as websites, applications, or other electronic commerce (Herlina et al. 2023). The most popular e-commerce in Indonesia such as Shoppe, TokoPedia, Bukalapak, and so on (Herlina and Widyaningrum 2022). E-commerce becomes an electronic communication tool and digital information process in business transactions (Jain et al. 2021).

Social media is a place to share various information both personal and public that has an interest. Social media is a meeting place for a community that is carried out online. Social media is an Internet-based application community that is built on the basis of ideology according to the goals of the account owner (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). Social media platforms act as a communication medium for sharing information from different points of view in the form of



content in the form of writing, photos or videos (Ahmed and Saeed 2021). Social media is used to convey information or ideas in the form of writing, photos and videos through the Internet network (Paramita et al. 2023). In an increasingly digitally connected world, social media has become an integral part of many people's daily lives, allowing them to connect, share and interact in new and innovative ways. Social media is widely used for marketing because many people spend a long time on social media sites. Social media has made it easier to access all information more easily, people can view, comment, react and share experiences quickly (Ahmed and Saeed 2021). However, social media has positive and negative effects that can affect human life (Fernandes Andry, Herlina, and Marcellus Susanto 2023).

TikTok is a social media platform focused on sharing short videos. Over time, TikTok has continued to innovate and adapt to trends and user needs. TikTok's features are evolving into social e-commerce that businesses can use to communicate marketing and sales through short videos. TikTok's various features make it an increasingly competitive marketplace in both the entertainment and business worlds through the various features it offers. Using TikTok's features can make the digital business communication process more efficient.

Live streaming communication refers to the process of communicating in real time through a live broadcast on an online platform. It involves the broadcaster (the person or entity doing the broadcasting) and the audience (the people watching the broadcast) interacting through comments, emoticons reactions, and other interactions. Live streaming is included in the theory of media effects, that influence viewers' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Live streaming as a medium has the potential to influence viewers' views on certain issues or cause changes in their behavior. Live streaming is a subset of social media, that allows users to share content, interact, and connect online. Social media theory analyzes how platforms like live streaming enable community building, influence and identity formation online. Live streaming involves direct interaction between the broadcaster and the audience, similar to interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication theory explains how people communicate with each other in person or through media. In the context of live streaming, this interaction creates a relationship between the broadcaster and the audience that is similar to interpersonal communication.

Digital business communication is the exchange of verbal and nonverbal information in an organization that includes the activities of producing, sending, receiving, and interpreting communication in the context of individuals, groups, the public, and mass media (Venkatesh et al. 2016). Digital business communication encompasses the realm of internet, mobile, and social media that connects with the audience by conveying words or images or videos that focus more on business communication (Joglekar et al. 2022). Digital business communication experiences innovation from year to year. Digital business communication on the e-commerce platform is only in the form of photo features, messages and consumer comments as a communication medium to attract consumers to be able to visit the business platform. But over time, digital business communication has used short videos and even uses live streaming functions to communicate with consumers in marketing their business products.

Communication between seller and buyer is included in interpersonal communication which should have good communication quality to reduce misunderstanding (Laksana and Nurhaliza 2023). According to (Herlina and Loisa 2018), good communication quality leads to close relationship which can improve individual performance and trust. According to (Koltsova and Kartashkova 2022), interpersonal communication through digital media can be exploited by



using cognitive, semiotic and psycholinguistic features of emoticons, included in text messages in social networks. Technical advances and the means of digital communication have led to the development of digital semiotics, which is characterized by its multimodality and abundance of paralinguistic elements such as emoticons, memes, and others. These extralinguistic elements serve as compensatory mechanisms in the new means of communication. According to (Loreto 2019), communication through social media that is done comprehensively can help interpersonal communication skills. Digital communication will have a positive impact on interpersonal communication in the world of work kerja (Amanawa and Nwiyii 2022). Therefore, digital business communication that uses live streaming features will be very good in the business world.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The type of research is qualitative research with an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is used to explore phenomena based on the experience of each meaningful event (Smith and Osborn 2012). The event to be analyzed in this study is digital business communication using the TikTok platform which is currently a trend. Here, digital business communication using the TikTok platform has the main goal of achieving great benefits with the least amount of resources. Data analysis techniques are carried out thematically. Thematic is the analysis of data transcriptions that support digital business communication on the TikTok platform by identifying different transcriptions that appear and then categorizing them more specifically (Liem S, Panggabean H and Farady R, 2019).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the search of various transcripts scattered on the Internet in the form of photos, videos, messages and survey results from various institutions, as well as interviews with several sources regarding the TikTok phenomenon with the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach using thematic techniques as follows:

### a. *History of the TikTok platform*

TikTok was first launched by the Chinese state initiated by a technology company called ByteDance in 2016 under the name of a platform called Douyin, then in 2018 ByteDance acquired the US social media and then merged the platform with the name TikTok.

### b. *Development of the TikTok platform*

TikTok has developed very rapidly, starting with creative video features such as creative effects, background music, and easy-to-use editing functions. The following is the growth of TikTok globally around the world based on the Business of Apps report (Annur 2023).

Table 2. TikTok user growth

No	Name	Active users of TikTok	Value/Percent
1	q1 2018	85,000,000	0.51%
2	q2 2018	133,000,000	0.80%
3	q3 2018	198,000,000	1.19%
4	q4 2018	271,000,000	1.62%
5	q1 2019	333,000,000	1.99%
6	q2 2019	381,000,000	2.28%
7	q3 2019	439,000,000	2.63%
8	q4 2019	508,000,000	3.04%
9	q1 2020	583,000,000	3.49%
10	q2 2020	700,000,000	4.19%



11	q3 2020	667,000,000	4.00%
12	q4 2020	756,000,000	4.53%
13	q1 2021	812,000,000	4.86%
14	q2 2021	902,000,000	5.40%
15	q3 2021	1,037,000,000	6.21%
16	q4 2021	1,212,000,000	7.26%
17	q1 2022	1,398,000,000	8.37%
18	q2 2022	1,466,000,000	8.78%
19	q3 2022	1,534,000,000	9.19%
20	q4 2022	1,601,000,000	9.59%
21	q1 2023	1,677,000,000	10.05%

Based on Table 2, the growth of TikTok users has a positive trend from year to year. The TikTok platform is gaining enormous popularity, especially among young users. A survey conducted by Katadata Media Network team in 2021 (Dihni 2022) is as follows:

Table 3. TikTok users by age

No	Age	Value/Percent
1	10-19 years old	28%
2	20-29 years old	35%
3	30-39 years old	18%
4	40-49 years old	16.3%
5	>49 years old	2.7%

Based on Table 3, the dominance of TikTok users is 20-29 years old with a value of 35%. The TikTok platform attracts public attention with dance challenges, trends, and viral creative content, and makes TikTok a personal experience, so many people spend time on TikTok. According to the We Are Social report, many people spent time on TikTok in January 2022 report (Annur 2023). Here are the details of the data.

Table 4. Ten countries with average time spent on TikTok per month

No	Name	Value/ Hours/Month
1	Britania Raya	27,3
2	Rusia	26,3
3	Amerika Serikat	25,6
4	Jerman	23,6
5	Australia	23,4
6	Meksiko	23,4
7	Indonesia	23,1
8	Kanada	22,6
9	Prancis	21,1
10	Brasil	20,2

Based on Table 4, the average time users spend on TikTok per month is in the range of 20-28 hours per month. TikTok continues to expand its functionality by introducing new features such as live streaming, special effects features, and collaborations with famous artists and celebrities. So many people spend a lot of time on TikTok. Based on a report from We Are Social and Hootsuite on time spent on social media throughout 2022 report (Annur 2023). Here are the findings:



Table 5. Average time spent using social media globally

No	Name	Value/ Hours/Month
1	TikTok	23,5
2	YouTube	23,1
3	Facebook	19,7
4	WhatsApp	17,3
5	Instagram	12
6	Line	11
7	Twitter	5,5
8	Telegram	4
9	Snapchat	3,2
10	FB Messenger	3,1

Based on Table 5, people spend more time on TikTok social media than other social media, with an average of 23.5 hours per month than other social media.

*c. TikTok platform for businesses*

TikTok is an e-commerce platform feature that other e-commerce such as Shopee and Tokopedia. Turning TikTok social media into e-commerce-based social media through social commerce features TikTok users can promote products through short videos. Based on a survey using the audience profiler feature of tSurvey.id report (Annur 2023). Here are the reasons people use TikTok to shop online.

Table 6. Reasons for purchasing with TikTok

No	Name	Value / Percent
1	Relatively low prices	76,75
2	Attractive promos & vouchers	65
3	Interesting host explanation	52
4	Easy to use features	41,25
5	Product ads always appear	38
6	Interesting host explanation	34
7	Confidence that the TikTok store is secure	31,5
8	Trusted seller	28,75
9	Host live influencer	24

Based on Table 6, marketing by TikTok through short videos with additional toppings from business people is able to bring consumers to be able to do online shopping on TikTok.

*d. Digital business communication strategy using TikTok live streaming platform.*

Digital communication media before TikTok by sharing photos and interacting through likes, comments, and shares as in web-based e-commerce (Ahmed and Saeed 2021). The digital business communication strategy basically uses a traditional communication strategy, namely direct supplementation through discussions in TikTok's live streaming and supplementation of previous social media. The results of interviews with TikTok consumers on how they perceive the online shopping experience show that they prefer online shopping in TikTok compared to other e-commerce because there are many promotions, the quality of the product does not disappoint because before they buy, they watch live streaming and ask everything in detail about the product to the seller so that the product they buy meets their expectations. Based on the results of the



interview, the digital business communication built by the TikTok platform is based on the concept of traditional or face-to-face communication, but the difference is that the TikTok platform uses online-based media. This online-based media is able to respond to consumers' needs through two-way direct communication so that two-way interaction occurs. The difference with digital business communication in e-commerce was one-way communication, consumers only saw messages, photos and videos so many products failed to live up to expectations or in the proverbial case of buying a cat in a bag. The presence of TikTok platform in live streaming feature brings big changes in digital business communication, which can facilitate digital business to be clearer, more real and closer to consumer expectations. Live streaming digital business communication is a good marketing place that is effective and efficient. However, no matter how good the marketing place is, if it is not balanced with price, quality, promotion, discounts and host quality, everything will be in vain. Therefore, digital business communication requires good management in managing the business to be more focused. Digital business can also support sustainable development (SDGs), which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

## CONCLUSION

Digital business communication is focused on short video content where buyers and sellers communicate only through comments. This communication is one-way, so there is no difference with other e-commerce platforms. TikTok's live streaming platform using the live streaming feature has two-way communication or interaction happening at the same time, so there is interaction between sellers and buyers. TikTok's digital business communication with live streaming feature has a concept with traditional or offline communication, which can provide a clearer picture than communication with text. TikTok's digital business communication with live streaming function is an effective and efficient marketing medium because sellers can provide detailed explanations of product information and provide challenges or attractions or direct proof of the product, so it can attract audiences interested in doing online shopping. TikTok's digital business communication with live streaming feature gives consumers a sense of confidence in the products they buy according to consumer expectations and clarifies the real condition of the product, and consumers can provide reviews in product comments and provide comments directly through the store's live streaming. TikTok digital business communication with the live streaming feature is able to significantly reduce business fraud compared to ordinary e-commerce that relies on photos, emoticons, comments and videos.

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