

## Social Media Performance in Telecommunications Companies: A Comparative Study Across Platforms

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### ABSTRACT

The telecommunications sector in Malaysia is a dynamic and competitive industry. Effective utilisation of social media could lead to business gaining competitive advantages. Hence, this paper examines the social media performance of two Malaysian telecom companies across four major platforms: YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. It examines key factors such as video post count, posting frequency, and account longevity to social media performance. It also examines audience engagement of the most popular videos across the four social media platforms. The findings indicate that early platform adoption enhances brand visibility by increasing follower counts. However, high follower numbers alone do not translate into audience engagement as consistent and frequent posting is equally important. Although frequent posting improves visibility and engagement, the findings also show that specific nature of platform and the audience specific behaviour should be considered. On Instagram, frequent posting does not lead to higher engagement, whereas TikTok rewards frequent posting. The study also highlights that YouTube remains the leading platform for viewership, while TikTok excels in engagement. Facebook and Instagram show mixed engagement levels. One social media approach for telecommunications companies is to provide consistent posting and develop platform-specific strategies which is needed for maximizing social media performance and maintaining a strong competitive position.

**Keywords:** Social media, social media strategies, Malaysia, telecommunications companies

### INTRODUCTION

The telecommunications sector is undergoing a significant transformation driven by rapid technological advancements and evolving consumer demands. The increasing availability of innovative devices and the increased demand for data requirements have shaped the demand for telecommunication services. Data consumption globally over telecom networks is projected to triple between 2022 and 2027, as highlighted in the PWC 2023 Report. This trend is also evident in Malaysia, where the telecommunications sector is both highly competitive and dynamic. The projected market size of the telecommunication sector of USD 8.33 billion in 2024 and anticipated to reach USD 9.07 billion by 2029 (Mordor Intelligence, 2023). The Malaysian telecommunications services industry has also experienced rapid transformation (Salazar, 2007) due to intense competition, technological advancement that have both led to an increase in subscribers and penetration rate. Within this competitive environment, maintaining a strong social media presence is crucial for telecom firms. This is even more crucial given that a large number of Malaysia population, i.e., at around 83.1%; as of January 2024; are active on social media (Data Reportal, 2024) and they

spend more time on social media than the global average (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2024). Consequently, the importance of social media strategies is crucial for companies in Malaysia.

Given this context of dynamic highly competitive environment together with high number of social media user in Malaysia, telecommunications companies should exploit social media to gain competitive advantage. Empirical research has provided the evidence that companies that are active on social media have gained competitive advantage ((Ravaonorohanta & Sayumwe, 2020). Thus, effective utilization of social media can improve a telecom company's market position, influence consumer behaviour, and drive innovation. Moreover, social media marketing is not only more cost-effective compared to traditional media advertising (Liu et al., 2021), but it also enhances consumer and stakeholder engagement by enabling direct interactions and nurturing relationships. Such engagement allows for advanced data analytics, provide knowledge of how to enable more engagement, and created business value (Liu et al., 2021)

Therefore, the objective of this paper is to assess the efficacy of social media techniques employed by two Malaysian telcos across four popular social media platforms, i.e., YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. We investigate how video post count, account establishment date, frequency of social media posts, content language, contribute to the effectiveness of telecommunications companies' social media presence in terms of number of followers and engagement. We examined four social media platforms rather than only on one platform brands as companies have utilised multi social media platform (Unnava, & Aravindakshan, 2021). Furthermore, consumers also engage with brand across several platforms (Unnava, & Aravindakshan, 2021). Additionally, an analysis of the most popular posts across popular social media platforms of the two telcos was also conducted to identify strategies that enhance follower interaction and social media effectiveness. Hence, this paper contributes to literature as it focuses on one specific industry, i.e., telecommunications with direct competitor comparisons. The study undertakes a comparative analysis of companies' performance across several social media platforms, including the old social media platforms (i.e., YouTube) with the emerging platforms (Tik Tok), thus exploring the levels of adoption and engagement on newer platforms versus the older platforms.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical studies have demonstrated the strategic advantages of social media engagement in gaining competitive advantage and consequently improving organizational performance. For instance, Ravaonorohanta and Sayumwe (2020) found that companies active on Twitter are associated with good financial performance. Similarly, Ashley and Tuten (2015) observed that brands with higher posting frequency tended to attract a greater number of followers. Additionally, their study indicated that organizations leveraging multiple social media platforms experienced higher levels of audience engagement and follower growth.

Thus, a company's presence on social media platforms plays a significant role in enabling direct interaction with the consumers. For this reason, start-up telecom companies, for instance, utilize platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to develop strong connections with their customers and improve customer relationships (Kalinová & Kovaříková, 2023). Research findings have shown that various strategies were employed to maximize engagement among social media users including customizing content and utilizing a diverse range of media formats, such as images and videos, which yield better results in follower acquisition compared to relying solely on one format (Church, Zhao, & Iyer, 2020). Another effective approach, as noted by Bredikhina et al. (2023), involves leveraging events and brand networking, incorporating interactive and event-related content to increase following and further enhance brand visibility on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram.

The effectiveness of social media strategies can be evaluated using key indicators such as audience growth and consumer engagement. Audience growth refers to the gradual increase in followers or subscribers. However, some scholars argue that social media engagement provides a more credible measure of the effectiveness of social media strategies (Trunfo & Rossi, 2021). Social media engagement, or interaction, can be assessed at three levels. The first level, consumption, involves passive engagement, such as viewing a brand's video. The second level, contribution, includes active interactions such as liking, commenting, or sharing content. The third and highest level, creation, refers to users generating their own content related to the brand (Trunfo & Rossi, 2021). The high-level engagement and connection with the audience are needed to improve brand outreach. As such, telecom companies for instance, can assess the efficacy of social media strategies by analysing these measures which covers a range of consumers' interactions, from basic responses like to higher level of consumer engagements.

Among the effective strategies for generating audience engagement and retention is maintaining consistent posting frequency as it will promotes users' anticipation and could builds a sense of connection among followers (Bareto & Ramalho, 2019; Peruta & Shields, 2017; Rosas-Quezada et al., 2019). Research by Barreto and Ramalho (2019) demonstrates the significant impact of posting frequency on consumer engagement, although this is also contingent upon content type and format used by the companies. Ashley and Tuten (2015) research also provide similar insights. Their study of social media content from selected brands across various social media channels, showed that brands with the highest number of weekly tweets also had the largest number of followers. Moreover,

they found that brands utilizing the most social media channels had higher follower counts and greater engagement (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Peruta and Shields (2017) further emphasize the importance of consistent branding and posting across multiple platforms to retain and attract customers. Hence, companies that have more frequent and consistent social media posts would have higher audience retention rates, as audiences are more likely to stay connected to a brand when regularly supplied with engaging content (Rosas-Quezada et al., 2019). As such, companies should have prioritized both consistency and frequency of social media posts as part of their strategy.

Consumers engagement in the virtual environment, is defined as a behavioural manifestation towards a brand, and it is usually seen through actions such as clicks, likes, comments, and shares (Van Doorn et al., 2010). A common measure of engagement, the "like," is an indicator of users approval or satisfaction with the content (Swani et al., 2013; Gavilanes et al., 2018). Social media posts with a high number of likes are often seen as interesting and popular which can attract additional engagement and developed greater connection with consumers (Sabate et al., 2014). Social media posts with a high number of likes are often perceived as interesting and popular, which can attract additional engagement and foster a stronger connection with consumers (Sabate et al., 2014). The importance of online engagement has been emphasized by researchers, as empirical research has shown that consumer online engagement positively impacts their offline behavior (Unnava & Aravindakshan, 2021).

However, the challenges for business achieve significant user engagement as noted by Moran et al. (2020) that engagement rates with branded content are declining despite increased content marketing efforts of the companies. Moran et al. (2020) analysed 757 brand posts over a 15-week period and found that adjustments to controllable content component, such as media richness and interactive cue, have significant increased consumer-brand engagement Metrics like clicks, likes, shares, and comments all improved when these strategies were implemented. Hence, this shows the importance of strategically optimizing content to drive audience engagement.

Content strategy, including action-oriented content, language, and cultural relevance, is also vital in strengthen customer engagement and social media effectiveness (Liu et al., 2021). Liu et al. (2021) highlight that action-oriented content designed to encourage user engagement significantly contributes to digital engagement growth. Furthermore, Zhao et al. (2018) demonstrate that using local languages and incorporating cultural backgrounds are more engaging than one-size-fits-all strategies, particularly for global telecom brands operating in culturally diverse regions. Therefore, integrating language and cultural relevance into content strategies is essential for maximizing customer engagement and ensuring the effectiveness of social media efforts.

## **METHOD**

This research used a descriptive and comparative analyses of social media presence of the two major telecom brands which are the key players in the industry with significant market share and customer base. The brands selected are Unifi and Maxis. Celcom/Digi, another major telco in Malaysia was not chosen even though it has a significant customers based due to the complexities of the merger which have impact on the metrics of the company's social media presence. Celcom and Digi Malaysia merged to become Celcom/Digi in December 2022. Before the mergers, both Celcom and Digi Malaysia have a separate social media account. After the merger, the social media accounts for merged entity were established. As the focus of this paper is also on the account's establishment dates and number of followers, number of videos posts; to include the newly merged entity social media accounts and engagement metrics would provide a skewed picture and problematic analysis.

Maxis has been selected for this study as one of Malaysia's oldest and largest telecommunications providers. Unifi is examined in comparison with Maxis rather than its parent company, Telekom Malaysia (TM), which is also a key industry player. In March 2023, TM restructured its operations under TM Technology Services Sdn. Bhd. (TM Tech), with Unifi operating within this new framework (TM website). Unifi is included in this study instead of TM, as it provides a range of connectivity services, including broadband internet, mobile communication, and voice services. As TM's consumer-facing brand, it aligns more closely with Maxis, which similarly offers broadband, fibre, and mobile services. This comparison enables a more relevant analysis of consumer engagement and social media influence between the two brands.

Each brand uses targeted messaging and promotions to connect with their core audience, reflecting customer sentiment and brand loyalty. Therefore, analysing Unifi and Maxis on social media would provide insight into audience engagement and their social media competitive positioning. Table 1 provides profile of the companies in terms of their market share, ownership, and customer and changes in revenue share from 2021 to 2022. Moreover, as shown in Table 1 Unifi's revenue share increased significantly from 10.07% to 22.19%, which showed its tremendous growth and market penetration. Maxis showed a small increase of revenue share from 22.8% to 23%, indicating stable growth. Thus, it is suitable to compare Unifi, a new entity with Maxis and older entity so as to gain insights of their social media profile and presence and activities and impact on engagement.

**Table 1:** Background of Maxis and Unifi

Company	Revenue Share 2021 (%)	Revenue Share 2022 (%)	Ownership	Customers
Maxis	22.80%	23.00%	BGSM Equity Sdn. Bhd.	9.1 million
Unifi	10.07%	22.19%	TM (Telekom Malaysia)	2.8 million

Source: Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, 2022.

### Selection of Social Media Platforms

This research focuses on social media utilization across the most popular social media platforms, both from the older to the more recent platform. As shown Statista as of April 2024, the top five most active users are Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp and TikTok (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>). The social media platforms selected, i.e., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are widely used in Malaysia. The approximate number of users on various social media platforms in Malaysia as of January 2024 are YouTube (28 million), Facebook (24 million), Instagram (17.35 million), TikTok (14.14 million) (Data Reportal, 2024). X, formerly known as Twitter, is not included as it has the lowest number of users, i.e. at 4 million as shown in the Data Reportal (2024) as compared to the other social media platforms examined in this study. Moreover, X primarily focuses on real-time information, news, and public discussion rather than video content. In contrast, this study focuses on video-based posts comprising audio-visual presentations and dynamic animations because, as noted by Moran et al (2020) video post signifies the highest level of media richness as they stimulate the most senses.

Each social media platform selected for this study has different user demographics and content preferences. The details of specific social media platforms as follows:

Facebook founded in 2004 focuses on social networking, community involvement, and marketplace activities, catering to a broad age range with a variety of material kinds, including text postings, photos, videos, and links.

Instagram concentrates on personal branding, influencer marketing, and e-commerce with visual content formats such as photographs, short videos, and stories.

TikTok, popular among younger generations, is known for its short-form entertainment and viral trend videos ranging from 15 to 60 seconds. As a result, its content primarily consists of short videos. The platform's algorithm curates users' feeds based on their preferences and past interactions (Rejeb et al., 2024).

YouTube is a popular site for video consumption and creation. It focuses on long-form video material such as tutorials, music videos, and educational tools although it has a it has shorter video (shorts).

The data collection of a social media performance metrics analysis for three leading Malaysian telecom companies. Data was collected up to March 5th, 2024, from each company's key social media accounts. However, the frequency of post of the two telcos across social media platforms were analysed for the whole month of February 2024.

The first part of the data collection was related to the following:

The social platforms used by the two companies.

Account establishment – the date when the first post was uploaded on each of the social media platform.

Number of followers /subscribers on each social media platform.

The frequency of posting

The second part involve involved determining the most popular video in each social media platforms of the two brands and determine number of likes and views for the most popular videos on for these popular videos on each platform.

## FINDINGS

The analysis of social media presence and engagement for the Telcos were examined from several social media metrics, including the platform used, the date of account creation/first activity, the number of videos posted, and the number of followers and the frequency of posting. This is followed by the analysis of user engagement (views and likes) on most popular videos on each platform for both brands

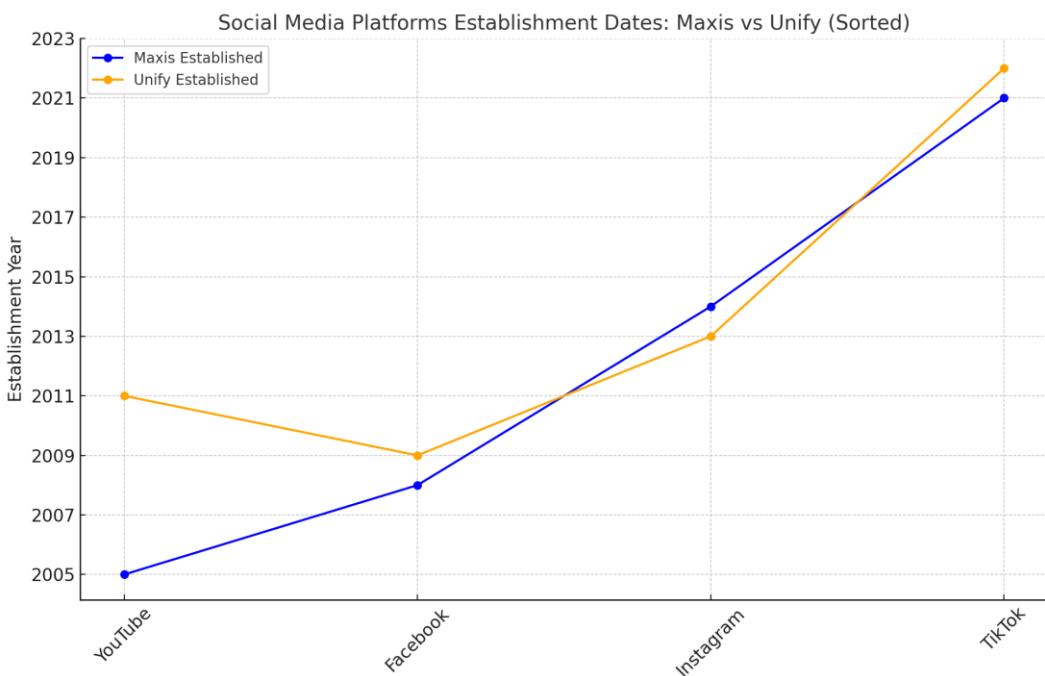
### Adoption of Social Media Platforms

The social media account establishment or first activity dates of two Malaysian telecom companies across various platforms are illustrated in Table 2. Both brands-maintained presence on these four social media platforms. The adoption patterns of both brands align with the company's establishment and the public availability and emergence of these platforms. Maxis, being one of the Malaysian oldest telcos and more established company, has a social media presence before Unifi, which was launched in the 2000s. Maxis's presence on YouTube in 2005,

Facebook in 2008, Twitter in 2009 and later followed by Instagram in 2014 and TikTok in 2021. In contrast, Unifi, despite delayed entry on some platform, about a year behind Maxis on TikTok and Facebook, has its presence on Instagram earlier than Maxis. However, YouTube shows the most significant gap, with Unifi social media presence coming far later than Maxis.

**Table 2:** Adoption of Social Media

Social Platform	Media	Maxis Date Established/ First Activity	Unify Date Established/ First Activity
Facebook		Oct-08	Oct-09
Instagram		Apr-14	Jan-13
TikTok		Jan-21	Jul-22
YouTube		Nov-05	Mar-11



### Use of Social Media and Followers' Base

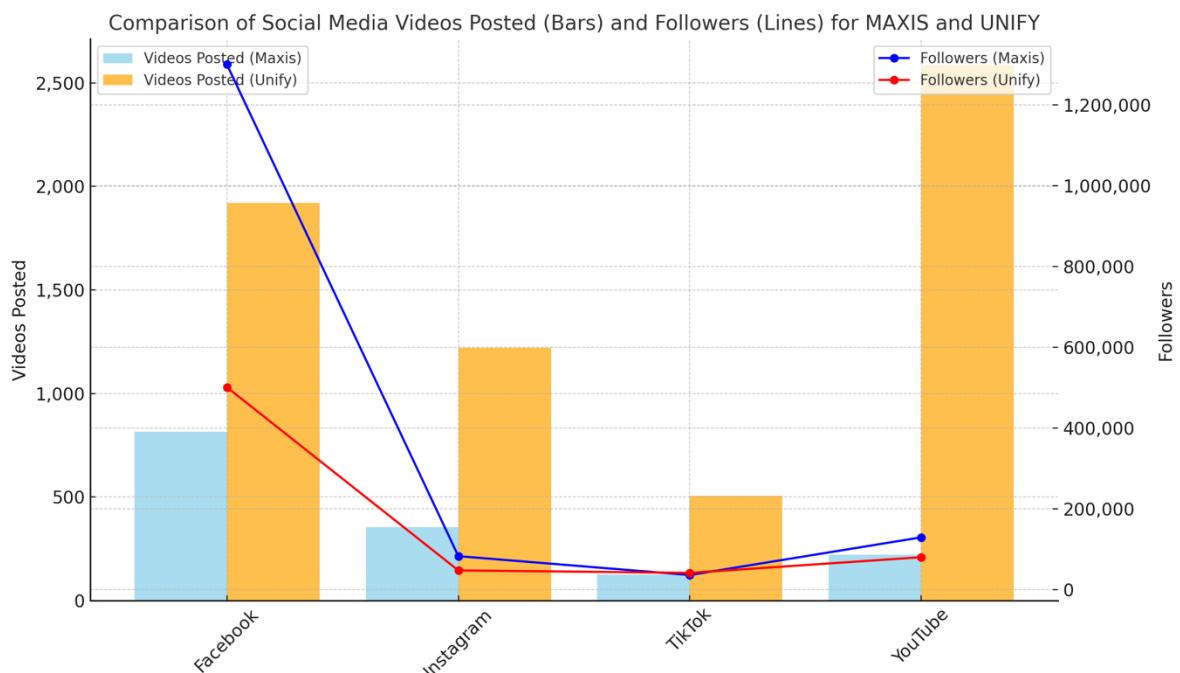
Despite its later entry to social media as compared to Maxis, Unify have an aggressive strategy to expand its brand visibility, through making a higher frequency of posting. Hence, Unify has a higher number of video content on these platforms. As shown on Table/Figure 3, Unifi's most significant video output is on YouTube, where its presence began in 2011. This strategy of frequent posting is mirrored across other platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.

It seems that Unifi's social media strategy; regular and frequent posting, appears to be used to counteract its later entry into social media platforms. However, Maxis, despite it fewer posts as compared to Unify, has retained a stronger follower base on almost all platforms which may be due to earlier social media presence.

For example, on Facebook, Maxis, with its presence since 2005, leads with 1.3 million followers, wide disparity as compared to Unifi's 500,700 followers. This significant disparity in number of followers exists despite Unifi posting more than twice as many videos as Maxis. Similarly, on Instagram, Maxis maintains nearly double the followers of Unifi, even though Unifi has produced over three times the content. Thus, this shows the significant advantage having an earlier social media adoption or presence.

**Table 3:** Social Media Presence and Follower Base

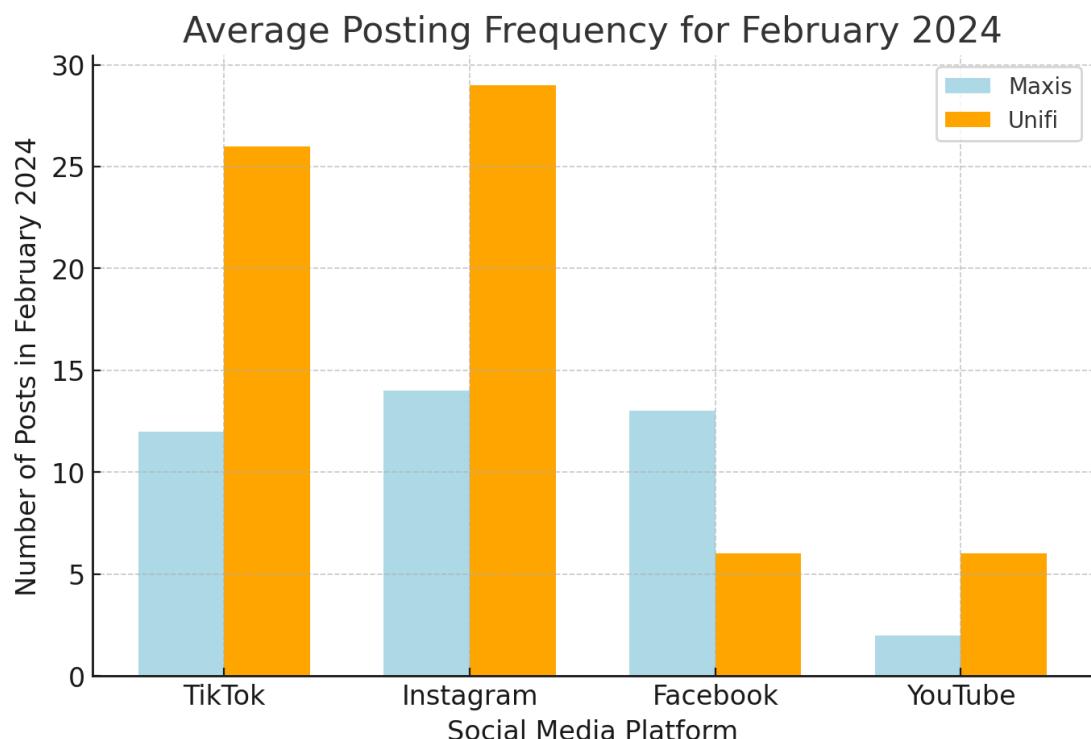
Social Media Platform	Maxis Date Established/First Activity	Unify Date Established/First Activity	Maxis Followers	Unify Followers	Maxis (Videos Posted)	Unify (Videos Posted)
Facebook	Oct-08	Oct-09	1300000	500700	815	1921 [2]
Instagram	Apr-14	Jan-13	82,400	47,100	356	1220 [3]
TikTok	Jan-21	Jul-22	35,700	41000	125	506
YouTube	Nov-05	Mar-11	129000	79800	221	2584

**Figure 3:** Social Media Presence and Follower Base

This posting frequency for both brands is shown on Table 4. For example, as shown on Table 4 for the whole month of February, Unifi's have on average of daily posting on Tik Tok and Instagram and every four days on Facebook and YouTube. While Maxis, posts every two days on Tik Tok, Instagram and Facebook and only once in YouTube. Hence, except for Facebook, Unify posts more frequently than Maxis for the month of February. Although, in comparison on the total number of video posted on YouTube, Unify posted more than 1921 videos, while Maxis posted 815 videos.

**Table 4:** Average posting frequency for the month of February 2024

Company	TikTok	Instagram	Facebook	YouTube
Maxis	Every 2 Days (12 posts)	Every 2 Days (14 posts)	Every 2 Days (13 posts)	Once (2 posts)
Unifi	Every day (26 posts)	Every day (29 posts)	Every 4 Days (6 posts)	Every 4 Days (6 posts)



**Figure 4:** Average video posts for the month of February 2024

TikTok is the only platform where Unifi outperforms Maxis in terms of follower count, despite Unifi being a later entrant. This could be due to TikTok's algorithm favouring consistent and high-frequency posting. However, Unifi's frequent updates on Instagram may lead to over-posting, which can result in audience fatigue and reduced engagement rates. It could be argued that Instagram audience have different preferences as compared to Tik Tok, which might be that Instagram audience value curated, high-quality visuals over sheer volume.

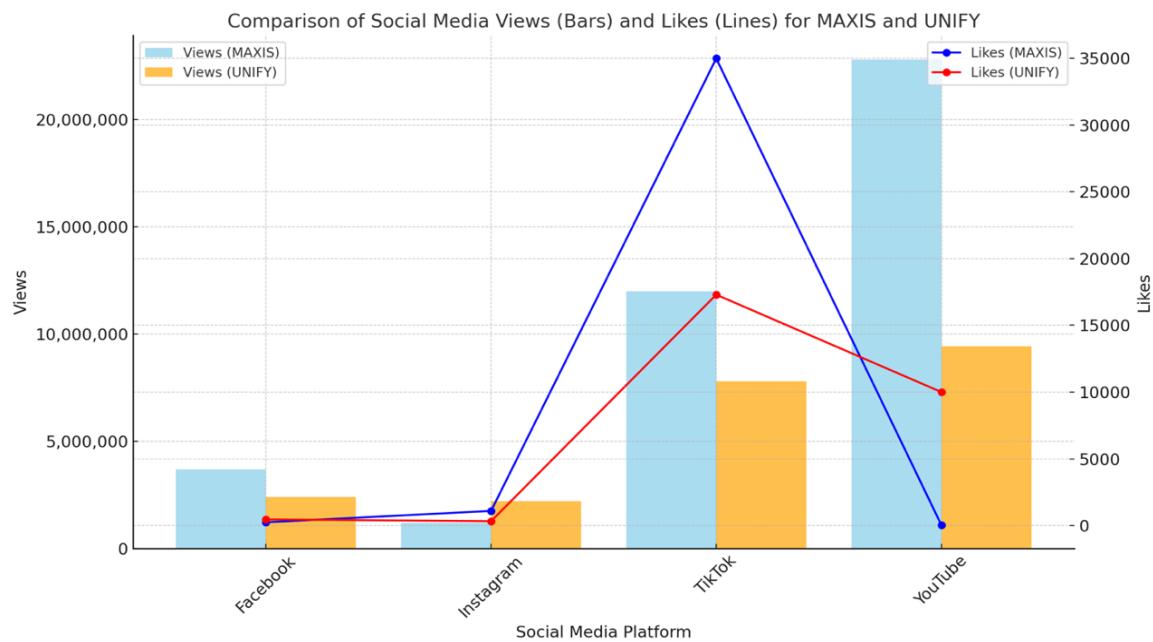
Thus, while Unifi's high frequency posting strategy has helped it gain visibility on newer platforms, Maxis's established brand and early adoption continue to provide it with a competitive edge in follower counts.

#### Cross-Platform Analysis of Consumer Engagement on Most Popular Video

The second part of the analysis examined the most popular video in each social media platform of the companies as of March 5, 2024. For YouTube, the most popular video is based on the long video content, not the shorts. Table 5 provide details of the most popular videos on each platform. All the most popular videos of the two brands are advertisements. While Maxis most popular videos across the fours social media platform are all in English. In contrast Unify posted video in Malay and English. The most popular video for Unify is the Malay for Instagram and Facebook and English videos on f Tik Tok and YouTube.

**Table 5:** Details of most popular videos across social media platforms

Social Media Platform	MX	UFY	Date Established Maxis	Date Established Unifi	Followers (MAXIS)	Followers (UNIFY)	Likes Maxis	Likes Unifi	Views Maxis	Views Unifi
Facebook	English	BM	Oct-08	Oct-09	1,300,000	500700	244	459	3,700,000	2,400,000
Instagram	English	BM	Apr-14	Jan-13	82,400	47,100	1098	330	1,200,000	2,200,000
TikTok	English	Eng	Jan-21	Jul-22	35,700	41000	35,000	17,300	12,000,000	7,800,000
YouTube	English	Eng	Nov-05	Mar-11	129,000	79800	33	10,000	22,805,644	9,436,071



**Figure 5:** Most popular videos and consumer engagements for Unify and Maxis

As illustrated in Figure 5, YouTube is the most dominant platform for both companies in terms of number of views of their most popular video. Unify's most popular video on YouTube has over 9 million views and Maxis has over 22 million views. Thus, YouTube consistently garners the highest views for both companies. However, TikTok is rapidly closing the gap; the most popular video on TikTok for Maxis is still higher than Unify, at 12 million views on its most popular video compared to Unify having 7.8 million views. This trend suggests that TikTok is emerging as a strong competitor to YouTube in terms of viewership, especially among younger generations with shorter content preferences.

Facebook ranks as the third social media platform contributing to viewership for both companies. Here, Maxis has a stronger presence with 1.3 million followers, and its most popular video has 3.7 million views, compared to Unify, which has approximately 500,000 followers and a most-viewed video with 2.4 million views. Interestingly, on Instagram, despite Maxis having a larger follower base, Unify's most popular video has one million more views than Maxis'. This might be because of Unify's earlier presence on Instagram, which has likely allowed it to build a more engaged community. Additionally, Unify's frequent posting strategy could contribute to maintaining higher video views despite the follower count difference.

Social Media Platform	MX	UFY	Date Established Maxis	Date Established Unifi	Followers (MAXIS)	Followers (UNIFY)	Likes Maxis	Likes Unifi	Views Maxis	Views Unifi
Facebook	eng	BM	Oct-08	Oct-09	1,300,000	500,700	244	459	3,700,000	2,400,000
Instagram	Eng	BM	Apr-14	Jan-13	82,400	47,100	1098	330	1,200,000	2,200,000
TikTok	Eng	Eng	Jan-21	Jul-22	35,700	41,000	35,000	17,300	12,000,000	7,800,000
YouTube	Eng	Eng	Nov-05	Mar-11	129,000	79,800	33	10,000	22,805,644	9,436,071

In terms of consumer engagement, that is measured by likes on the most popular videos across these four social media platforms, Table/Figure 5 shows that TikTok generates the highest engagement for both Maxis and Unifi compared to other social media platforms. On TikTok, Maxis performs slightly better on TikTok than Unifi. Maxis's video has 12 million views and 35,000 likes while Unifi has 7.8 million views and 17,300 likes. Interestingly, despite Maxis having a significantly higher number of views on YouTube, audience engagement extremely low, with only 33 likes. In contrast, Unifi's video, with over 9 million views, has a much higher engagement of 10,000 likes. This could allude to the act that suggests that Unifi's content resonates better with its audience, thus generating more positive interaction.

A similar trend is also shown on Facebook, where Unifi, despite having fewer total views, has a slightly higher number of likes than Maxis. This indicates that platforms like TikTok and YouTube drive the most engagement for Unifi, while Facebook and Instagram generate lower interaction. Although Maxis, has a stronger overall reach, as evidenced by higher total views across these four social media platforms, especially on YouTube and Facebook, the audience engagement levels are relatively lower on these platforms. Thus, there is a significant gap between the high viewership of Maxis on YouTube and the platform's ability to convert these views into meaningful engagement.

Additionally, Unifi's lower engagement on Instagram suggests that while its videos attract views, they may not generate as much audience interaction.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study examines the presence and performance of two major Malaysian telecommunications brands across four key social media platforms. Engagement analysed based on the most popular videos of both brands on YouTube, TikTok, Instagram and Facebook. The measure of engagement that is used in this study is like as it a fundamental indicator of audience approval (Swani et al., 2013; Gavilanes et al., 2018). Moreover, posts that have highest number of likes are seen as more popular and engaging, thus can attract more further interactions (Sabate et al., 2014). Formulating effective social media strategies is vital for telecommunications companies as they operating in an unpredictable and competitive environment. As noted in previous sections, various empirical research has highlighted the need for effective social media strategies as they played a significant role in enhancing performance and competitiveness (Ravaonorohanta & Sayumwe, 2020; Ashley and Tuten, 2015).

The findings indicate that both companies maintain an active presence across all four key social media platforms examined in this study. The establishment of their social media accounts on these platforms is largely shaped by their respective establishment timelines and the availability of these social media platforms. Maxis has maintained a presence on these platforms longer than Unifi, with the exception of Instagram. As expected, the results generally suggest that an earlier adoption of social media correlates with a larger follower base. Maxis demonstrates a dominant position in terms of follower count on Facebook and YouTube. However, the results also reveal some discrepancies in this trend. The establishment dates for Instagram and TikTok differ by only a year. The findings indicate that while Unifi entered Instagram earlier and TikTok later than Maxis, it has cultivated a higher follower base on TikTok but a lower follower base on Instagram compared to Maxis.

This trend could be the outcome of strategic approaches. Unifi's strategy of maintaining a higher posting frequency suggests that increased activity may lead to improved social media performance. Furthermore, one of the most useful strategies for increasing engagement and audience retention is maintaining a consistent posting frequency, as it helps brands gain more followers and achieve higher audience engagement (Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Barreto & Ramalho, 2019; Peruta & Shields, 2017; Rosas-Quezada et al., 2019). Moreover, achieving higher audience engagement is a more credible measure of social media effectiveness than simply focusing on the number of followers or follower growth (Trunfo & Rossi, 2021). Unifi appears to be implementing this strategy. The number of videos posted far exceeded Maxis on all the four platforms. The number of videos posted by Unifi on YouTube is significantly higher than that of Maxis, possibly to offset its later entry onto the social media platform. Unifi's frequent posting strategy on TikTok aligns well with the platform's algorithm, leading to higher engagement. Research suggests that frequent posts build anticipation and foster a stronger sense of connection among followers (Barreto & Ramalho, 2019; Peruta & Shields, 2017; Rosas-Quezada et al., 2019). Thus, both consistency and frequency should be key priorities in social media strategies.

Thus, this study also showed that higher follower numbers do not always translate into higher engagement when it is not followed by high and consistent posting frequency. Maxis, despite having a larger audience, often experiences lower engagement rates, while Unifi's videos sometimes outperform expectations relative to its follower base. For example, Maxis has a significant lead in YouTube followers and views, but its engagement is minimal. In contrast, Unifi, despite fewer views, has higher engagement per view. This highlights a growing trend: TikTok is overtaking YouTube in engagement for both Maxis and Unifi.

However, despite Unifi's higher posting frequency on Instagram compared to Maxis and its earlier presence on the platform, its engagement levels remain lower than those of Maxis. This suggests that the specific characteristics of a platform's audience and the characteristic of the specific social media platform must be considered when formulating social media strategies. While high frequency posting increases brand visibility, it can also lead to audience fatigue, particularly on Instagram, where users may prefer more high-quality content. This is in contrast on TikTok, that Unifi have higher engagement with more frequent posting which may be aligned with the interest of the audience and the nature of the social media platform.

## CONCLUSIONS

Comparing the analysis of across key social media performance of two key Malaysian telecom brand draws several insights. Social media performance is not solely determined by the number of followers but also by audience engagement. TikTok has emerged as a platform that rivals YouTube. Nevertheless, YouTube is still the leading platform for viewership, whereas TikTok excels in engagement. However, both Facebook and Instagram exhibit mixed engagement levels. The analysis also showed that while older social media accounts tend to have a larger follower base, a high follower count does not necessarily translate into strong engagement. Although frequent and consistent posting can lead to higher engagement, telecommunications companies should adopt platform-specific approaches. Therefore, they should customize their social media strategies based on the unique strengths of each platform and the characteristics of their audience. Sometimes, frequent posting does not result in higher engagement and views, as these factors depend on platform strengths and audience preferences. By understanding engagement trends and adapting to platform-specific requirements, telecom companies can enhance their social media performance and strengthen their competitive edge. For future studies, first, it is suggested that a focus on higher levels of audience engagement as it could provide more holistic insights on social media performance. Second, studies could also investigate whether how these brands utilised these social media data to determine their target audience needs and behaviour's and tailored their social media strategies and contents to these targeted audience and obtain higher level engagement.

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