Journal of Social Research

E-ISSN: 2828-335x
Vol. 5, No. 11, October 2026, pp. 6066-6082
DOI : 10.55324/josr.v5i11.3547
Journal of Social Research

Analysis of the Influence of Visual Aesthetics and Content Creativity on Brand Awareness Through Brand Image as Mediation (Case Study on Lilo Sketza in Cirebon)

Putri Nur Shafa Kurniawan*, Sudadi Pranata, Mualif Ismail
Universitas Catur Insan Cendekia, Indonesia
Email: putri.kurniawan.mj.22@cic.ac.id*, sudadi.pranata@cic.ac.id, mualif.ismail@cic.ac.id

Keywords:
Visual Aesthetics; Content Creativity; Brand Image; Brand Awareness; SEM-PLS; Lilo Sketza.

This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA license.

Copyright © 2026 by Author. Published by International Journal Labs

Abstract

The effectiveness of Lilo Sketza's digital marketing strategy in Cirebon largely depends on its ability to deliver visually appealing and creative content that enhances brand awareness amid increasing competition among nonformal art education institutions. This study was motivated by a substantial decline in the engagement rate of Lilo Sketza's Instagram account, from 35% in 2023 to 5.03% in 2024 and 1.82% in early 2025. The study aimed to examine the direct effects of visual aesthetics and content creativity on brand awareness and their indirect effects through brand image as a mediating variable. A descriptive and explanatory quantitative research design was employed using simple random sampling. Based on a population of 777 Instagram followers, the Slovin formula yielded a minimum sample size of 107 respondents, while the final sample comprised 108 social media users in Cirebon. Data were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4 software. The results supported all seven proposed hypotheses (H1–H7). Visual aesthetics and content creativity had positive and statistically significant effects on brand image (H1 and H2). Furthermore, brand image, visual aesthetics, and content creativity positively and significantly influenced brand awareness (H3, H4, and H5). Brand image also partially mediated the relationships between visual aesthetics and brand awareness and between content creativity and brand awareness (H6 and H7). The model explained 75.6% of the variance in brand awareness. These findings suggested that enhancing Lilo Sketza's brand awareness required prioritizing visually appealing designs and distinctive, creative content to strengthen brand image and improve brand recognition among target audiences.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of digital marketing has transformed how businesses interact with consumers, particularly through the increasing use of social media as a primary marketing channel. In this context, brand awareness has become a key indicator of the extent to which audiences can recognize and recall a brand amid the continuous flow of digital information. Digital marketing, particularly through social media platforms, has been shown to enhance brand awareness and expand brand reach (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Yadav & Rahman, 2020). However, not all brands successfully capture audience attention as competition for visibility on digital platforms intensifies, partly because of differences in content quality, creativity, and visual aesthetics (Lee & Kim, 2022; Lim et al., 2022). Therefore, strengthening brand awareness requires not only an active social media presence but also the strategic management of visual presentation and content creativity.

Brand awareness refers to consumers' ability to recognize and recall a brand across different contexts (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020). Social media marketing strategies have been associated with increased brand awareness (Yadav & Rahman, 2020; Dwivedi et al., 2021), while content quality, relevance, and digital exposure also contribute to its development (Lim et al., 2020). Integrating effective communication strategies with high-quality content presentation is essential for establishing and maintaining brand awareness over time (Zhang et al., 2023b). Accordingly, this study positioned brand awareness as the primary outcome variable influenced by two key digital marketing elements: visual aesthetics and content creativity.

Visual aesthetics is an important factor influencing brand awareness. Visual elements, including color, composition, typography, and design consistency, contribute to attracting audience attention and shaping brand perceptions (Kim & Sullivan, 2021a). Appealing and consistent visual aesthetics can enhance consumer attention and brand recall (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021), although their effectiveness may vary according to audience preferences (Wang et al., 2022). In addition to visual aesthetics, content creativity, which involves presenting messages in innovative, distinctive, and engaging ways, plays a significant role in differentiating brands from competitors (Ashley & Tuten, 2020). Creative and relevant content can strengthen consumer engagement and brand recall (Lim et al., 2022; Lou & Yuan, 2021c). However, its effectiveness also depends on alignment with audience characteristics and the specific features of digital platforms (Voorveld, 2021; Voorveld van Noort G. et al., 2020).

Brand image also plays a significant role in explaining the relationships between visual aesthetics, content creativity, and brand awareness. Brand image encompasses consumers' perceptions of and associations with a brand, which develop through accumulated experiences and information (Keller, 2021). A positive brand image can strengthen the relationship between marketing activities and brand awareness (Zhang et al., 2023b; Dwivedi et al., 2021). However, (Bilgin, 2021) suggested that brand awareness could develop even in the absence of a strong brand image, whereas Kim and Sullivan (2021a) emphasized the importance of brand image in strengthening brand-related perceptions and fostering long-term consumer relationships. These differing perspectives highlighted the need to examine the mediating role of brand image in the relationships between visual aesthetics, content creativity, and brand awareness. Accordingly, this study positioned brand image as a mediating variable through which visual aesthetics and content creativity could indirectly influence brand awareness.

In practice, local art education institutions such as Lilo Sketza in Cirebon have utilized social media as a digital marketing channel to showcase visually appealing and creative content. However, improvements in visual consistency and posting frequency remain necessary to sustain audience engagement. Evidence of declining digital engagement was observed on Lilo Sketza's Instagram account (@lilosketza). In 2023, the account recorded an average engagement rate of approximately 35% across 117 published posts. In 2024, the number of posts declined to 25, accompanied by a decrease in the average engagement rate to 5.03%. This downward trend continued into early 2025, when the engagement rate fell to 1.82%. These figures indicated challenges in sustaining audience interaction with Lilo Sketza's Instagram content, potentially affecting opportunities to strengthen brand recognition and recall.

Differences in the visual presentation of Lilo Sketza's Instagram content are illustrated in Figure 1.

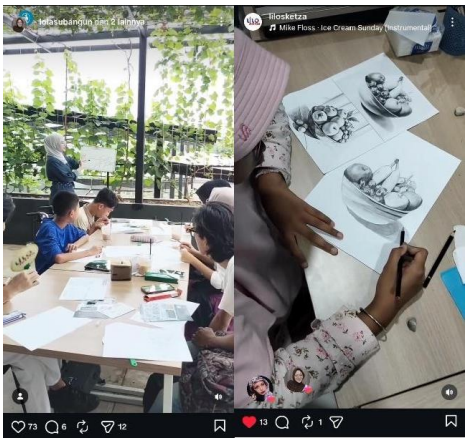


Figure 1. Presentation of Interesting (Creative) and Simple (Conventional) Content
Source: Lilo Sketza's Instagram Content (2026)

The difference between "interesting" (creative) and "simple" (conventional) content was objectively determined using Social Media Content Quality Theory (Pratama & Setyarkaranti, 2023). Engaging content was determined by evaluating visual indicators such as color/theme, composition, and sharpness of images, as well as creative indicators such as ideas, thematic concepts, and storytelling. Conventional content is defined as minimalist content that only displays student work statically without specific graphic elements or narrative concepts. A comparison of the indicators of the two types of content is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Content Presentation Based on Research Variables

Yes	Variable	Indicator	Content with Interesting Presentation	Content with Simple Presentation
1	Visual Aesthetics (X1)	Visual composition (arrangement of elements)	Yes	Yes
		Color/theme consistency	Yes	Yes
		Visual quality	Yes	Yes
2	Content Creativity (X2)	Uniqueness of content ideas	Yes	No
		Interesting storytelling/concept	Yes	No
		Creative messaging	Yes	Yes
3	Brand Image (M)	Professional effect	Yes	Yes
		Easy to remember	Yes	Yes
		Positive image	Yes	Yes
4	Brand Awareness (Y)	Audience Recognition	Yes	Yes
		Interaction	Yes	Yes
		Reach (views)	Yes	No

Source: Data processed by researchers based on social media content documentation (2026)

Table 1 shows that visual aesthetic indicators are met in both types of content, so that they basically meet decent visual standards, but the level of processing and appeal can still differentiate the effectiveness of the message. A considerable difference can be seen in content creativity: the uniqueness of ideas and storytelling is only found in content that is presented in an attractive way. This difference has an impact on brand awareness, especially better reach (views) on interesting content. A comparison of the interaction metrics of the two content is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of Audience Interaction Metrics on Instagram Content

Engagement Metrics	Content with Interesting Presentation	Content with Simple Presentation
Viewers	3.253	468
Like	74	13
Comment	6	10
Save	1	1
Share	12	1

Source: Data processed by researchers based on social media content documentation (2026); Content links: instagram.com/reel/DExOi_rThca (interesting) and instagram.com/reel/DVGFMH4khpN (simple)

The data presented in Table 2 indicated that content characterized by strong visual aesthetics and high creativity exhibited substantially different digital performance compared with simpler content. This difference could be explained through the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) framework, which emphasizes that brand equity is rooted in consumers' knowledge, perceptions, and associations, particularly their ability to recognize and recall a brand (brand awareness) and the associations they develop with it (brand image) (Kotler & Keller, 2022). The Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework provided an additional theoretical perspective, positioning visual aesthetics and content creativity as stimuli (S), brand image as the organismic response (O), and brand awareness as the behavioral or cognitive outcome (R). Less engaging stimuli may receive limited cognitive processing, potentially resulting in weaker audience engagement. Furthermore, the Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action (AIDA) model suggested that appealing visual elements and distinctive creative concepts could attract audience attention and stimulate interest. Conversely, inadequate visual quality and weak narrative development could reduce audience interest and subsequent digital interactions, thereby limiting opportunities for brand recognition and recall.

Previous studies have predominantly examined the direct effects of independent variables on brand awareness. Kurniawan and Tamami (2025) suggested that visual aesthetics could enhance psychological comfort but did not examine how visual aesthetics contributed to brand image and, subsequently, brand awareness. Similarly, Ardani and Harahap (2024) focused on the relationship between content creativity and audience engagement without investigating the structural relationships among content creativity, brand image, and brand awareness. Anwer (2024) emphasized brand recognition and recall as fundamental components of brand awareness; however, limited research has simultaneously examined visual aesthetics and content creativity through the mediating role of brand image. Naningsih and Budianto

(2026) further suggested that engaging content could strengthen brand image, which might subsequently contribute to greater brand awareness. Moreover, research on digital marketing within the nonformal arts education sector remains limited. Studies by Saputri (2025) and Anis et al. (2026) emphasized the importance of visual aesthetics in promotional activities but provided limited examination of content creativity and its indirect effects through brand image within an integrated mediation model.

Based on these findings, four research gaps were identified: (1) limited empirical investigation of brand image as a mediator of the relationships between visual aesthetics, content creativity, and brand awareness; (2) insufficient research examining visual aesthetics and content creativity within the nonformal arts education sector, particularly in institutions such as Lilo Sketza; (3) a lack of integrated models simultaneously incorporating visual aesthetics and content creativity as predictors of brand image and brand awareness; and (4) inconsistent findings regarding the magnitude of the direct relationship between content creativity and brand awareness. Accordingly, this study aimed to examine the direct effects of visual aesthetics and content creativity on brand image and brand awareness, the effect of brand image on brand awareness, and the mediating role of brand image in the relationships between visual aesthetics, content creativity, and brand awareness at Lilo Sketza in Cirebon. Theoretically, the study sought to contribute to digital marketing research by integrating the CBBE and SOR frameworks within the context of nonformal arts education. Practically, the findings were expected to provide strategic insights for Lilo Sketza's management regarding the optimization of visual consistency and content creativity. The study also sought to clarify the mechanisms through which visual and creative content contributed to brand awareness, enabling arts education institutions to develop more effective social media marketing strategies that emphasized strengthening brand image rather than relying solely on posting frequency.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach using descriptive and hypothesis-testing methods (Sugiyono, 2020; Creswell & Creswell, 2021). The descriptive analysis examined respondents' perceptions of visual aesthetics, content creativity, brand image, and brand awareness, while hypothesis testing assessed the proposed relationships among these variables. The research was conducted at Lilo Sketza Course and Training Institute (Lembaga Kursus dan Pelatihan, LKP) in Cirebon, a nonformal arts education institution operated by PT Anak Sultan Makmur. The institution utilized social media to promote its educational services through visual and creative content. Data collection was conducted in 2026.

The target population comprised social media users and potential consumers in Cirebon who had been exposed to Lilo Sketza's digital marketing content (Al-Dhuhli & Ismael, 2021; Amarina & Laksmiwati, 2026; Herman Maryam & Fikri, 2025; Sukmawati & Sudarmin., 2023). Population coverage and respondent eligibility were considered when determining the sampling procedure (Shafira & Ardelia, 2025; Tille, 2026). The study reported using simple random sampling (Etikan & Bala, 2020; Siyoto & Sodik, 2024). Respondent recruitment was not restricted to official Instagram followers because algorithm-driven content distribution enabled exposure beyond the account's follower base (Putra & Wijaya, 2025). An online questionnaire was distributed in May 2026 to Lilo Sketza's Instagram followers and other

Instagram users (Ramadhan & Sari, 2023). Screening questions were used to identify respondents who had previously encountered Lilo Sketza's content (Hapsari et al., 2026). Although probability sampling can support statistical generalization when its requirements are satisfied (Tanaka, 2025), the online recruitment procedure did not establish that all eligible respondents had a known and equal probability of selection.

The minimum sample size was estimated using Slovin's formula (Nuryadi et al., 2022; Memon et al., 2020), based on 777 followers of Lilo Sketza's Instagram account in May 2026 and a specified margin of error of 9%. The calculation yielded approximately 107 respondents. The final dataset comprised 108 valid responses. However, the 777-follower sampling frame did not fully represent the broader target population, which also included nonfollowers exposed to Lilo Sketza's content. Furthermore, the specified margin of error did not independently establish adequate statistical power for testing mediation effects.

Primary data were collected through a structured online questionnaire developed using indicators corresponding to each research variable (Taherdoost, 2021; Pandey & Pandey, 2021; Pradana et al., 2025). Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (Pratama & Setyarkaranti, 2023; Sari & Pradana, 2023). Secondary data were obtained from Lilo Sketza's Instagram and TikTok content archives, institutional profiles, platform analytics reports, and relevant academic literature (Sari & Wijaya, 2024; Johnston, 2021; Smith, 2022; Snyder, 2020). A summary of digital content interactions is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Recapitulation of Instagram and TikTok Content Interaction Lilo Sketza

Year	Platform	Total Content	Total Likes	Total Comment	Total Share	Average Engagement (%)
2023	Posted on Instagram	117	1.899.489	228	27	35,00
	TikTok	5	-	-	1	6,54
2024	Posted on Instagram	25	928	20	25	5,03
	TikTok	55	1.129	28	32	20,20
2025 (to February)	Posted on Instagram	38	935	95	38	1,82
	TikTok	81	1.794	77	52	11,10

Source: Lilo Sketza Social Media Archive (2026), reworked

The percentage of engagement is calculated by comparing the total number of likes, comments, and shares with the number of followers and uploaded content. In 2023, Instagram showed an engagement rate of 35%, indicating the presence of high-performance content, while TikTok was only 6.54%. In 2024, Instagram engagement decreased to 5.03%, while TikTok increased to 20.20%. This trend is visualized in Figure 3. The increase in TikTok can be explained by the algorithm of the short video platform that distributes content based on user preferences and interaction patterns (Kaye et al., 2022), while the decrease in Instagram engagement is related to the increase in users' passive consumption behavior (Dwivedi et al., 2021). However, the influence of social media is not only determined by the quantity of

interactions, but also by the quality of the relationship between users and content (Casaló et al., 2021), so Instagram remains important in building brand image.

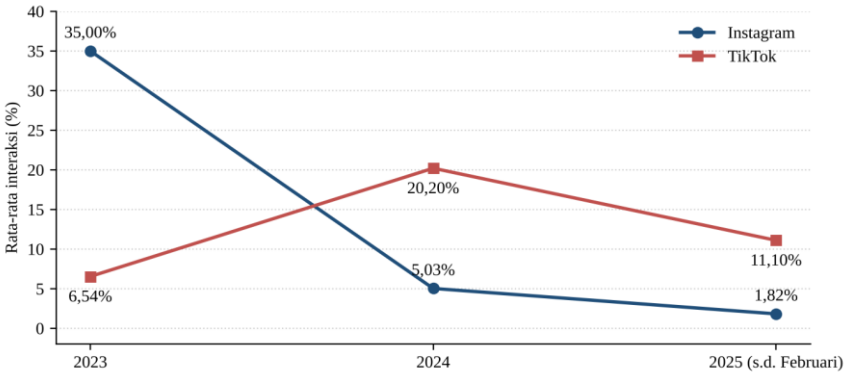


Figure 2. Average Trends of Lilo Sketza 's Social Media Interactions in 2023–2025
Source: Processed from Table 3

The operational definition of the variables and research indicators is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Operational Definition of Research Variables

Variable	Operational Definition	Indicator	Source
Visual Aesthetics (X1)	Physical design elements and sensory appeal of brand visual stimuli (color scheme, layout, graphics) to communicate brand identity, attract attention, and create a professional first impression	Visual composition; color/theme consistency; visual quality	Keller (2021)
Content Creativity (X2)	The ability to generate marketing messages that are unique, new, different, and relevant to audiences that spark public engagement	Uniqueness of content ideas; interesting storytelling/concepts; creative message delivery	Kotler & Keller (2020)
Brand Image (M)	A set of associations and perceptions in consumers' memory of a brand formed from experience, information, and emotional evaluation	Professional impression; easy to remember; positive image	Dwivedi et al. (2021)
Brand Awareness (Y)	Audience's ability to recognize (brand recognition) and recall (brand recall) when faced with social media stimulus	Known audience; interaction; reach (views)	Casaló et al. (2021)

Source: Adapted from Keller (2021), Kotler & Keller (2020), Dwivedi et al. (2021), and Casaló et al. (2021)

Data analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the help of SmartPLS 4. PLS-SEM was chosen because it is able to analyze direct and indirect relationships simultaneously, is suitable for small to medium sample sizes, and does not require strict normal distribution (Memon et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022a; Hair, Hult, et al., 2021). The evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) included convergent validity (loading factor > 0.70 and AVE > 0.50), discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker and HTMT criteria <

0.90), and construct reliability (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability > 0.70) (Hair et al., 2022; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler et al., 2015; Purwanto & Sudargini, 2021). Evaluation of the structural model (inner model) included multicollinearity test (VIF), determination coefficient (R^2), effect size (f^2 with criteria of 0.02 small, 0.15 moderate, and 0.35 large), predictive relevance ($Q^2 > 0$), and path coefficient (Hair, Risher, et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022b; Hair et al., 2024a). Hypothesis testing was carried out by bootstrapping procedure; the hypothesis was accepted when the t-statistic > 1.96 and the p-value < 0.05. The influence of mediation was tested through indirect effect significance (Hair et al., 2024b; Hair et al., 2024c).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The characteristics of the respondents were classified based on education level, age group, and area of domicile as presented in Table 6.

Table 5. Distribution of Respondent Demographic Characteristics (N = 108)

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Education Level	High School/Vocational School Equivalent	56	51,9
	Diploma (D1–D4)	16	14,8
	Bachelor (S1)	34	31,5
	Master (S2)	2	1,8
Age Group	17–19 years old	38	35,2
	20–24 years old	46	42,6
	25 years and older	24	22,2
Domicile Region	Cirebon Region	108	100,0
	Outside the Cirebon area	0	0,0

Source: Data processed by researchers based on google form (2026)

The majority of respondents had a high school/vocational education equivalent (51.9%), followed by Bachelor (31.5%), Diploma (14.8%), and Master's (1.8%). The high proportion of high school/vocational high school students is related to Lilo Sketza's role as a portfolio guidance provider for FSRD entrance selection. The age group of 20–24 years is the largest (42.6%), followed by 17–19 years old (35.2%) and 25 years and above (22.2%), so that the respondents are dominated by the younger generation. All respondents (100%) are domiciled in the Cirebon City and Regency areas, so the perception data collected reflects Lilo Sketza's real geographical target market.

Respondent Answer Description

The tendency of respondents' answers to each variable was associated with dominant demographic characteristics, as presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Description of Respondent Answers

Variable	Indicators Assessed	Coordinator Demographic Facts	Perception Trends	Description
Visual Aesthetics	Visual composition, color/theme consistency, visual quality	83.4% have a high school/vocational education and a bachelor's degree	Very high/positive	Responsive high because it has a critical aesthetic sensitivity to design
Content Creativity	Uniqueness of ideas, storytelling, creative message delivery	77.8% aged 17–24 years	Height/Attractive	Perspective and portfolio educational content is considered attractive because it meets the needs of digital information
Brand Image	Professional effect, easy to remember, positive image	51.9% of students and 42.6% of 20–24 year olds	High/credible	Visual stimulus and creative content are converted into the perception that modern and competent institutions
Brand Awareness	Known audience, interaction, reach	100% domiciled in Cirebon	Very strong/sticky	Geographical proximity strengthens brand awareness as a reference for fine arts courses

Source: Researcher-processed data (2026)

Table 6 shows that the educational background and age of the respondents, which are dominated by the younger generation, contribute to the high assessment of visual aesthetics and content creativity, while geographical proximity makes Lilo Sketza inherent as a reference for non-formal arts education institutions in Cirebon.

Evaluation of Measurement Models (Outer Model)

The results of the estimated research model using SmartPLS 4 are presented in Figure 4, while the outer loading and VIF values of each indicator are presented in Table 8.

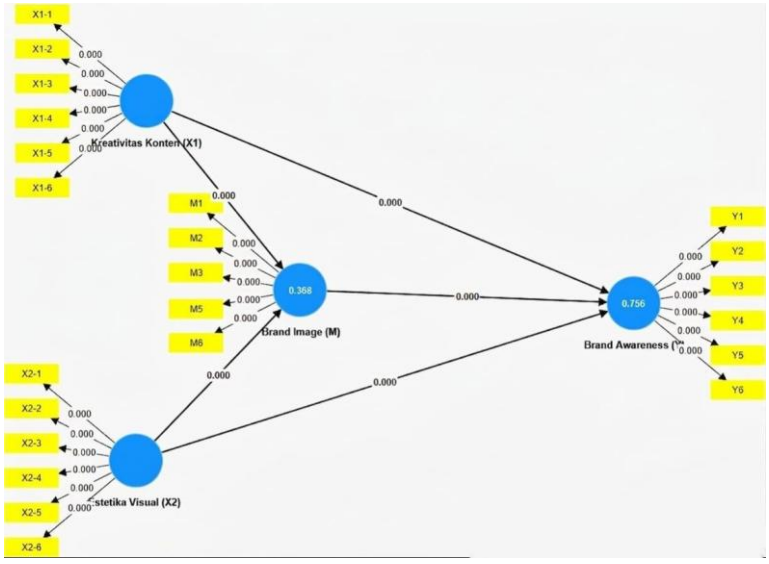


Figure 3. Results of Research Model Evaluation
Source: SmartPLS 4 (2026) processed data

Table 7. Results of Outer Loading and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

Indicator	Outer Loading	VIVID	Indicator	Outer Loading	VIVID
M1	0,849	2,749	X2-2	0,807	2,096
M2	0,851	2,617	X2-3	0,767	1,825
M3	0,824	2,428	X2-4	0,765	1,949
M5	0,797	2,138	X2-5	0,809	2,246
M6	0,853	2,870	X2-6	0,819	2,131
X1-1	0,752	1,682	Y1	0,799	2,645
X1-2	0,783	1,952	Y2	0,716	1,701
X1-3	0,824	2,045	Y3	0,732	1,980
X1-4	0,731	1,756	Y4	0,766	2,301
X1-5	0,803	2,089	Y5	0,830	2,530
X1-6	0,820	2,213	Y6	0,794	2,336
X2-1	0,843	2,337			

Source: SmartPLS 4 (2026) processed data; M = Brand Image, X1 = Visual Aesthetics, X2 = Content Creativity, Y = Brand Awareness

All indicators have an outer loading value above 0.70, which is in the range of 0.716 (Y2) to 0.853 (M6), thus meeting the criteria for convergent validity. The value range per variable is 0.797–0.853 for brand image, 0.731–0.824 for visual aesthetics, 0.765–0.843 for content creativity, and 0.716–0.830 for brand awareness. All VIF values were in the range of 1.682–2.870, below the conservative limit of 3.0, so there were no problems with multicollinearity and estimated free-path coefficients from collinearity bias (Henseler et al., 2015). The results of the reliability and AVE tests are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Construct Reliability Test Results and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	AVE
Brand Image (M)	0,891	0,892	0,920	0,703
Content Creativity (X2)	0,889	0,893	0,915	0,643
Brand Awareness (Y)	0,865	0,868	0,899	0,599
Visual Aesthetics (X1)	0,876	0,887	0,906	0,618

Source: SmartPLS 4 (2026) processed data

All constructs had Cronbach's alpha values (0.865–0.891), composite reliability rho_a (0.868–0.893), and rho_c (0.899–0.920) above 0.70, so that the research instrument had excellent internal consistency. The AVE value of all variables exceeded 0.50, with the highest value on the brand image (0.703), which means that this construct was able to explain 70.3% of the variance of the indicators, followed by content creativity (64.3%), visual aesthetics (61.8%), and brand awareness (59.9%). Discriminant validity was tested using HTMT and Fornell-Larcker criteria as presented in Table 9 and Table 10.

Table 9. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Test Results

Interconstruct Relationships	HTMT
Content Creativity (X2) ↔ Brand Image (M)	0,405

Interconstruct Relationships	HTMT
Brand Awareness (Y) ↔ Brand Image (M)	0,836
Brand Awareness (Y) ↔ Content Creativity (X2)	0,602
Visual Aesthetics (X1) ↔ Brand Image (M)	0,519
Visual Aesthetics (x1) ↔ Content Creativity (x2)	0,136

Source: SmartPLS 4 (2026) processed data

Table 10. Fornell-Larcker Criterion Test Results

Variable	Brand Image (M)	Content Creativity (X2)	Brand Awareness (Y)	Visual Aesthetics (X1)
Brand Image (M)	**0,835**			
Content Creativity (X2)	0,363	**0,802**		
Brand Awareness (Y)	0,735	0,531	**0,774**	
Visual Aesthetics (X1)	0,467	-0,050	0,590	**0,786**

Source: SmartPLS 4 (2026) processed data; the bold number is the square root of AVE

The overall HTMT value was in the range of 0.136–0.836, below the conservative limit of 0.85, with the highest value in the relationship between brand awareness and brand image (0.836). In the Fornell-Larcker criteria, the square root of AVE of each construct, namely brand image (0.835), content creativity (0.802), brand awareness (0.774), and visual aesthetics (0.786), was greater than its correlation with other constructs. Thus, discriminant validity was met and the four constructs were distinct empirical entities (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler et al., 2015; Rademaker et al., 2024). The measurement model was declared valid and reliable so it is feasible to proceed to the evaluation of the structural model.

Evaluation of Structural Models (Inner Model)

The effect size (f^2) of each pathway is presented in Table 11, while the values of the determinative coefficient and predictive relevance are presented in Table 12.

Table 11. Effect Size Test Results (f-Square)

Pathway	f2	Categories
Brand Image (M) → Brand Awareness (Y)	0,380	Large
Content Creativity (X2) → Brand Image (M)	0,237	Medium
Content Creativity (X2) → Brand Awareness (Y)	0,564	Large
Visual Aesthetics (X1) → Brand Image (M)	0,373	Large
Visual Aesthetics (X1) → Brand Awareness (Y)	0,555	Large

Source: SmartPLS 4 (2026) processed data

The influence of content creativity on brand image (0.237) was moderate, while the other four pathways exceeded the large effect criterion (0.35), with the highest score on the influence of content creativity on brand awareness (0.564) and visual aesthetics on brand awareness (0.555). This shows that visual aesthetics and content creativity are key drivers in building public memory and digital reputation Lilo Sketza, in line with Sundjaja et al. (2025) that digital visual stimulation provides a big boost to consumer response.

Table 12. Results of the Determination Coefficient (R-Square) and Predictive Relevance (Q-Square) Test

Variable	R2	R2 Adjusted	Q2predict	RMSE
Brand Awareness (Y)	0,756	0,749	0,646	0,610
Brand Image (M)	0,368	-	0,336	0,834

Source: Data processed SmartPLS 4 (2026); the R value of 2 brand image is obtained from Figure 4

The R2 brand awareness value of 0.756 (adjusted 0.749) is in the high category (> 0.67), which means that 75.6% of Lilo Sketza's brand awareness variations can be explained simultaneously by visual aesthetics, content creativity, and brand image, while 24.4% are influenced by factors outside the model. The R^2 value of brand image of 0.368 indicates that 36.8% of brand image variations are explained by visual aesthetics and content creativity. The Q^2 value of brand awareness is 0.646 and the brand image of 0.336 is greater than zero, so the model has good predictive relevance; especially brand awareness is relatively high (> 0.35). The remaining unpredictable variations can come from outside factors such as changes in social media algorithms, market trends, and competitors' promotional strategies.

Hypothesis Testing

The results of testing the hypothesis of direct and indirect influence through the bootstrapping procedure are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Pathway	Original Sample (O)	T-Statistics	P-Values	Verdict
H1	Visual Aesthetics (X1) → Brand Image (M)	0,486	7,954	0,000	Accepted
H2	Content Creativity (X2) → Brand Image (M)	0,388	4,724	0,000	Accepted
H3	Brand Image (M) → Brand Awareness (Y)	0,383	6,439	0,000	Accepted
H4	Visual Aesthetics (X1) → Brand Awareness (Y)	0,432	7,044	0,000	Accepted
H5	Content Creativity (X2) → Brand Awareness (Y)	0,413	6,922	0,000	Accepted
H6	Visual Aesthetics (X1) → Brand Image (M) → Brand Awareness (Y)	0,186	4,826	0,000	Accepted
H7	Content Creativity (X2) → Brand Image (M) → Brand Awareness (Y)	0,149	3,840	0,000	Accepted

Source: Data processed SmartPLS 4 (2026); for H6 and H7, the sample mean (M) was 0.187 and 0.150 respectively with a standard deviation of 0.039

All paths had a t-statistic > 1.96 and a p-value < 0.05, so that all seven hypotheses were accepted. The influence of visual aesthetics on brand image (H1) had the largest coefficient (0.486; t = 7.954), indicating that the alignment of Lilo Sketza's visual elements was understood by the audience as a representation of the professionalism of the institution. Content creativity affects brand image (H2) with a coefficient of 0.388 (t = 4.724), because the presentation of solutive educational content is able to trigger public trust. Brand image affects brand awareness

(H3) with a coefficient of 0.383 (t = 6.439), because solid brand perception acts as a memory trigger when consumers need related services. Visual aesthetics (H4; 0.432; t = 7.044) and content creativity (H5; 0.413; t = 6.922) also have a direct effect on brand awareness: distinctive visual styles attract attention amid the flow of social media information, while creative content encourages engagement and voluntary sharing of content by audiences.

The indirect effect of visual aesthetics on brand awareness through brand image (H6) was 0.186 (t = 4.826; p = 0.000), and the indirect effect of content creativity on brand awareness through brand image (H7) was 0.149 (t = 3.840; p = 0.000). Because direct influence (X → Y) and indirect influence (X → M → Y) are both significant in a positive direction, brand image acts as complementary partial mediation. This means that brand awareness can be formed directly through visual and content exposure, but the presence of a strong brand image magnifies the impact in a sustainable manner.

The results of the study show that visual aesthetics and content creativity have a real positive impact, both directly on brand image and brand awareness, and brand image plays an important role as a mediating variable. Lilo Sketza's empirical condition as a non-formal art education institution explains this finding: potential consumers need visual proof in the form of a portfolio of tutors and students before recognizing the brand, so visual consistency and creativity are not just attractions, but a means for potential consumers to assess the studio's level of expertise. Therefore, the problem of declining the engagement rate of Instagram accounts @lilosketza throughout 2023–2025 can be overcome through optimizing graphic composition, neatness of color schemes, authenticity of ideas, and interesting storytelling.

This pattern of intervariable relationships strengthens the concept of CBBE (Kotler et al., 2022) and the SOR model. Visual aesthetics and content creativity function as a stimulus received by the audience (organism) to form a brand image, which then triggers a response in the form of brand awareness. This mechanism also reflects the AIDA stage, where visual appeal and innovative content trigger attention and interest before recalling and active audience engagement are formed. These findings are in line with (Kim & Sullivan, 2021) that a professional visual appearance is directly proportional to the formation of a good brand perception, as well as with (Lim et al., 2022; Lou & Yuan, 2021) that relevant and creative content is effective in embedding brands in consumer memory. The effectiveness of brand image as an intermediate variable is in line with (Mulyani & Hermina, 2023; Zhang, 2023) who concluded that a trusted brand image is a bridge for digital marketing to be able to increase consumer awareness. These results are also consistent with the findings that social media marketing activities are related to brand awareness, brand image, and brand equity (Bilgin, 2021; Ibrahim et al., 2020; Seo & Park, 2021), as well as that credibility and visual presentation on social media influence audience response (Campbell & Farrell, 2020; De Veirman et al., 2021; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2020).

Theoretically, this study enriches the digital marketing literature in the art education services sector by emphasizing that content appeal does not automatically lead to brand awareness without a perception formation process; a trusted and professional brand image acts as a cognitive bridge (Agustin & Wijaya, 2024; Alam & Noor, 2020; Manisha, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2021). Practically, Lilo Sketza's management needs to formulate visual brand guidelines that include the alignment of color schemes, layout composition, and upload typography

(Syahputra, 2022), as well as produce innovative educational content with storytelling techniques around art learning activities. This research has limitations, namely cross-sectional design that measures perception at one point in time, the use of perception data (self-report) that risks causing bias, and objects that are limited to Lilo Sketza in Cirebon so that generalization to the art education industry in other cities or non-creative sectors must be done carefully.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that all seven proposed hypotheses (H1–H7) were supported. Visual aesthetics and content creativity had positive and statistically significant effects on brand image, indicating that graphic design consistency, color harmony, visual quality, originality, and storytelling contributed to perceptions of Lilo Sketza as a professional and trustworthy art education institution. Brand image, visual aesthetics, and content creativity also had positive and statistically significant effects on brand awareness, with the structural model explaining 75.6% of the variance in brand awareness. Furthermore, brand image partially mediated the relationships between visual aesthetics and brand awareness and between content creativity and brand awareness, suggesting that visually appealing and innovative content strengthened brand recognition and recall both directly and indirectly through favorable brand perceptions. These findings indicated that integrating visual appeal, creative messaging, and consistent brand positioning could help Lilo Sketza address declining social media engagement and strengthen its brand awareness.

Based on these findings, Lilo Sketza's management was advised to establish consistent brand guidelines, including standardized visual elements, color schemes, and content templates, to reinforce brand identity. Content strategies should prioritize creative storytelling, particularly by showcasing students' artistic development, learning experiences, and achievements, to enhance audience engagement and strengthen brand associations. Maintaining a consistent posting schedule and highlighting student testimonials and successful admissions to Fine Arts and Design programs (Fakultas Seni Rupa dan Desain, FSRD) could further improve brand credibility and recall. Future research should incorporate additional variables, such as social media marketing, influencer marketing, and customer engagement, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of brand awareness formation. Expanding the sample across geographical regions, conducting comparative studies among arts education institutions, and employing longitudinal research designs were also recommended to examine changes in audience behavior, platform algorithms, and digital marketing effectiveness over time.

FUNDING

This research did not receive any specific funding from any governmental, commercial, or not-for-profit organization.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the conduct or writing of this research.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors jointly contributed to the conceptualization and design of the study, data collection and analysis, interpretation of the findings, and preparation and critical revision of the manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript and accept responsibility for the integrity and accuracy of the work.

GENERATIVE AI STATEMENT

Generative AI tools were used to assist with language refinement and grammatical editing. The authors reviewed and revised the manuscript and take full responsibility for the accuracy, interpretation, and final content of the article.

REFERENCES

Agustin, R., & Wijaya, T. (2024). Visual storytelling for digital brand awareness. *Procedia Computer Science.*

Alam, S. S., & Noor, M. K. M. (2020). The relationship between service quality, corporate image, and customer loyalty in digital marketing. *International Journal of Data and Network Science*, *4*(3), 333.

Al-Dhuhli, I., & Ismael, S. (2021). The impact of social media marketing on brand awareness. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies.*

Amarina, F. N., & Laksmiwati, H. (2026). The relationship between social comparison and body dissatisfaction in female Instagram users. *Character: Journal of Psychological Research*, *13*(1), 335.

Ashley, C., & Tuten, T. (2020). Creative strategies in social media marketing: An exploratory study of branded social content and consumer engagement. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, *26*(3), 1.

Bilgin, Y. (2021). The effect of social media marketing activities on brand awareness, brand image and brand loyalty. *Business & Management Studies: An International Journal*, *9*(2), 456.

Campbell, C., & Farrell, J. R. (2020). More than meets the eye: The functional components underlying influencer marketing. *Business Horizons*, *63*(4), 469.

De Veirman, M., Hudders, L., & Nelson, M. R. (2021). *What is influencer marketing and how does it target children? Journal of Advertising Research, 61(1), 1–16*.

Djafarova, E., & Bowes, T. (2021). "Instagram made me buy it": Generation Z impulse purchases in the fashion industry. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 59, 102345.*

Djafarova, E., & Rushworth, C. (2020). Exploring credibility of online influencers. *Computers in Human Behavior, 104, 106177.*

Dwivedi, Y. K., Ismagilova, E., Hughes, D. L., Carlson, J., Filieri, R., Jacobson, J., Jain, V., Karjaluoto, H., Kefi, H., Krishen, A. S., Kumar, V., Rahman, M. M., Raman, R., Rauschnabel, P. A., Rowley, J., Salo, J., Tran, G. A., & Wang, Y. (2021). Setting the future of digital and social media marketing research: Perspectives and research propositions. *International Journal of Information Management, 59, 102168.*

Etikan, I., & Bala, K. (2020). Sampling and sampling methods. *Biometrics & Biostatistics International Journal*, *9*(1), 1.

Herman Maryam, M. N. G., & Fikri, M. (2025). Population theory and sampling in social research. *Advances in Education Journal*, *2*(2), 45.

Ibrahim, B., Aljarah, A., & Ababneh, B. (2020). Linking social media marketing activities to brand awareness and brand image: A structural equation modeling approach. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, *26*(1), 1.

Kim, A. J., & Sullivan, P. (2021). Emotional branding speaks to consumers: The influence of brand image on consumer response. *Journal of Brand Management*, *28*(2), 117.

Kotler, P., Keller, K. L., & Chernev, A. (2022). *Marketing management* (16th ed.). Pearson.

Lee, J., & Kim, S. (2022). The impact of visual aesthetics in social media marketing on consumer engagement. *Sustainability*, *14*(3), 1345.

Lim, X. J., Radzol, A. R. M., Cheah, J.-H., & Wong, M. W. (2022). The impact of social media influencers on brand awareness and purchase intention. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 65, 102103.*

Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2021). Influencer marketing and visual quality. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, *21*(2), 123.

Manisha, M. (2024). Innovative frontiers: Exploring factors influencing travel podcast consumption and creative content value in the Web 4.0 era. *European Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship, 917–927.*

Mulyani, S., & Hermina, U. (2023). The mediating role of brand image in digital marketing. *Journal of Management Sciences*, *11*(1), 45.

Nguyen, B., Yu, X., Melewar, T. C., & Hemsley-Brown, J. (2021). Brand innovation and social media: Knowledge acquisition from social media. *Journal of Business Research, 126, 1–10.*

Pratama, A. R., & Setyarkaranti, R. (2023). [eos]Analysis of the influence of social media content quality on brand awareness and consumer engagement. *[Eos]Journal of Digital Marketing & Communication.*

Putra, A. S., & Wijaya, K. (2025). Consumer homogeneity in creative industry followers. *Journal of Digital Communication and Marketing*, *6*(2), 102.

Ramadhan, G., & Sari, M. P. (2023). Random sampling techniques in quantitative research. *Journal of Modern Statistics*, *8*(3), 210.

Seo, E. J., & Park, J. W. (2021). A study on the effects of social media marketing activities on brand equity and customer response. *Journal of Air Transport Management, 66, 36–41.*

Shafira, M. T. I., & Ardelia, V. (2025). Population analysis and sampling procedures in the digital age. *Advances in Education Journal*, *12*(1), 112.

Siyoto, S., & Sodik, M. A. (2024). Fundamentals of clinical and social research methodology. *Journal of Research Methodology*, *11*(1), 45.

Sukmawati, S., & Sudarmin. (2023). Concept of population and sample in quantitative research. *Journal of Scientific Research and Assessment*, *7*(2), 202.

Syahputra, S. (2022). *Visual branding strategies through social media to increase brand awareness*.

Tanaka, H. (2025). Probability sampling in social media analytics. *International Journal of Quantitative Methods*, *19*(2), 1.

Tille, Y. (2026). Instagram users' motives in following lifestyle journalism media accounts. *Journal of Computer, Information and Technology*, *6*(1), 11.

Voorveld, H. A. M. (2021). Brand communication in social media: A research agenda. *Journal of Advertising*, *50*(1), 14.

Voorveld van Noort G., H. A. M., Muntinga, D. G., & Bronner, F. (2020). Engagement with social media and social media advertising: The differentiating role of platform type. *Journal of Advertising*, *50*(1), 38.

Yadav, M., & Rahman, Z. (2020). Measuring consumer perception of social media marketing activities. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 54, 102103.*

Zhang, J. (2023). Rebuilding strategic autonomy: ASEAN's response to US–China strategic competition. *China International Strategy Review*, *5*(1), 73–89. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42533-023-00128-3