



## MAPPING TIKTOK ADOPTION IN ROMANIAN UNIVERSITIES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES ACROSS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

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### INTRODUCTION

#### Context:

- 47% of Romanians have TikTok accounts (highest in EU).
- Gen Z prefers TikTok search over Google (39% vs traditional search).

#### Research Gap:

- Limited understanding of how Romanian universities leverage TikTok.
- Need to assess institutional readiness for Gen Z communication preferences.

### OBJECTIVES

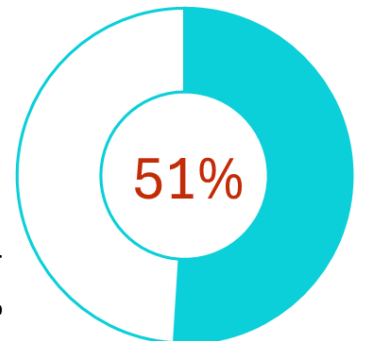
- Map adoption rates across 85 Romanian accredited universities (52 public, 33 private).
- Identify factors influencing TikTok presence and engagement.
- Analyze content strategies of high-performing university accounts.
- Provide practical insights for future universities' digital strategies.

### ANALYSIS

1. Website analysis for social media presence.
2. Direct TikTok account verification and metrics collected via Phlanx.com (followers, likes, comments, engagement rate).
3. Qualitative content analysis of viral videos (>800,000 views).

### RESULTS

- 51% TikTok adoption rate (54% - public universities / 45% - private ones); variation driven by university's size (40%-76%) and field (0-89% across disciplines).
- Low website integration (2%) despite high adoption (51%) signals institutional hesitancy over TikTok's privacy and reputational risks.
- Public universities have 5.6x larger audiences but achieve similar engagement rates (~12%).
- Content volume drives growth: +14 followers/post ( $p < .001$ ), account age irrelevant.



### CONCLUSIONS

- Institutional size, not ownership type, determines TikTok success.
- Recommended strategy: 40-30-20-10 content mix (student life, career outcomes, admissions, humor).
- Universities need formal TikTok policies to balance reputational risks with Gen Z engagement opportunities.