

Duet this song

A qualitative study on the strategies that musicians use on TikTok to encourage co-creation

Student Name: Maria Thomais Konstantakopoulou
Student Number: 635319

Supervisor: Dr. Erik Hitters

Master Media Studies - Media & Creative Industries
Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication
Erasmus University Rotterdam

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ABSTRACT

TikTok is a fast-growing social media platform which has become an essential component of musicians' marketing efforts due to its substantial user base and the opportunity it provides for musicians to interact directly with their audience. The social media platform provides special tools that encourage the creation of user-generated content.

The thesis focuses on the ways in which musicians on TikTok leverage the platform's features to encourage music fans and users to actively create content, thereby promoting their music and fostering engagement answering the question:

What are the strategies that musicians use on TikTok in order to encourage content co-creation in the platform, promote their music and engage with their audience?

Qualitative methods, notably multimodal analysis, were used to answer this research question. In order to understand how musicians inspire users to produce content and promote their music, the study examined TikTok videos from musician accounts. Purposeful sampling was chosen in order to select videos that encourage co-creation and high engagement between musicians and TikTok users. The sample was made up of short videos produced by musicians who used TikTok to actively market their songs. Pop, folk, and rock were among the musical genres represented by the majority of the musicians studied, who were from Europe and the USA.

The study identified four main strategies utilized by musicians to encourage content co-creation, increase user engagement, and build a bond with their TikTok audience. One of the tactics is "Encouraging Desired Behavior," in which artists encourage people to produce content by providing rewards and encouraging comments. "The Central Role of the User" demonstrates how musicians incorporate audience suggestions and comments into their music as a way of involving their audience in the co-creation process. By showcasing personal and authentic experiences, "Proximity to the Artist" emphasizes building familiarity and relatability. The fourth

tactic focuses on offering easy-to-use methods, such as clear instructions and visual cues, to assist users in creating content. Last but not least, musicians use hashtags generated especially for their new songs or the challenge they have created. Understanding these strategies can help musicians utilize TikTok to promote their work and interact with their audience.

KEYWORDS: *TikTok, content co-creation, music marketing, user-generated content, TikTok musicians*

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1. Introduction

TikTok is one of today's social media networks with the highest growth rates (Bhandari & Bimo, 2020). TikTok had about 656 million users worldwide in 2021. It is anticipated that this number will rise by almost 15% annually, reaching 755 million users in 2022. This presents a great opportunity for musicians to promote their music as they can get access and reach millions of users by participating in the platform. According to a TikTok report, 75% of its US users claim to find new musicians through the platform. TikTok connects musicians and creators with users and music fans. TikTok plays a significant role in contemporary music's production, consumption, and interpretation. According to Obermann, Global Head of Music, TikTok (2020), "TikTok has become an integral part of music discovery, connecting artists to their fans and introducing brands to every corner of the community". The platform announced the 2022 emerging artists and the hits that went viral on TikTok. The contribution of TikTok to wider commercial success is evident when looking at the No.1 singles in the US. In 2022, 13 of the 14 songs that debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 were songs that went viral on TikTok (Music Business Worldwide, 2022). Independent musicians can grow a fanbase on the platform. "It's like an open mic for indie musicians, where they can explore what works" (Mashable, 2022). Nevertheless, the saturation on the platform has increased since its launch as more and more musicians use it as part of their social media marketing in order to promote their music. Engaging with fans through social media channels has become increasingly important for artists, as it allows them to build relationships with their fans (Gamble, 2018). TikTok has transformed music consumption from a passive activity into an interactive experience (Cirisano, 2022). The platform encourages user-generated content more than any other social media platform.

TikTok has become a vital part of musicians' marketing strategy. Early users of the platform have realized that it is an essential marketing tool since it makes their music more accessible to listeners and more widely known (Coulter, 2022). In this thesis project, I aim to study how content co-creation strategies are used by musicians on the TikTok platform in order to promote their music and engage users on the app. TikTok offers its users features that encourage the co-creation of content. The platform was chosen for the study as it is different from other social media platforms by providing unique features that promote the creation of content. In comparison with other platforms, "TikTok allows brands to encourage the creation of

highly orchestrated user-generated content” (Brooks et al., p. 7). Those features can be used by artists in order to encourage engagement and co-creation. This thesis will focus on how musicians in the app take advantage of these features to influence music fans and users to create user-generated content to promote their music and build engagement.

In order to achieve that, the strategies musicians use on TikTok to encourage user-generated content in order to promote their music will be explored.

Research Question

What are the strategies that musicians on TikTok use in order to encourage content co-creation in the platform, promote their music and engage with their audience?

TikTok has provided musicians with a way to manage their artist identities, engage with viewers, broaden their reach, and promote their music without much assistance from conventional gatekeepers and experts in the music industry (Tintiango, Fung & Leo-Liu, 2023). Music marketing, as well as value co-creation, have been studied extensively in academia. Nevertheless, since TikTok is a relatively new platform, not many studies have been conducted about music creators on the platform, especially on how musicians on TikTok encourage participation and co-creation through the content they produce. According to Coultler (2022), although it has become very popular, “TikTok's role in music is still an understudied area of inquiry”. Studies about musicians and TikTok include co-creative activities on the platform and value propositions created by the musicians (Toscher, 2021), the use of TikTok by Filipino musicians (Tintiango et al., 2023) and Transmedia storytelling in Music challenge memes on TikTok (Vizcaino-Verdu & Abidin, 2022). With this research, I intend to contribute to the literature concerning music promotion techniques on TikTok and social media engagement, as well as the apprehension of new methods of digital music marketing. The knowledge derived from the findings will also help music creators and will provide insights regarding strategies for music promotion that have worked for other musicians. Insights will be provided about the engagement of the users as a result of those strategies.

2. Theoretical Framework

According to Powers (2013), music promotion is “the cumulative effect of efforts intended to increase the awareness, presence, longevity, and sale of popular music among the listening public” (p. 315, as cited in Meier, 2019, p. 322). Obviously, the artists are responsible for creating music. But in order to guarantee that the music is heard, marketing is used. “Thus publishing, packaging, distribution and sale of music occur” (Ogden & Long, 2011, p. 120). Furthermore, digital media have challenged the way music promotion is done. According to a music executive, in the past, a few radio stations, MTV and VH1, were the main forces behind music promotion (Powers, 2013, p. 318). Meier (2017) and Powers (2013) noted how music promotion has progressed. In the case of popular music, the promotion has evolved from a series of post-product activities to include all elements of music production, distribution, and consumption (as cited in Klein, 2020). Social media platforms have become an integral part of promoting and marketing musicians’ work. A reason why artists use social media as a tool can be explained by their reach (Nickell, 2020). Gamble, McAdam, and Brennan (2018) argue that both well-known and emerging artists use social media to “facilitate both self-marketing and distribution-based artist-driven strategies directly with their fans” (p. 4). According to Nickell (2020), social media has become an essential resource for independent musicians worldwide, as it enables them to expand their reach beyond physical limitations. This means that regardless of their ability to travel and perform in different locations, social media platforms provide established as well as independent musicians with a way to connect with audiences and promote their music on a global scale.

Moreover, Nickell argues that it is necessary for artists in order to “achieve economic viability” (p. 48). Social media has become increasingly important for artists to establish and maintain their careers. According to Mourelatos and Mourelatos (2022), the use of TikTok as an online video-sharing tool significantly increased Spotify streams, especially for male and European artists, during the pandemic. TikTok became the most popular app in 2020 and had a “massive impact on the music business by creating a fan base, appeal, and streams on platforms like Spotify, ultimately generating income” Aguiar and Martens 2016; Aguiar 2017; AlyTovar et al. 2020 as cited in Mourelatos & Mourelatos, 2022, p. 1).

When it comes to finding ways to promote a brand on TikTok Naumenko's and Gavrilovets's (2020) research supports that there are three main strategies that can be used. The first one refers to creating hashtag challenges. The example of the producer Alan Walker is described. The producer used TikTok to promote his song "Different World." Walker invited followers to post videos of themselves helping the environment using the hashtag #DifferentWorld which was created especially for this challenge and his new song. The creators of the 60 best videos were given rewards for their work. The second strategy involves User-Generated Content. The authors claim that Generation Z strongly prefers to participate and that artists are more likely to get greater support if they can encourage their users to upload videos of themselves. Influencer marketing is the third strategy that they describe, which is used in other platforms as well, like YouTube.

2.1 TikTok as a platform for musicians

TikTok is a social networking platform for short-form video sharing that enables people to record, edit, and share videos that are between 15 seconds and three minutes long. All the data support that TikTok has become a "music streaming platform" (Ingham, 2021). One indicator of this is that in 2020, around 70 artists were discovered through the platform (Oliver & Lalchev, 2022). Non-musical platforms like TikTok began to change their initial concepts and added new features to meet the needs of musicians. TikTok differs from other social networking sites as it makes it easy for users to use music to create sounds or remixes (Vizcaíno-Verdú, De-Casas-Moreno & Tirocchi, 2023).

Most music industry analysts agree that the platform has become a key player in the music industry, allowing its users to discover music through the platform. "The impact of platforms such as TikTok on new music discovery is a clear indication of how the music business has changed" (Oliver & Lalchev, 2022, p. 67). This can partly be explained by TikTok's value proposition which differs from other platforms as it is centered around songs, which makes it more than just a platform for co-creation between artists and fans, digital marketing, or the creation of an artist's brand. Studying TikTok as a marketing platform for musicians is important since its impact on music marketing is significant, and it has become an essential platform for music discovery. According to a 2021 study, 75% of TikTok users discover new artists on the platform, and 72% associate specific songs with TikTok. Furthermore, 67% of users are more

likely to search for tracks they first heard on the app on music streaming platforms (Jones, 2021). The impact of TikTok extends beyond music streaming and also impacts music sales. This indicates the platform's potential impact on music sales and its importance for music discovery. Nevertheless, there is currently no direct evidence of a link between TikTok song virality and album sales (Coulter, 2022).

Furthermore, for unsigned and up-and-coming artists, going viral on TikTok can create leverage that empowers them to negotiate fairer contracts, such as 50/50 record deals, or choose to remain independent (RA, 2022). This highlights the potential impact of TikTok on the music industry and its role in empowering emerging artists. The platform has been helping smaller artists to reach a larger audience (Coulter, 2022). It also explains the need for artists to be on the platform and create content. In the digital age, musicians are required to build their own brand and audience through social media before being signed by record labels. They are expected to demonstrate their ability to reach a large audience by providing quantifiable metrics such as streaming numbers. This might also have a negative effect on artists. Musicians feel pressured to join the platform as it has become the norm in the industry. When they join, they might feel overwhelmed as they have the role of “social media creator and manager” (Tintiango, Fung & Leo-Liu, 2023, p. 12).

TikTok has also arguably allowed for a more active role of users. Sanders et al. (2021) even conclude that the use of new technologies has made it possible for consumers to become gatekeepers, influencing the cultural industries. TikTok creators post their videos with descriptions and hashtags to increase visibility, much like other social media platforms such as Instagram. The social media platform enables users “to create highly engaging short-form content” (Morrow, 2020, p. 134). According to Wang (2020), short-form videos are a reflection of the fast-paced lifestyle of modern society and are intended to capture the attention of users. This implies that the platform's success may be attributed to its ability to offer engaging and fast-paced content that appeals to users (Vizcaíno-Verdú, de-Casas-Moreno, & Tirocchi, S, 2023, p. 153). With the help of TikTok, viewers can now engage with musical content in a range of profound and intriguing videos. In their study, Vizcaíno-Verdú et al. (2023) found that TikTok creates “an appropriate environment for music creation, sharing, and participation” (p. 160). Kaye (2022) also notes the importance of music in TikTok's popularity, as it allows users to

express themselves creatively and engage with others through shared musical experiences. The platform's interactive and collaborative nature encourages users to participate in these musical challenges and contribute to the platform's growing library of user-generated content. TikTok's focus on music and audio-based content has been a critical factor in its success and has helped to establish the platform as a hub for creative expression and musical collaboration. People who create content on TikTok do not only participate in a trend; they also express themselves, connect with others who share their interests, and identify with a network of like-minded people (Vizcaino-Verdu & Abidin, 2022).

2.2 User-generated content

Uses and Gratification theory argues that people consume media that help them satisfy their needs. People feel rewarded when they believe the chosen media successfully met their needs (Palmgreen, 1984). According to Diana-Maria & Oana (2020), much research has recently concentrated on how to apply the U&G theory to social media. The appearance of social media has allowed users to become content creators. On TikTok, users have the opportunity to create their own content as the features of the platform facilitate user-generated content production. According to Cirisano, TikTok has transformed music consumption from a one-way interaction to one that creates involvement. As a result, TikTok prioritizes user-generated content and social (peer-to-peer) promotion, as well as active involvement (as cited in Coulter, 2022). TikTok “gives much more agency to user-created content as a marketing tool over any other social media platform” (Coulter, 2022). Bhandari and Bimo (2020) argue that the creation of content is highly incentivized on TikTok compared to more visibly social actions like commenting, liking, or following. This is allowed by the variety of tools that TikTok offers users in order to create videos, as it lowers the entry requirement and the risk involved. Because of this, more users will produce content. Bhandari and Bimo explain that the design of the platform and its features, such as the easy access of the record button, constitutes the creation of videos more effortless (2020).

As this study focuses on the ways musicians try to engage with the users and encourage participation and co-creation, it is crucial to delve into the needs and motivation of users for participating and producing their own content. According to Bucknell Bossen and Kottasz's (2020) study on the uses and gratifications of adolescent TikTok users, the sample who reported being active in producing videos did so to satisfy their needs for praise and social recognition, as

well as desires to create their own identities and find fame, as well as to maintain and build relationships. Researchers have argued that there are both internal and external motivations for creating content on social media. Deci and Ryan (2000) suggested that intrinsic motivations include relatedness (the need for social ties and a sense of community) and competence (the need to demonstrate one's talents)(as cited in Törhönen et al., 2020). Prior study (Stoeckl et al., 2007; Bughin, 2007) has identified most of the intrinsic motives for producing content, such as the desire for enjoyment, the desire for recognition, and the desire for expression (as quoted in Buf & Tefăniță, 2020). According to Shao (2009), self-expression is the "expression of one's identity" (p. 14).

2.3 User Engagement

For this research, it is vital to get a better understanding of why users engage with music videos on TikTok. According to Oh and Choeh (2022), artists can anticipate different kinds of fan responses, “including simple viewing, liking/disliking, commenting and uploading reaction videos” (p. 805). These responses will need to be taken into account when assessing the level of engagement with the users. The engagement of users and music fans with the content has multiple dimensions, including cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Affection is the emotional dimension of engagement which “refers to the consumer's degree of positive brand-related affect in a particular consumer/brand interaction” (Hollebeek et al., 2014, p. 154). "Activation" refers to the amount of time, effort, and focus a customer devotes to a brand. For example, musicians can use visually appealing graphics, animations, or special effects in their videos to capture viewers' attention and enhance cognitive engagement. Regarding activation, musicians can create engaging videos that encourage viewers to interact with their brand by liking, commenting, or sharing their content. They can also use call-to-action prompts in their videos to encourage viewers to create their own content or share their own videos using the musician's music. Musicians come up “with content that has some form of call-to-action in the form of challenge” (Tintiangko, Fung & Leo-Liu, 2023, p. 11). Social media marketers utilize calls-to-action (CTAs), which are defined as encouraging certain behaviours and are presented as a persuasive technique for carrying out a particular activity (Weiger et al., 2018). Broachie (2018) suggested engaging the audience with concise language and a call-to-action (CTA) (as cited in Moriuchi, 2019) in order to get the users to act right away.

In addition, the TikTok user interface has several features that are designed to promote user engagement and interaction with other users. Kaye et al. (2020) note that the "Use This Sound" feature allows users to easily incorporate audio from other TikTok videos into their own content. This feature encourages collaboration and creative remixing of existing content, which is a common practice on the platform. Similarly, Abidin et al. (2020) explain that the "Video Reply to Comments" feature allows users to respond directly to comments left on their videos, which helps build a sense of community on the platform and encourages users to engage with each other in meaningful ways. Two other features, "Stitch" and "Duet," also promote collaboration and creativity among TikTok users. Stitch allows users to clip short segments from other videos and incorporate them into their own, while Duet allows users to create side-by-side videos with other users. According to TikTok (2020), the Duet feature works by scrolling through TikTok videos, finding a video to Duet, and tapping a dedicated Duet button on the TikTok sharing interface. The TikTok platform automatically downloads the video and opens the video recording interface to shoot or import a video that appears side-by-side with the original being used for Duet. These features promote collaboration and creativity, as users can build on each other's ideas and contribute to a shared creative ecosystem. These features are used by artists that want to encourage users and fans to engage with their music. In their research regarding how TikTok is used by Filipino musicians, Tintiangko et al. (2023) found that the artists use the Duet feature, which is employed in order to encourage audience engagement. In addition, the artists used this feature to promote their songs. The way that the features mentioned above are being used will be explored in the analysis.

In their study, Lu, Yu and Wang (2023) found that visual factors are the most important for user engagement and that the beginning image of a video is more important than the ending image. The text in a video's title is also found to be important, although less so than visual features. Since music is an integral part of TikTok, the findings of the study could still be relevant to music creators on the platform. Based on the study's findings, music creators on TikTok should prioritize the visual elements of their videos, especially the beginning image, as they are the most important factors for engagement. This means that they should create visually appealing videos that grab the viewer's attention right from the start.

Furthermore, Mulligan (2011) discussed the artists' objectives for encouraging fan creativity and fan contributions to music production, in which he argues that fans can play a significant role in the creative process. Mulligan terms this phenomenon as "Fan-Fuelled Creativity". Mulligan proposes three distinct objectives for Fan-Fuelled Creativity: creativity, engagement, and marketing. The first objective, creativity, refers specifically to user contributions to music production. The other two objectives, engagement and marketing, are related to forming bonds with fans and developing marketing strategies for music promotion, respectively (Mulligan, 2011, as cited in Gamble, 2018). TikTok artists can use Fan-Fuelled Creativity to engage with their fans, collaborate with them in music production, and promote their music through challenges or contests. This can lead to increased engagement and a more loyal fan base.

2.4 Content co-creation and value co-creation on TikTok

Musicians on TikTok not only provide their music for users to listen to, but they also engage in co-creation activities with the fans. According to Saragih, co-creation is the process through which the producer and the consumer work together to create value (2019). Instead of viewing consumers as passive targets, companies should view them as "active operant resources that ultimately determine and generate value in their different value-creating processes." (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Gamble et al. (2018) have explored the use of User-Generated content in marketing strategies. They concluded that incorporating co-creation into marketing initiatives benefits artist marketing strategies as it boosts fan loyalty (p. 15). Musicians create value propositions by sharing their music on the platform, while the users integrate these value propositions by creating different kinds of videos (Toscher, 2021). Users and music providers on TikTok collaborate to produce video content. The music that the music creators present on the platform is what users integrate as resources in their own content (Toscher, 2021). According to Toscher (2021), artists create value that users then integrate by creating dances, lip-syncing videos, challenges, and memes. Users don't merely comment or circulate content; they become the content. For musicians on TikTok, this implies that the users become a part of the promotion of their work. The bigger labels view this as a means to reduce marketing expenses. This way, they are eliminating the middlemen, which makes it more affordable to produce and market music (Coutler, 2022). TikTok's emphasis on replication and imitation has created new

opportunities for brands to engage with users and leverage user-generated content as a marketing tool. Digital technologies have transformed consumers into advertising producers and distributors through user-generated content. As Brooks et al. note, TikTok provides a platform for brands to turn users into "unofficial brand ambassadors" by encouraging them to create content that promotes a specific product or service (2022, p. 7).

Kim and Choi (2019) researched how businesses can utilize social media strategies to encourage value co-creation. Introducing four drivers of co-creation, which include "experience, satisfaction, expression and share" (p. 5). Since this study focuses on individuals on TikTok and takes into consideration the product that they promote, the relevant drivers are expression which refers to intrinsic motivations of the users such as creativity. In addition, a driver for social media success, according to Kim and Choi's (2017) research on the co-creation of value, is offering rewards, which includes promoting the users who post material to their social media accounts.

Despite the efforts of musicians for co-creation, Coutler (2022) supports that "TikTok's music virality replaces the co-creation of traditional social media marketing in favor of user-generated content" (p. 146). TikTok sheds light on how consumers engage with music and media content. Listeners can interpret musical works differently and attach new meanings to them. In other words, a song's narrative may not necessarily relate to a TikTok viral video clip. Instead, user interpretation may override the artist's intended meaning in user-generated work.

Toscher (2021) argues that there are value propositions created by musicians on TikTok that promote co-creation, such as "psychomotor motivational value," which refers to cues and signals that the artists offer by suggesting, for example, how users can dance to their song. In their study, Gamble and Gilmore (2013) identified categories of co-creational strategies for marketing which include viral marketing, sponsored user-generated content, UGC marketing and prosumer marketing. In viral marketing, the users become a source of distribution. According to Halpern (2005), "the element of recommendation and word-of-mouth communication is not only a fundamental marketing tool but also a vitally important aspect of a music marketing campaign" (p. 18). Sponsored user-generated branding is "actively asking for consumer contributions through blogs, contests, voting, selected fan contributions or other forms of campaigns" (Burmans 2010, p. 2). Incorporating UGC marketing includes "blogs, mash-ups, online reviews, peer-to-peer Q&As, video clips, social networks, and Second Life avatars" (Gray, 2007, p. 23).

Lastly, prosumer marketing is being described. The definition of a prosumer is "a consumer who becomes involved in the design and manufacture of products and services so they can be made to individual specification" (Konczal, 2008, p. 22). It is interesting to see how these strategies are adopted in TikTok by musicians.

Furthermore, it is crucial to mention what might motivate customer co-creation. The customer value co-creation behaviour of the target audience may be motivated by homophily. This indicates that homophily can encourage audiences to share knowledge and drive consumer engagement behaviour (Bu et al., 2022). Homophily consists of four dimensions: attitude, background, values and appearance (Ladhari et al., 2020, as cited in Bu et al., 2022). When it comes to appearance, artists might try to appear close to the viewers. This could be achieved by wearing casual clothes, for instance. It is essential to identify elements that might make users feel close to the artists. Gerlieb (2021) observed how visual artists achieve that through TikTok videos. According to Gerlieb (2021), viewers might develop a warm sense of familiarity thanks to the interaction between the intimacy provided by the devices and the verbal and visual proximity to the artists and users. In the first method of establishing trust, the audience is brought into the artist's studio through intimate videos that feature close-ups of their hands and faces while also allowing viewers to view their studios and living quarters. Trust gradually grows via evoking feelings of peeking over the artist's shoulder or overall physical proximity. Through the screen, the audience is made a friend, as opposed to Instagram, which increases the likelihood that the audience will learn more about the artistic process, much like going to a studio.

2.5 Virality and music promotion on TikTok

Virality plays an important part in the success of a song and the career of artists in the app. According to Adibin (2020), musicians are concentrating on what is trending, which is characteristic of TikTok creators, in order to increase their exposure and virality (as cited in Tintiangko, Fung & Leo-Liu, 2023). TikTok encourages creators to use hashtags to describe, categorize, and make their videos simple to discover, similar to other online social media platforms. Ling, Blackburn, De Cristofaro, and Stringhini (2021), identified several factors that may indicate the virality of short videos. These features include objects that are included in the video, text, emotional experience, challenges, hashtags used, and creators' profiles. Their study

suggests that the most accurate predictor of a video's virality is the number of followers; a creator with more than 10,000 followers is more likely to produce a viral video than creators with fewer followers. Additionally, viral videos are more likely to have medium- or close-up shots with a second point of view. In contrast to earlier research on picture memes, the text actually helps videos grow faster.

In addition, it is argued that the recommendation system plays a vital role in making content viral. According to Coutler (2022), the number of followers does not play a vital role in deciding to make a video go viral but “instead emphasizes the organic traction of users’ videos” (p. 138). Analyzing the artists that went viral on TikTok in 2020, it was discovered that the majority of the songs that went viral were from established artists, while only 12.5% of those were from new and upcoming musicians (The Pudding, 2022).

Viral videos using snippets of songs have a direct correlation to Spotify and Billboard chart position. In fact, some songs have seen a significant increase in streams and chart position after going viral on social media platforms like TikTok. The platform has also helped upcoming artists’ songs become viral and gain visibility. In 2023, many talented musicians who were honoured at the Grammy Awards that year first gained popularity on TikTok (Audible treats, 2023). For example, GAYLE's song "ABCDEFU," which originated from a TikTok comment, earned a nomination for Song of the Year after amassing over 2.5 million creations on the platform.

Virality is something that musicians on TikTok are trying to achieve as they use the social media platform to promote their music. There are several music marketing agencies offering advice on TikTok such as Burstimo. The music marketing company offered potential promotion techniques for musicians on TikTok and presented two strategies (as cited in a Radovanović, 2022). The first method entails actively seeking out a group of like-minded people, creatively presenting their music and information about the making of the songs as well as delving into the meaning of the songs. The second tactic entails breaking down songs into shorter snippets and contacting influencers who could develop a trend based on the sound, such as a viral dance challenge.

3. Methodology

This master thesis aims to deepen the comprehension of the ways that musicians use TikTok to engage with users and fans and facilitate co-creation in order to promote their music. The strategies that the artist use will be explored in order to answer the research question.

This chapter covers in detail the reasons regarding the decisions made to conduct this research successfully. It aims to offer a clear description of how the topic of the study was addressed, as well as to explain the academic choices taken to answer the research question. The chapter begins by delving into the research design and the choices regarding the sampling method. Further, the methods by which data were collected will be described. The following section refers to the operationalization and the data analysis process. Lastly, the reliability and liability of the research methods will be discussed.

3.1 Research design

The strategies musicians on TikTok deploy in order to encourage content co-creation in the platform and to promote their music are examined. Qualitative methods are the most suitable methods to achieve that. Boeije (2009) argues that qualitative research questions typically begin with "what" or "why", and they can be either descriptive or explanatory. The Thesis RQ belongs in this category. In order to uncover the underlying meanings in the text, qualitative content analysis is an effective method for finding solutions from specific visual or verbal material relevant to the study subject (Schreier, 2014). Content analysis was used for data collection and analysis. Qualitative content analysis is a research technique for the subjective interpretation of data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, as cited in Lookingbill, 2022). TikTok videos from musicians' accounts, as well as user-generated videos from users of TikTok, were analysed in order to understand how musicians' TikToks encourage users to engage and create user-generated content as a means to promote their music. "Content analysis is increasingly becoming a valuable method to examine how individuals access and engage with information on TikTok" (Lookingbill, 2022, p. 1).

3.2 Sampling

Before the units are collected, it is crucial to determine the sampling method that will be used in order to collect the suitable units that will provide the necessary information that serves

the research question. The units of measurement were short-form TikTok videos of musicians. The duration of the videos varied and was between 20 seconds and 3 minutes. For the aims of the thesis research, the videos created by musicians had to promote and encourage co-creation and high-level engagement between them and the users of the app.

Non-probability sampling was used. In non-probability sampling, the sample is taken from the population based on the researcher's judgments or criteria instead of collecting units randomly (Flick, 2018). As described above, in that way, it was ensured that the videos selected encourage co-creation. All musicians who are actively making content on TikTok in order to promote their music are part of the population. Criterion purposive sampling was selected in order for the data collected to fit the research question and the need of the study. For the aim of the thesis project, these musicians should be releasing music on digital platforms and promoting their songs on TikTok by creating different types of content. Users who have labelled their accounts using the categories musicians/bands were taken into consideration. "The cases are specifically selected because they can teach us a lot about the issues that are of importance to the research" (Coyne, 1997, as cited in Boeije, 2010).

There are different content types that the creators include in their content strategy in order to promote their music, which encourages a high level of engagement. Those different forms of content served as categories for data collection. The final sampling size consisted of 130 TikTok videos. In addition, the first ten comments from each video were analysed. Initially, the sampling size was to be determined by an equal division into the categories presented below. However, after the collection of the videos, it was observed that some categories were more popular than others. Hence videos that belonged to certain categories were more difficult to find and collect, such as the third category. Therefore, the number of units in every category which were obtained is not equal but proportionally adjusted according to the popularity of the category. The content types that include ways artists encourage engagement were drawn from a first acquaintance with the different content that is posted on TikTok by creators as well as the categories that emerged from the study of Toscher (2021). In this study, Toscher (2021) supports that artists create value propositions. The users of the app incorporate those by creating dance videos, participating in challenges, posting memes, and lip-syncing videos. During the collection process, the initial

categories were modified to fit all the categories and the different video types that were discovered.

Content types for content analysis.

1. **Challenges.** This content category refers to challenges musicians create on TikTok, such as duet or open verse challenges. The practice of giving fans the chance to "fill in the missing parts" of new songs by themselves, both textually and musically, has given rise to a genre known as the "open verse challenge," in which singers from a variety of genres invite their fans to duet their music videos (Radovanović, 2022, p. 58). More specifically, musicians perform the song's chorus while sharing only the instrumental part of the verse and asking other users to write their own verse. One tactic the musicians frequently use is to upload a subtitled video of them singing their new song, leaving out some of it so that other TikTok users can utilise the function to sing along (Tintiangko et al., 2023).
2. **Use of sound.** In this content type, the artists are encouraging users to create content using their songs or to create videos playing the song. In these videos, the musicians are either talking directly to the viewers and explaining the steps they need to take in order to create videos with their music, or they create tutorials on how users can edit a compilation of videos using their song.
3. **Reaction videos.** In these videos, the artists react to user-generated content that involves their music. For instance, they post reactions of them watching covers of their songs and videos of users that have responded to duet challenges. Occasionally, they also react to videos of users that have used their song as background music.
4. **User involvement.** This category includes videos created by artists after suggestions and prompts from users on the platform. Users suggest song ideas that artists respond to by turning them into songs. Some videos in this category are inspired by the involvement of users. For example, users might make detailed suggestions for a different version of a song.
5. **Taking an action.** This category includes transition videos and dances. Musicians create transitions using their own music, and other users can recreate these transitions.

At the same time, musicians create dance routines and perform them using their songs.

From the 130 videos that were collected, only 121 were analysed, as it was observed that saturation was reached. Therefore, the videos that were not analysed would not add new information to the analysis. The first category included 29 videos, while the second included 8. Forty-three videos belonged to the third category. The fourth and fifth categories included 21 and 20 videos, respectively.

3.3 Data collection

This research used a web-scraping method in order for the units to be collected. In order to download the videos from each category, the website Apify.com was used, which allows all the data from TikTok to be exported as an excel file and saved for analysis. The videos were discovered from a new account in order to minimise the influence of the algorithm and the watch history of the existing account of the researcher. The data were collected through the Discover tool on TikTok, which allows users to find specific videos using searchable terms and hashtags as well as through the “For you page” on which videos appear when the user enters the app. Posts are shown in accordance with a complex algorithm that takes into account the popularity of the post itself, the creator's popularity, videos that the user has previously liked or engaged with, and the location of the device accessing TikTok (Herrick et al., 2021 as cited in Lookingbill, 2022). The videos from the first and the fifth category were discovered by searching relevant hashtags like #openversechallenge on the discovery page. Videos that belonged to the rest of the categories were found by searching through the content that artists have posted on their accounts. Most of the artists whose videos were collected live and work in Europe and the USA. The genres of the songs included in the videos belong to pop music and folk. A few of the videos belong to rock, hip-hop. As the platform uses the location of the user, trending videos from Europe, especially the Netherlands and Greece appeared when the data were collected as it was the location of the device during the sampling and data collection period. The artists whose videos were analysed are both established and emerging musicians. It is important to address that the videos that were collected relied on organic reach, as there are also artists who promote their videos through paid ads on the platform.

3.4 Data Analysis

Multimodal analysis was employed in order to make sense of the data. TikTok is a video-sharing platform; therefore, visual analysis is important in order to analyse the videos from the sample. First, all the relevant elements that are depicted in the videos were identified and described. Those include the objects and the setting (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Regarding the objects, every attribute in the image should be observed. The settings have to do with the context the objects are in, which includes the background, the lighting, and the quality of the overall image. Moreover, a textual analysis was conducted. These included the texts the musicians use in their videos, the verbal communication, as well as the text used in the description section to encourage other users to engage with the video.

According to multimodal analysis, after developing the initial categories, an analytical template was developed and tested before applying the template to all the data collected (Serafini & Reid, 2019). Categories were constructed, and themes were developed in order to answer the research question. Thematic analysis was employed in order for themes to emerge. The thematic analysis includes “identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). In order to translate the data into findings, analysis involves segmenting and reassembling the data (Boeije, 2010, p. 93). The three steps that were implemented in order to analyse the data were open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. During the first step, open coding was implemented and all the posts were categorised into codes. For the coding, both deductive and inductive methods were used by using concept-driven codes from the literature as well as data-driven codes. In axial coding, the similar codes already created are merged together, and categories were formed. Afterwards, main categories and sub-codes were developed. A code tree was produced, which is provided in the appendix(A). The initial open coding and the axial coding were conducted in the Atlas software. In the final step, themes were created to answer the research question, which are discussed in detail in the results chapter.

3.5 Operationalization

The videos were examined by taking into account the different co-creational marketing typologies (Gamble & Gilmore, 2013) as well as the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for content production on social media.

The videos were viewed after taking into consideration specific characteristics. The use of text and lyrics in the videos is one of those. The lyrics of songs are frequently used by TikTokers to tell stories (Crystal Abidin and D. Bondy Valdovinos Kaye, 2021, Radovanovic, 2022). The next element is the “paralanguage”, which is defined by Kumari and Gangwar (2018) as the nonverbal communication that includes vocalisations (lip-syncing in the case of TikTok) and other nonverbal voice qualities (as cited in Vizcaíno-Verdú and Abidin, 2022). The role of the performer in the videos will also be assessed. Vizcaíno-Verdú and Abidin (2022) found that when it comes to the performer’s role, content creators appear to be in the centre of the video, using close-ups and looking directly at the viewers. The last element concerns the emotion and the feelings conveyed in the videos. The videos can be funny, emotional, and inspirational. Emotions refer to “psychophysiological reactions involving adaptive modes of the individual when perceiving an object, person, event, or significant memory (nostalgia, mood, humor)” (Vizcaíno-Verdú and Abidin, 2022, p. 898). In their study, Ling et al. considered the “type of subjects” (objects, characters) that appear on the videos as well as the point-of-view, which concerns the perspective, whether that is first, second or third-person (p. 5). The tables provided below present the operationalization of the concepts introduced in the theoretical chapter which are used to answer the research question.

Table 3.1 Operationalization of the strategies used to foster co-creation.

	Definitions	Examples
Co-creation marketing strategies	Viral marketing in the music industry Halpern (2005) writes that “the element of recommendation and word-of-mouth communication is not only a fundamental marketing tool, but also a vitally important aspect of a music marketing campaign”	Asking users to use the TikTok sound (song) or share the video.

	<p>Sponsored user-generated branding</p> <p>Sponsored user-generated branding has been described as “actively asking for consumer contributions through blogs, contests, voting, selected fan contributions or other forms of campaigns” (Burmam, 2010, p. 2)</p>	<p>Asking users to participate in a challenge, create their own video.</p>
	<p>UGC marketing incorporates “blogs, mash-ups, online reviews, peer-to-peer Q&As, video clips, social networks, Second Life avatars” (Gray, 2007, p. 23)</p>	<p>Using content created by users in order to promote the song.</p>
	<p>Prosumer marketing. A prosumer can be defined as “a consumer who becomes involved in the design and manufacture of products and services so they can be made to individual specification” (Konczal, 2008, p. 22).</p>	<p>Fans contribute to song lyrics, fans co-write the song.</p>
Value propositions	<p>Value propositions foster co-creation made by musicians such as “psychomotor motivational value” which refers to hints and signs that the artists provide by suggesting how to dance to the song or do transition (Toscher, 2021, p. 12).</p>	<p>Artists giving cues on how users can dance to a song and how and what kind of transition videos the users can create.</p>
Motivations for producing content	<p>Self-expression</p> <p>“Expression of one’s identity” (Shao, 2009, p. 14).</p> <p>Competence</p> <p>The need to exhibit one's skills (Deci and Ryan, 2000, as cited in Törhönen et al., 2020)</p>	<p>The creators invite users to express themselves and showcase their skills perhaps through creating challenges.</p> <p>Creators are rewarding users that create content and perform the desired actions.</p>

	Social and personal recognition (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)	
	Extrinsic motivations (status, money) (Törhönen et al., 2020)	
Similarity	Homophily (attitude, background, values and appearance) (Ladhari et al., 2020, as cited in Bu et al., 2022).	Artists might try to appear close to the viewers. This could be achieved by wearing casual clothes.

Table 3.2 Operationalization of the user comments

Dimensions of engagement	Examples
Cognitive dimension “Cognitive processing’ is defined as “a consumer’s level of brand-related thought processing and elaboration” (Hollebeek, 2014, p. 154)	“This song has stuck in my mind since I heard it”
Emotional dimension “the degree of positive brand-related affect in a particular consumer/brand interaction” (Hollebeek, 2014, p. 154)	“I love your song”
Activation “A consumer’s level of energy, effort and time spent on a brand in a particular consumer/brand interaction” (Hollebeek, 2014, p. 154)	“I made a cover of the song, would you like to check it out?”

3.6 Credibility

Regarding credibility, the main themes and conclusions were backed up by specific evidence obtained from the data analysis. However, it is vital to remember that the researcher's involvement in interpreting the data is crucial. The researcher "is considered a central device in the analytic process in this type of interpretive study" (Golafshani 2003, as cited in Berkovicha & Benoliel, 2019, p. 137). Even though only 121 videos were analysed, the themes presented were prevalent, and they appear in most of the videos, which supports that the findings were not a result of the researcher's subjectivity.

Regarding the reliability of the research, the methodology, including the data analysis, was transparent, and all the steps taken were described in detail. All the actions that were taken in this research were carefully documented, which makes the re-creation of the study in the future possible. Furthermore, using the software Atlas helped keep track of the process and maintain the data analysis organised. All of the data that was gathered came from public accounts that were accessible to everyone, not from private accounts that required consent, in order to uphold a strong ethical foundation for this research.

4. Research Results

This chapter presents and discusses the findings from the conducted analysis. Musicians on TikTok create and post a great number of videos in order to promote their music. From those videos, there are certain types of content that encourage involvement and co-creation with the users of the platform. The analysis was focused on exploring the ways in which the artists intend to achieve that, which aims to answer the research question:

What are the strategies that musicians on TikTok use in order to encourage content co-creation in the platform, promote their music and engage with their audience?

Co-creation and interaction happened between the creators and other normal users or TikTok fans and between the creators and other musicians on the platform. Through the thematic analysis of the data collected from 121 TikTok videos and their captions, four main themes were developed in order to provide an answer to the research question. Several themes are specific to the features available on the platform, which musicians and fans utilise to facilitate co-creation.

4.1 Theme 1: Encouraging desired behaviour

Encouraging the desired behaviour is the first theme that emerged, which refers to the different ways in which artists are trying to motivate users to create something together or create a certain type of video. The musicians are encouraging fans or other musicians to create content by providing incentives that are appealing to them as well as providing positive feedback to users who have created videos to reinforce this behaviour.

4.1.1 Providing Incentives

The most common type of incentive that was identified during the analysis was the chance for the videos of the users to be shared by the artist. In half of the videos that contained challenges created by the artists, it was mentioned that some of the videos of the users will be shared by the artist, or the users will be featured in the following videos on the artist's account. This is a motivation for the fans of the musician as well as other musicians who would like more exposure to the fans of the respective artist. An artist mentioned in the video, "I will pick the best ones & share 'em on my profile" (video 43), while another artist wrote in the caption that if they do a duet, she will repost her favourites. Sharing videos of users through reposting or reacting to them was the most common incentive. Others include creating some contests that offer a prize

for the winner. For instance, in a video, a band asking people to create whatever type of content they want with their song created a contest where the winner will get three tickets to their show. Another artist was willing to give 10% of the song royalties to the person who would create his favourite verse for his song. Lastly, a musician in a video who asks people to duet him while he plays the song mentions, "If you write one (verse) I really love I wanna set up a writing session together and alsooo I'm gonna pick someone to open for me in a city on tour" (video 20). According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media participation is mostly driven by people's need to express themselves, obtain personal and social recognition, and leave a favourable first impression (as cited in Kim & Choi, 2017). By providing incentives like sharing the videos of users on their accounts, artists appeal to the motivations of social recognition.

These strategies of including incentives can act as rewards for the users for completing the desired action. Kim and Choi (2017), in their research regarding social media users' value co-creation process with a start-up, found that a driver for social media success includes providing rewards which include promoting the users who create content on their social media accounts. The content analysis showed that musicians provide similar rewards by posting users' videos on their accounts. Self-determination theory acknowledges both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for certain behaviour. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), intrinsic motivations include competence (the desire to demonstrate one's abilities) and relatedness (the need for social relationships and a sense of community) (as cited in Törhönen et al., 2020). The extrinsic motivations involve income or status. By providing incentives like sharing the best videos from users, the musicians recognise and take into account the extrinsic motivations of users. At the same time, creating the challenges, duets and inviting users to create content could appeal to the intrinsic motivation of users regarding self-expression and a need to demonstrate their abilities.

4.1.2 Positive reaction to videos

Sharing the videos can act as an incentive for users, as it is described above. Reacting to the videos is one way of sharing them on the account of the artist. With the help of the duet feature, musicians react to other users' videos about their songs. This gives them the opportunity not only to show they are watching the fan's content but also to react to the videos giving value to them. Some comments of musicians reacting to other people's videos include "his version is everything" (video 75), and "Insane dynamics, wow" (video 47). There are different ways in

which artists give positive feedback. The sub-theme that emerged several times refers to being impressed and shocked by what the artist hears or sees. This is seen in an example in Figure 1 where a singer watching another user duet her song is expressing how impressed she is as she drops her jaw. Some artists might become moved or emotional while hearing other people dueting their song. An example in Figure 2 shows a songwriter who watches a cover of another user and is moved. In 30 videos, the musicians are encouraging, providing text that supports that together with their facial expression and their actions. Other musicians are being by mentioning that the singers have stolen their songs as a way of saying how impressed they are as they admire them performing. Musicians might be smiling and dancing along or singing the lyrics that other people wrote for the challenge they created. This is illustrated in Figure 3, in which an artist, while recording her reaction to a video of a user creating a dance with her song, seems very excited and happy, smiling and dancing. These kinds of incentives and reactions can reinforce the desired behaviour, which is to make users keep dueting the musicians or creating content with their songs. Research about playful communication and TikTok demonstrated that artists might encourage audience engagement through challenges and the development of connections, which are playful traits (Tawfik, 2021).

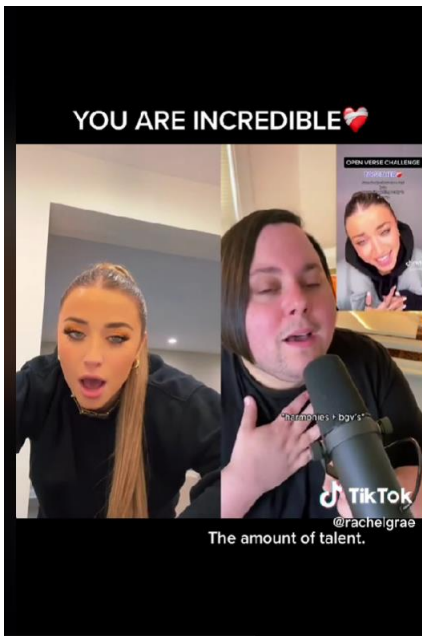


Fig 1: The singer acts very impressed by the cover of another user in the app.



Fig 2: The singer becomes very emotional as she reacts to a duet of her song created by another user.

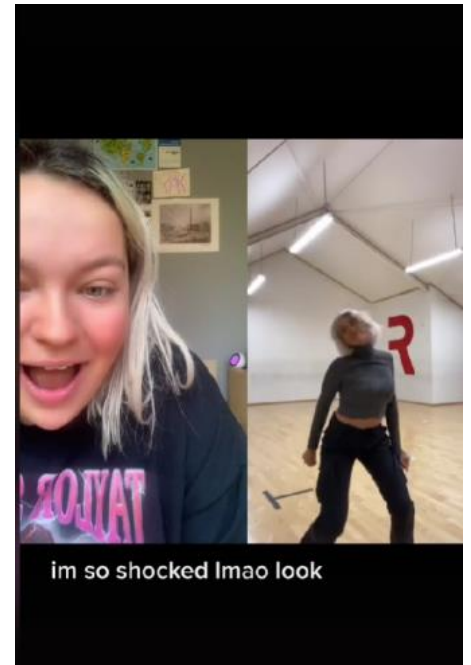


Fig 3: The singer expresses happiness and excitement as she watches a dancer who has created a choreography of her song.

4.1.3 Expressing the completion of an action

This subtheme concerns the videos that fall under the challenge category in which artists invite users of the platform to create together with them. When it comes to identifying the types of audience engagement, through the thematic analysis of the comments under the videos, it was found that the users are engaged in a cognitive, emotional, and behavioural way. Regarding the behavioral dimension, the users are expressing that they have completed the required action initiated by the musicians. Users' comments include "I made a duet, I hope you like it", "I made a Polish verse on my TikTok", or a simple "Done". The users are not only creating the content that the musicians want, but they are also informing them. This reveals an activation since they have dedicated energy and effort into making these videos. In these comments, some users not only write that they created videos but encourage the artists to watch them. That way, the chances of the artists commenting on their video or responding with a duet reacting to their video increase. The comments include "I made a cover of (Song title), would be cool if you check it out! It's on my TikTok page", and "I duetted your video!! I appreciate it if you can check it out". Users not

only ask for the artist to watch their videos, but they are also informing them about other users that have created similar videos and invite them to see them. For example, they inform that other musicians have created different videos with their songs "You need to check out the remakes made by (@name of the artist) of this song!!". The way artists encourage these actions is by posting on their account videos of them reacting to duets that other users have created. This suggests that the artists are encouraging users and fans to engage with them on a behavioural level. According to Hollebeek (2014), the behavioural dimension of engagement refers to "a consumer's level of energy, effort, and time spent on a brand in a particular consumer/brand interaction" (p. 154).

4.2 Theme 2: Placing users in a central role to facilitate co-creation

The second theme discusses how musicians involve users and utilise ideas from the users and fans. The main theme is divided into two main sub-themes, which include: (a) deriving inspiration from users and (b) creating content from a prompt of a fan.

4.2.1 Deriving inspiration from users

TikTok users and fans leave comments under artists' videos describing ideas for songs that they would like the artist to write about. The artists pick some of these comments and create songs with stories inspired by the users. Using the video reply feature on the platform, musicians have the ability to share their songs and link them with the comments that they were inspired by. It was observed that the artists take into account those ideas and create content inspired by the involvement of their fans on the platform. For instance, in Figures 4 and 5, artists have responded in comments by writing new songs. In Figure 4, an artist created a song responding to a fan's idea for a song regarding "A small town girl with big dreams and plans that only go on to be crushed by the judgment of the small town and the expectation to stay.". Musicians are also using fans as an inspiration in a more indirect way. An example in Figure 6 shows certain musicians who created a song using the name of the playlists their fans have added their song to on Spotify. The fans create value by suggesting song ideas, and the artists appear to respond by taking those ideas and using them to create a product that is formed as a result of their collaboration.

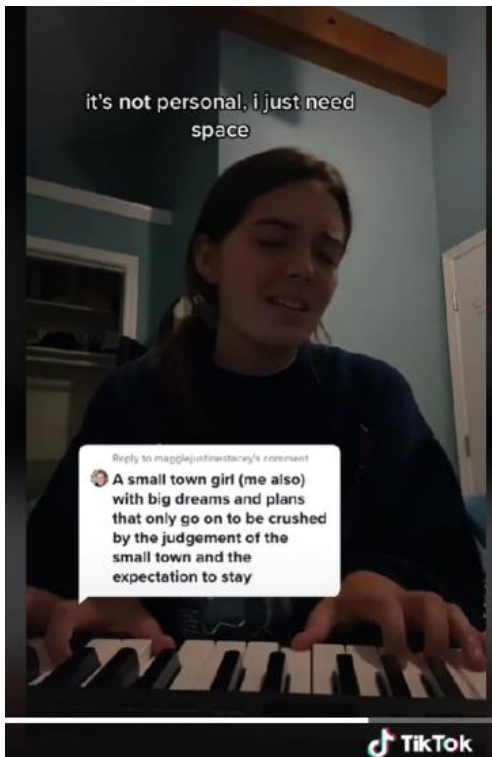


Fig 4: The songwriter wrote a song with a theme that a user suggested.



Fig 5: The songwriter wrote a song with a theme that a user suggested.

4.2.2 Creating content from a prompt from a fan/ suggestions

Besides creating songs from story ideas provided by the users, musicians also create content by listening to users. This can refer to getting ideas for creating a different version of their song. This is illustrated in Figure 7, in which a band responded to a user comment, "Romantic version of Discoteque, balanced for a cosy evening by the fireplace. Wondering how a full acoustic show would look. Would you be interested?". The artists decided to create a video playing an acoustic version of their song in a studio decorated accordingly, with a Christmas tree and a fireplace. In a different video, an artist created a new version of the song and added different instruments after a user suggested that she records a different version with specific instruments. The artists foster co-creation by creating different versions of their songs suggested by fans and app users. Several

videos from the dataset that belonged to the challenge category were created from comments of users asking for such a challenge in order to contribute to the song.

The sub-themes above are consistent with the co-creational prosumer typology. According to Konczal (2008), a prosumer is "a consumer who becomes involved in the design and manufacture of products and services so that they can be made to individual specification" (p. 22 as cited in Gamble & Gilmore, 2011). In their research, fans contributing to song lyrics is mentioned as an example of prosumer marketing. Therefore, fans contributing to song ideas and the creation of a different version of a song are involved in the production of a good. Fan fuelled creativity is a term used by Mulligan (2011) that describes this phenomenon in which users contribute to music production (as cited in Gambel et al., 2019).



Fig 6: The musicians created a song using the name of the playlists their fans have added their song to



Fig 7: The band recreated a different version of their song that a user suggested.

According to Turri et al.'s study (2013), TikTok users who create content have better levels of advocacy, loyalty, and support for a musician's artistic vision than content consumers. This research focuses on content where artists employ co-creation techniques. The users of TikTok, who are content producers as well as consumers, are targeted by artists in such videos. At the

same time, they are encouraging users of the app to produce content, whether it be through duet recording, song concept submission, or assistance with the construction of a song's alternate version. In addition, closeness with the consumer can be established by providing valuable content on social media and "being responsive to the consumer" (Turri et al., 2013, p. 210).

4.3 Theme 3: Proximity to the artist

The third theme highlights the lack of distance between the creators and the audience that the artists present. According to Turri et al. (2013), viewers must experience a sense of closeness with the artist in order to establish an emotional connection. Specifically, the artists appear very close to the viewers, which is achieved by the activities they choose to do in the videos as well as the setting and background they choose for the videos. In addition, they manage to create this proximity to the fans through the objects they include in the videos, by their clothes, using close-up, and by being relatable. The decision to wear casual clothes reveals that there is a need to show a similarity with the everyday user, which can be supported by homophily (Ladhari et al., 2020). By appearing to do everyday activities and presenting themselves to be close to normal people, they are trying to establish a closer connection with them. Given the lack of personal interaction, self-connection, and intimacy are both crucial for relationship formation in online contexts (Turri et al., 2013). By fostering a sense of intimacy, users of the app can feel closer to them, which can make them feel more comfortable engaging with them and creating videos in similar conditions as those in the artists' videos.

4.3.1 Everyday activities

During the filming of videos, ten artists decided to show everyday activities while asking users to duet their videos. In some videos, the artists had gone for a walk in a park. This is illustrated by an example in Figure 8. The musician created a duet challenge while playing with his dog in his backyard. Those videos do not appear to be forced or that they took an effort to make. Inviting users to create videos with them while they are doing normal everyday activities might encourage users to do the same and create videos without having to put a great effort into making them. Therefore, encouraging more people to create videos as they can create them whenever the users want.

4.3.2 A look into the artist's space

More than half of the videos that were analysed were filmed in the personal space of the artists, whether that was their bedroom, their living room, or their home studio. For example, an artist is holding her guitar while sitting with her legs crossed on her bed, as seen in Figure 9. This can create the feeling of being close to the artist. This appears to be in line with the findings from the study of Gerlieb (2021) about visual artists on TikTok, in which she concludes that, unlike Instagram, on TikTok, the audience is more likely to learn about the artistic process, similar to visiting a studio. That is also the case with the musicians on TikTok showing their home studio or the space where they work in. Moreover, it is supported by Gerlieb (2021) that this type of content helps artists build trust. This is done by evoking feelings of peeking over the artist's shoulder to their space. This has a result that through the screen, the audience is made to feel like peers.

At the same time, when the artist is inviting other users to duet with her while sitting in her bedroom bed, it can help users create the duets from their personal space. In Figure 10, the audience can see the bedroom of a musician, which looks like an ordinary room of a young person, having posters on the wall and clothes on the bed. Moreover, in 75 out of 120 videos, the artists were wearing casual clothes, namely, t-shirts, sweaters or hoodies.

4.3.3 Objects included in the videos

In the open verse challenges that the artists created, in the part where the users are supposed to sing, the artists, instead of microphones they, hold some other kind of objects even though as professional musicians, they have access to microphones. Creators have used bottles of water, hairbrush (as seen in Figure 11), toothbrush, candles, and other personal or household objects. As a result, people who do not own microphones or professional equipment are not discouraged to create their own videos. At the same time, it was found that artists use close-ups, and they take up a large section of the screen. By doing that, the users can notice all their expressions and feel close to them. According to Gerlieb (2021), the interaction between the device's intimacy and the verbal and visual proximity to the creative makers enables viewers to "fall into friendly familiarity" (p. 9). Similarly, through the analysis, it became apparent that the artists create intimacy by choosing close-ups and talking to the camera or phone directly. Therefore, the artists use the distance between them and the phone as well as the objects they use

in the video as a way to appear closer to the viewer and establish a friendly character. Since the "virtual proximity" which is created by the intimate screen creates a sense of closeness and a bond between the artist and the audience (Gerlieb, 2021, p. 12).

4.3.4 Relatability

Creators emphasise some qualities which can make them appear relatable. Some videos present a more funny and playful character. Artists post videos that are not always perfect and can include mistakes. Artists have posted videos of losing their balance when dancing or doing an activity. In a video an artist posted a video performing a transition. Before completing it, she lost her balance, and she fell. As she gets up, the backup dancers as well as herself laugh because of the unexpected mistake. Another famous musician sings a vocal run that is not executed very well. In these situations, artists also make humorous comments like "phenomenal vocal run" (video 121) during a mistake they made while singing and "could be better, but I'm working on it!!!" (video 70). By showing that they are now perfect and that they can make mistakes, they appear closer to the audience and can encourage them to share their videos as they do not have to be perfect.



Fig 8: The artist is recording the challenge while playing with his dog.



Fig 9: The artist is sitting with her legs crossed looking at the camera.

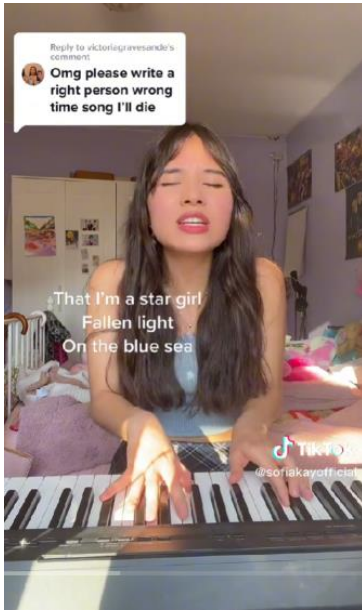


Fig 10: The users can see the bedroom of the singer.



Fig 11: The singer is holding a hairbrush instead of a microphone.

4.4 Theme 4: Facilitating convenient engagement

The fourth theme that emerged through the analysis while considering the ways artists encourage co-creation with users of the platform describes the ways in which artists facilitate this interaction and create the right conditions in order to make it easy for the users to engage with them. There are several ways in which artists provide certain cues in order to increase the chances of users creating with them. These are visual as well as textual elements. The creators (a) give clear instructions by describing in detail what they expect from the users, (b) provide suggestions, (c) provide visual cues to the viewers, (d) use prompts to help and inspire the users of the app, (e) include specific call-to-action (CTA) and (f) categorize their videos using hashtags.

4.4.1 Giving clear instructions

This sub-theme that was developed presents the efforts of musicians creating videos in which they explain in great detail the actions the users should take. Providing clear instructions appears to be a way to encourage users to perform certain desired action. During a video asking his fans to create videos using his song, an artist described: "I want you to create a sequence of small videos, 2-3 seconds each, videos of you travelling, include people that you love or you miss them and put my song in the video" (video 3). In another video, a singer is describing how users can create a video compilation using her song. In the video, the artist gives precise instructions on how they can make the videos they want to include match the beat of the song. While she mentions how many seconds each clip should last in order to match the music she says "1 video for 6,9 seconds and 17 videos for 0,35 seconds" (video 39). Using this strategy, artists assist the users in the process of creating their own videos by inspiring them or trying to avoid any obstacles they might face while using their songs. Furthermore, different artists create tutorials on how to play their song or how to perform the dance to their song.

4.4.2 Providing suggestions

Except for giving clear instructions, artists also provide more subtle cues presenting ways in which fans and app users can use their songs to create content. This is achieved by creating examples themselves, suggesting how the song can be used on TikTok. One way is to create transition videos in which musicians introduce a transition at a certain point of a song. Figure 12 and 13 shows a musician with two other people creating a transition for his new song. The artist sings the last phrase before the chorus. Then they all flip their hair down. When their hair is up again after fractions of a second, they have changed outfits, they wear sunglasses and they dance to the chorus. By creating these kinds of videos, artists can give ideas about what kind of videos they can create and in which parts of the song they can create a transition. Another way in which artists can achieve the same effect is by creating videos of them dancing to the song. Without even asking the users, they can recreate the dance using their song. Toscher (2021) notes that there are value propositions that foster co-creation made by musicians which include "psychomotor motivational value" which refers to hints and signs that the artists provide by suggesting how to dance to the song or do transition (p. 12). Regardless of the videos the artists create to give cues to the users, people on the app can take the initiative and start trends,

transitions, or dances themselves. According to Coutler (2022), with user-generated content, user interpretation could prevail over the artist's original meaning. In addition, users can take part in the songs and create their own trends and transitions.



Fig 12: The artist records a transition video with other people. After the verse ends, they do a hair flip.



Fig 13: When the chorus enters they have changed clothes and they wear sunglasses.

4.4.3 Visual cues

This sub-theme refers to the open-verse challenges that the artists create. In all of the videos in this category that were analysed, the artists provided cues in order for the viewers to know when it is their turn to sing or play. When it comes to paralanguage, the artists point their "microphone" which is an everyday personal or household item as discussed in theme 3.3, toward the viewers. In addition, text appears on the screen, signalling that it is time for the viewers to sing. Figure 11 is taken from a video in which the timing of the text is very precise and appears in order to prepare the users: "3, 2, 1, Your turn!".

When it comes to challenge videos that the artists create, it becomes evident that the videos belong to that category and that the artists are inviting people to sing with them. The words "Open verse challenge" appears on the videos in a position that is easy to stand out. An example is shown in Figure 14. The artist has written the "DUET CHALLENGE" phrase on the top of the video in capital letters while using the pink colour, which creates a contrast with the blue sky. Consequently, it is easy for the viewers to identify the type of video and think instantly if they want to create a duet. This is consistent with the findings of Lu, Yu, and Wang (2023), who discovered that visual elements are crucial for user engagement and that a video's opening picture is more significant than its closing one. Making clear that the video challenges could foster engagement as viewers know immediately that they are watching a video in which artists invite them to collaborate. Therefore, decreases the chances of the users accidentally skipping the video before realising that calls for participation. According to Moriuchi (2019), the message you wish to transmit in social media marketing must be communicated within the first few seconds so that the target audience can take action right away.

Moreover, all the videos that belong to the challenge category provided included the lyrics of the song. Providing lyrics can facilitate the creation of duets as users can easily look at the screen and record a duet with the singers. Another artist decided to use different colors for the lyrics that she is singing from the lyrics that the users are supposed to sing. In that way, the artist indicates which part the users should sing.

4.4.4 Using prompts

Artists give ideas regarding what users can do or create together with them. For example, in Figure 15 which is an open verse challenge, a musician is asking viewers to write a letter to their younger self. Instead of giving absolute freedom to users to write a verse they like, the musician provides a specific prompt. In a different video in which a musician is asking other people to duet with him, during a certain moment, a text appears on screen suggesting they harmonise during this part as seen in Figure 16.



Fig 14: The “Duet challenge” appears on the top of the screen with capital letters.

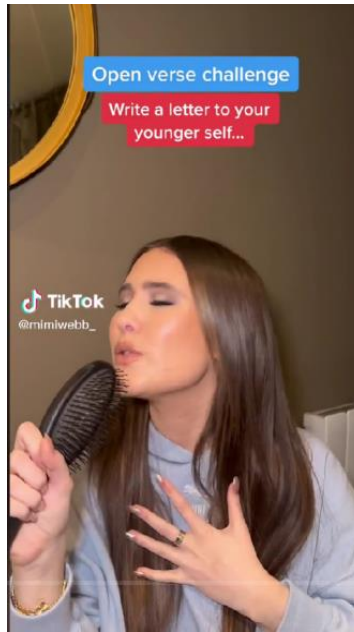


Fig 15: The singer uses a specific prompt and asks users to write a letter to their younger selves.

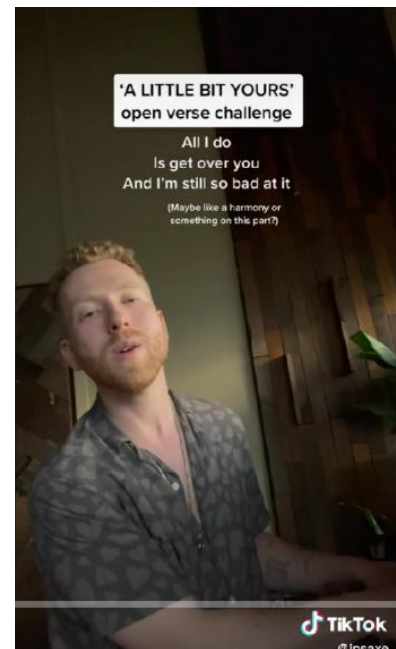


Fig 16: The artist makes suggestions of what other users can create while duetting his video.

4.4.5 Including call-to-action

In the videos in which artists want the users to complete an activity, they ask for a certain action in order for the viewers to perform it. More specifically, they use calls-to-action (CTAs). Calls-to-action are also used by social media marketers and are characterised as the encouragement of particular behaviours and is presented as a persuasive strategy for performing a specific action (Weiger et al., 2018). In the case of TikTok musicians, artists include in their videos certain actions that they want the users to complete. In order for the users to take action immediately, Broachie (2018) recommended using strong visuals and engaging the audience with clear messaging and a call-to-action (CTA) (as cited in Moriuchi, 2019). Including CTA can increase the chance of a user performing the desired activity, especially if the user is in the last step before the conversion. In the case of artists on TikTok, including CTA can increase the possibility of users of the app who are already fans performing the action. Artists present CTA by including text written in the description or in the video as well as mentioning them verbally.

In a caption of a video, a singer writes, "it's time to use this sound", referring to the remix of her new song that is included in the video. On TikTok, users can click on the sound of the video and use it as background music for their video. The social media platform encourages such messages through the functions it offers. According to Kaye et al. (2020), users may simply add audio from other TikTok videos to their own material by using the "Use This Sound" function. With this tool, users may collaborate and remix current material in creative ways.

An example of a similar CTA that the creators use is a video where the band asks the users to create videos using their song. By using the original sound (the song) in their videos, users share the song and contribute to making the song potentially go viral. Gamble and Gilmore (2011) mention viral marketing as a category of co-creational marketing in which the message is already created and consumers are encouraged to pass it on. This is encouraged not only with the CTA "use the sound" but with other CTA, which motivates users to create a video of whatever form while including the sound. These videos include transition videos, dances, and duet challenges. Creating these challenges as a marketing strategy may be a result of the value proposition that underlies songs, the co-creative activity on the TikTok platform, and how people create content by integrating music (Toscher, 2021).

In another example, a singer is asking people to use a specific hashtag which is the name of the song when they create a video with this song. "Make your own TikTok using the #name of the song" (video 110). According to Bampo et al. (2008), this type of strategy has the advantage that the creator of the message keeps control while inviting customer participation (as cited in Gamble & Gilmore, 2011).

4.4.6 Categorizing the videos using hashtags

When it comes to hashtag strategy, the artists use two types of hashtags. The first type concerns popular hashtags, which any artist can use to categorize their videos and indicate that the videos belong to a music account. In the first type, specific hashtags are included to indicate any popular challenges or video categories that exist on the platform, like the hashtags #openversechallenge and #duet. At the same time, general popular hashtags are used by musicians on TikTok, including #songwriter and #newmusic. Those hashtags are popular; therefore, they are used to increase the discoverability of the videos. Specific hashtags which are related to the songs of the artists and the artists' names belong to the second category. This is

supported by the findings of Naumenko and Gavrilovets (2020), who also discovered that creating hashtag challenges by coming up with hashtags that are specific to the song constitutes a way for artists to promote their songs on TikTok.

By creating specific hashtags, they are able to find all the videos other users create regarding their songs. The musicians from the sample have used combinations of hashtags from the two categories. For instance, in a video, an artist included general popular hashtags like #openverse, which indicates that the users can contribute with their own verse and #fyp (for you page), which is used in order for the videos to appear on the first page users land when they open the app (video 10). In addition, the artist has created a hashtag with the title of her song #snap. Including hashtags that are widely used by other musicians on the platform allows the artist to make evident to the app and the users that the video they are watching is created by a musician and presents new music. Utilizing suitable hashtags like #musician might assist in promoting videos to the right audience (Musicians Institute, 2021). Moreover, users can identify that the video contains a challenge in which they can participate. When artists use unique hashtags for their releases, users can easily discover and find videos dedicated to the song or artist. This strategy also can foster virality as users have the ability to include the relevant hashtag when they create a video using the song, allowing other users to discover the song and also use the same hashtag if they decide to create a relevant video.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

The goal of this study was to explore the different ways in which musicians encourage audience participation and user co-creation on TikTok, which is a relatively new social media platform and offers unique features. The research question that this study aimed to answer was the following:

What are the strategies that musicians on TikTok use in order to encourage content co-creation in the platform, promote their music and engage with their audience?

Through content analysis, TikTok music videos created by musicians on the platform were examined and more specifically, these consisted of short videos created by musicians primarily in the pop, folk, and rock genres. The content strategy that the musicians used, the features they included offered by the platform and the types of engagement that the videos solicit were taken

into consideration for the analysis. The study identified four key strategies used by musicians to encourage content co-creation, enhance user engagement, and establish a connection with their TikTok audience.

Four main strategies were identified, which encourage the co-creation of content, increase user engagement, and create a bond between musicians and their TikTok audience. Musicians on TikTok effectively encourage co-creation and connection with their audience by motivating active involvement, offering positive feedback, including people in the creative process, and building a suitable environment.

The first strategy, "Encouraging Desired Behavior," focuses on the ways in which musicians inspire people to work together to create content. They use a variety of incentives, such as sharing users' videos or showcasing them on their own accounts. To further encourage users to engage in an active way, contests with prizes are also conducted. Musicians hope to foster a good atmosphere that motivates people to keep co-creating material through encouraging comments and reinforcement. They demonstrate amazement, surprise, and emotional responses to the videos, reinforcing the intended behaviour.

The second strategy, "The Central Role of the User," emphasises how artists include consumers in the process of co-creation. Users' recommendations and comments serve as a source of inspiration for musicians, who then write songs in response to them. They connect their music with certain user comments to show how the inputs of the people directly influence the end result. The aforementioned strategy is aligned with the co-creational prosumer typology (Konczal, 2008). In their study, Gamble & Gilmore (2011) highlight fan-contributed song lyrics as an example of prosumer marketing. During the analysis of the videos, it was observed that on TikTok, some of the examples of this include fan contributions to song ideas and the development of alternative song versions. Therefore, this study elaborates on ways artists encourage this prosumer marketing co-creational strategies.

The third strategy, "Proximity to the Artist," focuses on musicians' efforts to create a sense of familiarity and relatability with their audience. Their videos are shot in intimate settings like their bedrooms or living rooms and they present everyday moments. Musicians foster a feeling of authenticity that makes them more approachable and relevant to their audience by dressing casually and presenting genuine mistakes. Gerlieb (2021) in her study, mentions how

artists create a sense of closeness and trust by showing the studios where they work, creating a virtual proximity through close-ups of their faces. In this study, similar ways in which musicians are trying to establish intimacy were observed.

The fourth strategy underlines the convenience methods used by artists. They include precise instructions that discuss in great depth the steps users should follow to produce content. When it is the users' turn to contribute, visual signals like pointing or writing on the screen serve as a reminder. According to Toscher (2021), there are value propositions that encourage co-creation generated by musicians, such as "psychomotor motivational value," which refers to cues and signals that the artists provide by advising how to transition to the music or dance to it. In this research, how musicians provide such motivational values is revealed. At the same time, musicians categorize their videos using hashtags and help them become more discoverable by other users. On TikTok, musicians employ two different kinds of hashtags: popular and specific. While particular hashtags linked to the song and artist's name allow artists to promote their music and find all the videos uploaded by people using their songs, trending hashtags like #singersongwriter and #newmusic increase discoverability. Making use of distinct hashtags for promoting releases can allow users to identify and take part in challenges.

5.2 Discussion and theoretical implications

A study by Turri et al. (2013) showed that compared to content consumers, people who create videos on TikTok exhibit higher levels of advocacy, loyalty, and more support for a musician's artistic vision. This study is focused on content in which artists engage in co-creation methods. In those videos, artists appeal to the users on TikTok, who are content creators and not just consumers. At the same time, they are encouraging content consumers to create in the app, whether it is recording a duet, contributing to song ideas, or helping with the creation of an alternative version of a song. Taking into consideration the findings of the study conducted by Turri (2013), artists might encourage users to become content creators in order to enjoy higher levels of fan loyalty and advocacy.

There are several motivations for users to create content and engage with social media. The goal of this research was to identify the ways in which musicians encourage co-creation with other users on TikTok. Through the content analysis and the themes that emerged regarding the strategies the artists use on TikTok to foster co-creation and engage with the users on the app, it

was found that the strategies focus on intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that users might have. To elaborate, through the strategies and the content that the musicians produce, users can fulfil both intrinsic and extrinsic needs. The self-determination theory recognises both internal and external drivers behind certain actions. Deci and Ryan (2000) (as cited in Törhönen et al., 2020) claimed that intrinsic motivations include competence (the need to exhibit one's skills) and relatedness (the need for social connections and a feeling of community). Most of the intrinsic motivations for creating content are identified by prior research (Stoeckl et al., 2007; Bughin, 2007), including the need for amusement, the want for recognition, and the drive for expression (as cited in Buf & Ștefăniță, 2020). According to Shao (2009), self-expression refers to the “expression of one’s identity” (p. 14). This study is in line with the theory and adds to it as it showcases how artists’ invitations take into consideration those needs as well as how users respond to those invitations. The desire of users for self-expression and a need to showcase their skills may be satisfied by introducing challenges and duets, and allowing users to generate their own material. In particular, when creators invite users to use their creativity and imagination to make a video using their song, the users have the opportunity to express themselves. Additionally, TikTok users respond by creating all sorts of content using the song of the artists or duetting the artists. Dancers create choreographies for the songs, instrumentalists duet the song while creating parts for the instrument that they play and singers add harmonies to the songs. Consequently, the users have the ability to show their skills and talents.

Extrinsic factors include money or status. Offering rewards to users can constitute a strategy based on the extrinsic motivation of the users. This study indicated that artists create contests and challenges which include relevant rewards for the users, such as winning money or royalties, recording sessions with the musician, and tickets to a show. Furthermore, the musicians acknowledge and consider the extrinsic motives of users by offering incentives like sharing and reacting to other users’ videos. By sharing the video of other users, they are being exposed to the followers of the artist. Through that action, they can gain recognition, especially among the fans of the artist. All the above results are also supported by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), who claim that social media participation is mostly driven by people's need to express themselves and obtain personal and social recognition (as cited in Kim & Choi, 2017). By providing incentives like sharing the videos of users on their accounts, artists appeal to the motivations of personal and social recognition. Therefore, the strategies that the artists use

recognise the needs of the users for self-expression, showcasing their skills, social recognition, and extrinsic motivation, such as gaining rewards. The strategies and the content the artists employ involve those motivations that drive users on social media to produce content and/ or engage with the content in order to allow co-create to happen.

When it comes to the levels of engagement, through the analysis of the comments, we can observe that as a result of the strategies the musicians employ, users are engaged in a behavioural, emotional, and cognitive way. It was discovered that the users described an activation process in the comments as they informed the artists that they had completed the actions of creating content. Given that individuals invested time, energy, and effort into creating these videos, this suggests an activation. As a result of the strategies the musicians use, fans are engaged at a behavioural level in order to facilitate co-creation.

The artists utilise features that are on the app in order to create their content and implement the strategies. For the challenges (open verse, duet) they take advantage of the duet feature, which allows users to record their video and duet with them. At the same time, the musicians use the duet feature to react to other users' videos. Furthermore, they use the video reply feature to directly reply to users' comments with a video and engage with them. They also incorporate in their strategy the use of hashtags and the use of sound, which makes it easier for other people to use the artists' song in their content. This research demonstrates how musicians use the features that TikTok offers and incorporate them into their content in order to foster engagement and co-creation.

When it comes to virality, several variables have been discovered by Ling, Blackburn, De Cristofaro, and Stringhini (2021) as potential indicators. They discovered that videos with large shot scales have lower viral potential. Through the analysis of the videos, it was observed that most of them used a close-up shot. Moreover, they concluded that the use of text increases the chances of a video going viral. All the videos that were analysed show text on the screen, whether that is lyrics of the song or text indicating that the video is a challenge. Lastly, using a second point of view impacts virality in a positive way. It was observed that in this research artists used a second point of view in the videos. The content forms, like the challenges, were common for the artists to post. Adibin (2020) argues that in order to maximise their visibility and virality, musicians focus on what is trending, which is a characteristic of TikTok creators. This

explains the similarity that was observed regarding the content forms that the artists produce on the platform.

Artists are using TikTok as a platform where they can market and promote their music and build a fan base. There are a great number of ways in which artists can promote their songs on TikTok (Jorgenson, 2022). This research focused on the ways that musicians employ co-creational strategies and user engagement in order to achieve that. Some other ways may include employing influencer marketing (Naumenko and Gavrilovets, 2020). Many of the videos that were analysed contained the hashtag new music (#newmusic), which indicates that those videos are created and posted on the platform by the artists in an effort to promote their new songs, which are featured in the videos. According to Naumenko and Gavrilovets (2020), promotion can be achieved by creating unique hashtags and challenges and encouraging user-generated content, and getting the users involved, strategies which were also observed in this research.

Through the challenges the artists create, the elements that they use in the videos, such as the use of text and being close to the viewer as well as the hashtags they use, combining popular hashtags and song-specific ones, they aim at making the videos go viral and reach many people as a way to promote their work. Encouraging co-creation and users to join challenges by creating their own videos, the users are becoming a marketing vehicle for promoting the songs. TikTok has cultivated a participatory culture that encourages user-generated content. Dances, song covers, and other forms of entertainment like this help music artists increase their sales, engagement, and streaming (Jorgenson, 2022).

5.3 Limitations

The videos that were collected were created and posted by artists mainly in Europe and USA. As indicated in the methodology chapter, the music genres of the videos which were analysed are limited. The music that the artists promoted belongs to popular, folk and rock music. The findings from this study might not be generalisable for genres that were not included in the study and for artists who do not make music in Western countries. Thus, this study does not apply to all artists or videos on TikTok, even though it enables an understanding of how musicians in western countries encourage user co-creation and engagement and what strategies they use to achieve that.

The videos which belonged to a category that could be identified with certain hashtags were easy to find on the Discover page. This indicates that the videos have performed well as they appear on the top of the page. This may indicate that those videos are successful and have attracted attention and engagement from the users. Nevertheless, the performance of the videos was not assessed. For that reason, it is not possible to deduct conclusions about the success of the strategies presented since a relationship between the strategies and the success of the videos has not been established. At the same time, there might be more complex elements that can affect the success of TikTok videos, such as the algorithm. Musicians must rely on luck in order to get discovered by these new digital intermediaries due to the mysterious algorithms utilized by streaming services and the social media (Sanders et al., 2021). Although this study has found the strategies that musicians use in their videos and in their content, in the future, further research would be required in order to find whether those strategies are directly linked with high performance or virality.

While a variety of videos belonging to different content categories were examined during the analysis, videos that are promoted by TikTok through paid advertising were not considered. It is important to address that paid ads are also a promotional strategy used by musicians on the platform in order to promote their music. Nevertheless, this study focuses on organic videos which rely on organic reach, given that through TikTok's features, musicians can skip agencies and interact with audiences directly, promote music to them, and share the music that they are working on in a more organic way (Tintiangko et al., 2023).

It is worth noting that, according to Kim & Choi (2017), it is evident from today's digital environment that value creation on social media is not only controlled by businesses; instead, user engagement is essential for effectively managing value co-creation. Therefore, musicians on TikTok do not always have all the control over the process of co-creation. This Master's thesis focuses on the strategies that the artists implement to foster co-creation and the results those strategies have on user engagement. Thus the focus is on the perspective of the artists. Coutler (2022) argues that user interpretation could prevail over the actual meaning of an artist through user-generated content. Since users are part of this value co-creation process and can take control out of the hands of the artists, the perspective of the users would be useful to be studied in further research.

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Appendix A

Code Tree

Encouraging desired behaviour

- Providing Incentives
- Positive reaction to videos
 - Impressed
 - Moved
 - Excited
 - Complimenting the user
- Inviting users to create together

The central role of the user

- Deriving inspiration from users
- Positive reaction to videos
- Turning into a collaboration

Proximity to the artist

- Everyday activities
- A look into the artist's space
- Objects included in the videos
- Relatability

Convenience

- Giving clear instructions
- Visual cues
- Using prompts

Use of Hashtags:

1. Creating new hashtags related to the song title
2. Using hashtags that are used frequently in order to increase discoverability
 - a. Using specific hashtags to indicate the category of the video #openversechallenge
 - b. Using general famous hashtags #songwriter #fyp

• Use of sound

- Lip-singing – original sound
- Playing and singing live

TikTok features

- Duet
- Video reply
- filters

User's comments

- **Expressing the completion of an action**
- **Asking artists to see the videos and respond to their videos**
- **Cognitive engagement**
 - Thinking about the song
 - Comparing the song/ artist with other songs/ artists
- **Providing ideas and requests**