

From Bedroom Soundtrack to Success
Analyzing Contemporary Promotion Strategies of Upcoming Music Artists on
TikTok

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the creative ways in which upcoming music artists utilize TikTok to effectively promote their music. In the modern age of digitalization, it is intriguing to look at how social media platforms such as TikTok influenced the music business, and what this means for upcoming artists who want to become successful in the music industry. This research leverages the AIDA model for marketing communication and the parasocial interaction theory as its theoretical basis. The study explores the ways in which three selected artists create attention, interest, desire, and prompt action among TikTok users while fostering perceived personal connections through parasocial interactions. Therefore, the research question of this thesis is: What strategies do artists employ on TikTok to promote their music?

Through the use of qualitative content analysis, this thesis analyzed TikTok content of the three selected artists Renao, Jaydon Lewis, and FRVRFRIDAY through the lens of the AIDA model and the parasocial interaction theory. In total, 75 TikTok posts were analyzed, looking into 25 posts per artist. The analysis, with the aid of a coding table, showed that the artists share similarities in the ways in which they promote their music, while also showing signature promotional strategies per artist. The analysis showed that capturing attention is the most important aspect among the three artists, relying on eye-catching visuals and intriguing captions mainly. Creating interest and desire were also shown to be important aspects, however, the analysis also showed that the artists barely focus on the aspect of prompting action. Furthermore, creating a parasocial relationship with an audience was also shown to be a key component. The intricacies of the promotional strategies of the artists were discussed together with providing further advice for upcoming artists on which aspects can be improved.

The implications of these findings can be significant for both academic research and practical application. This study contributes to the literature on social media marketing in

relation to the music industry which is understudied. For upcoming artists, or music industry workers, this study offers intriguing insights into the promotional strategies that upcoming artists utilize on TikTok in order to gain a bigger following and success. By highlighting useful promotional strategies, this study can serve as a roadmap for upcoming artists, highlighting which strategies are advantageous and which strategies need to be improved based on the three selected artists in order to build a fanbase through TikTok.

KEYWORDS: Music promotion, Social Media Promotion, TikTok Marketing, Music on TikTok

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1. Introduction

In 2018 a young and unknown artist with the name Lil Nas X dreamed of becoming popular with his music, however, he felt discouraged by the oversaturated rap industry and his parents who had little faith in him. Desperately trying to figure out a way of becoming successful with no money Lil Nas X directed his attention at TikTok. After spending months creating and promoting memes of his song “Old Town Road” one day everything changed dramatically for the upcoming artist. The hashtag #yeehaw which Lil Nas X created to promote his song, reached over 67 million plays on TikTok only after 6 months of the song being released. Today in 2024 the song has 995 million streams on Spotify. In an interview, Lil Nas X joked that it should be him paying TikTok and not the other way around (Alexander, 2019).

TikTok belongs to the most popular and most used social media platforms. In 2022 the app was downloaded by 627 million users across the world (Lu, 2023). TikTok has in a way become an environment where people can shape everyday culture and promote content of all kinds, including music. Not having TikTok today as a musical artist can rob artists of many new opportunities and gaining a target audience. TikTok has become one of the core places to go for digital promotion. Nowadays, it is not only young and upcoming artists, but also established and worldwide known singers that utilize TikTok and other social media platforms to expand their community (Qu et al., 2023, p. 703). With its short-form videos and algorithm-driven content discovery, TikTok has brought a unique music dimension to music promotion. More so, TikTok has become perceived as a platform where musicians can go to promote their music and gain popularity and success (Radovanović, 2022, p. 62). This research aims to dive into the creative promotional strategies that artists use to gain success on TikTok.

Since TikTok has been shown to have a massive influence on music artists across the world, launching careers of multiple artists now recognized as popstars, it is crucial to understand how music artists utilize TikTok to promote their music and garner attention (Coulter, 2022, p. 136). Music and TikTok are today heavily tied together as many songs get discovered by people on the platform, reshaping the music discovery aspect (Wares et al., 2023, p. 13). Whether it is a challenge, or a dance directly linked to a song, or the lyrics of the song TikTok, based on its algorithm-driven content discovery, can push forward these videos making them appear more frequently on the viewer’s “for you page” (the default

page of TikTok). More so, many songs are nowadays labeled as “TikTok songs” meaning, these songs became popular from TikTok. Therefore, it is important to look at this topic due to TikTok’s impeccable influence on international music charts and mainstream culture.

Furthermore, this research can help in filling out an academic gap, as this topic has been talked about only very briefly, and not in relation to the platform TikTok. Few studies have been done on the topic of TikTok and music marketing, for instance, Tintiangko et al. (2023) studied the ways in which Filipino artists utilized TikTok for their performances and music promotion. Similarly, B. Radovanović (2022) has explored the ways in which TikTok has changed and influenced the process of music-making and music promotion. Research by Yang (2023) focused on the aspects that can make a song blow up on the platform such as danceability and speechines. As I have mentioned, understanding these strategies can be academically crucial as it contributes to the fields of digital marketing by providing insights into how TikTok can be leveraged for music promotion. It also advances the AIDA model and parasocial interaction theory by applying them to a social media context. Furthermore, it can also offer practical guidance for upcoming artists and marketers in their promotional efforts. However, it is also important to note that this research can be of great significance and holds practical implications for musicians, industry professionals, and marketers alike. In a digital era, understanding and mastering the art of TikTok promotion can potentially create a path towards success. Moreover, insights gained from this research can inform broader discussion of the evolution of digital marketing in connection with the music industry.

Social media marketing is one of the most used ways of promoting products or services nowadays (Appel et al., 2019, p. 79). Businesses are now utilizing social media, such as TikTok, as promising platforms where they can conduct various promotional activities and where they can more easily and efficiently create communication channels between the organization and its customers at a lower cost compared to traditional media (Bruhn et al., 2012, p. 772). It is crucial to delve into this debate regarding social media promotion as understanding the intricacies of marketing on social media is essential for leveraging platforms such as TikTok, which is described as the social media platform of the moment, to reach and engage with audiences, develop brand awareness, and essentially drive the music consumption (Guarda et al., 2021, p. 43)

As shown with the example of Lil Nas X, social media platforms can be a great opportunity for organizations to expand on multiple levels of marketing and be a tool for

blowing up in the music industry. However, this study is looking at potential upcoming artists, that most likely operate on their own and do not create marketing strategies in a team environment unlike organizations do. The reason why this study is concerned with upcoming artists is to see how artists who are in the beginner stages of their career can utilize TikTok to gain an audience and potentially become successful and known worldwide like Lil Nas X. Therefore, it is also crucial to discuss how social media can be a crucial factor in spreading more awareness of a brand in relation to small and starting businesses. For instance, It has been shown that small businesses that are only in the starting steps rely the most on word of mouth recommendations (Karami & Naghibi, 2015, p. 91). Kuyucu (2021) argues that social media is precisely considered as one of the best tools for cost-effective marketing, which is something that upcoming artists can greatly appreciate.

In order to analyze the ways in which upcoming artists promote their songs on TikTok, I have selected three artists who frequently post on TikTok whose content will be analyzed in this research. The artists that I have selected for this study create music of different genres, specifically, RnB, Hip-Hop, and Amapiano. This genre-specific approach will aim to capture the diversity in music-promotional content, however, will also aim to capture similarities and patterns. A qualitative content analysis will be put to use in this research. This systematic and qualitative method will allow for a systematic interpretation of the content of both textual and visual data from the TikTok posts of the selected artists (25 per artist) which will provide knowledge in terms of recurring patterns and themes. This method can be well suited for analyzing the ways in which music artists use various strategies to promote their music on TikTok. A coding table will be used in order to have a clear overview of identified codes and to look at patterns that the artists share, while also noting down strategies that are signature to the artist. The codes will be based on previous research concerning the AIDA model and the parasocial interaction theory. The AIDA model provides a structured framework for analyzing various stages of consumer engagement with promotional content on TikTok, while the parasocial interaction theory explains the formation of relationships between artists and their audience. These theories are relevant since they offer empirically validated frameworks that can aid in understanding the strategies of musicians on TikTok.

The research question that will guide this research stands as follows: What creative strategies do artists employ on TikTok to promote their music?

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework below will first discuss previous research on music promotion on social media. Thereafter two theoretical models, namely the AIDA model for marketing communication and parasocial interaction theory, are introduced and applied to derive empirical research questions on how upcoming artists can use TikTok specifically to engage with their audience and entice them to interact with their product.

2.1 Music Promotion on Social Media

Before delving into the aspect of music promotion on social media, it is firstly important to define what is meant by promotion on social media. Social media promotion is understood as the application of promoting information, ideas, and methods to foster both social and economic ends (Si, 2015, p. 2). More so, it is described as: “a strategic and methodical process to establish a company’s impact, reputation, and item within areas of potential clients, visitors, or supporters” (Si, 2015, p. 2).

Previous literature on promotional strategies for music marketing on social media all agree on one aspect that is that social media is one of the best platforms for creating promotional content for someone’s music. Music marketing today is considered as more effective, strategic, and cheaper than previous traditional methods of music marketing which will be discussed in further paragraphs (Kuyucu, 2021, p. 16). More so, it is also discussed that investing time and effort into digital marketing is far more valuable than traditional forms of marketing as people are now in a position where they can establish a return on investment related to digital marketing (Kuyucu, 2021, p. 16).

Despite this study being interested in upcoming music artists, it has also been shown that among major music labels and music managers, social media is the most used form of marketing in music exports. Using social media for promotional purposes is also effective due to the fact, that marketing is now less geographically bound than ever (Chen et al., 2021, p. 53). Previous research that utilized a survey aimed at artists and music managers has shown that 93% of participants use social media for music promotion (Chen et al., 2021, p. 54). More so, this ties in with the effect of digitalization as it has been shown that streaming music, is a much more popular way of listening to music compared to traditional forms such as radio or TV (Kuyucu, 2021, p. 16). Apart from that, with the use of digital marketing audiences can now be immediately redirected to other platforms such as Spotify where you

can listen to a specific musician's work right away (Hassan et al., 2015, p. 265). More so, it is notable that streaming is mainly used by younger music audiences (Kuyucu, 2021, p. 16).

One of the most notable affordances of social media is its cheapness. This is particularly important in relation to upcoming artists who are assumed to not be in a financially favorable position. Promotional campaigns nowadays cost a fraction of what conventional media cost (Kuyucu, 2021, p. 17). This was proven using a Cost-Per-Thousand Impressions metric which showed that social media costs around 3 dollars, while the cost is approximately 10 dollars for radio, and 28 dollars for a TV campaign. Therefore, it would seem like a logical step for an independent and upcoming artist to promote their work through social media, as they would have to pay almost ten times more for a TV campaign (Kuyucu, 2021, p. 17). More so, TikTok also pays its creators for sharing content which is another benefit. A TikTok content creator makes a certain amount of money based on factors such as the number of views, amount of engagement, and the geographic region of the creator (Yu & Zhao, 2022, p. 324). It is said that TikTok pays between 2 to 4 cents per thousand views, therefore, compared to traditional media TikTok also affords the opportunity to be paid based on views (Metzler, 2024).

Music promotion strategies are therefore today spread across multiple social media platforms such as YouTube, Twitter, or TikTok. This is also ideal because music fans are at least partially active on these platforms which makes it a perfect environment for establishing connections and relationships with fans (Kuyucu, 2021, p. 19). Yet, communication spread through social media platforms needs to be authentic and story-based in order to stand out and garner attention in the oversaturated world of social media content (Sheinkop, 2016, p. 8). Creating authentic and eye-catching promotional content is crucial as consumers face an immense amount of content every day, making them choosier (Sheinkop, 2016, p. 9).

The digitalization of media has shown to stir up the music marketing landscape as various new promotional tools are available for a relatively low cost. However, as mentioned above, this brings an oversaturation to the market making it more difficult to stand out. However, it is still argued that in terms of music promotion traditional media stand no chance compared to social media (Kuyucu, 2021, p. 23). This is also due to social media's vast reach, as it has the potential to turn, for instance, TikTok users into product promoters and fans. By doing this, there is also a removal of distrust factor whereas having a TV campaign can do the exact opposite (Kuyucu, 2021, p. 23). Further research on dominant

practices in music marketing on social media was not found, therefore, this research can help in filling out that gap.

2.2 AIDA Model for Marketing Communication

The first theoretical framework that will be applied to this research on music promotion strategies on TikTok is the AIDA model. AIDA is recognized as a cornerstone of marketing communication theory and is quite popular in this sphere (Lee et al., 2017, p. 687; Pahlevi, 2024, p. 208). The effectiveness of AIDA has been acknowledged in various studies, such as in evaluating social media communication effectiveness on travel product promotion (Cheung et al., 2022, p. 67). It systematically provides a framework that customers undergo in response as they are exposed to promotional stimuli. The acronym AIDA stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action, describing sequential steps in the process of consumer engagement and the process of persuasion. This division recognizes every cognitive stage that a buyer undergoes in the process of buying a product or a service (Purbaningsih et. al., 2022, p. 19980).

The AIDA model was originally coined in the late 19th century by an American advertising advocate Elias St. Elmo Lewis, and it has become an integral concept in marketing theory and practice and is after further developments still widely used in contemporary times (Wijaya, 2012, p. 76). The model is successful in guiding marketers in crafting eye-catching and effective promotional campaigns across all kinds of media channels (Hassan et al., 2015, p. 265).

Still, despite AIDA being a popular hierarchy of effects model, it is said that there is a major gap in the research on how the AIDA model can be applied to social media (Hassan et al., 2015, p. 265). Therefore, this research will also aid in this aspect of helping to fill this gap in research, as this study is concerned with one of the most important and widely known social media platforms. Below, each stage within the models is described, followed by a description of tactics TikTok content creators can use to obtain said goal.

2.2.1 Attention

The first stage of the AIDA model is Attention. From the point of view of the organizations, or in the case of this study the music artists, social media represent a more creative, innovative, and relatively cost-effective communication option that provides potential customers with more opportunities for interaction, communication, or capturing

attention (Alalwan et al., 2017 p. 1183). Therefore, the stage of Attention is considered by some as the most important aspect of the process of marketing (Pramita et. al., 2022, p. 490). Yet, in today's fast and ever-evolving media landscape, it can be quite easy to be mixed in with all of the marketing traffic and become unnoticed (Besana et. al., 2018, p. 20; Galster, 2015). More so, nowadays individuals are constantly bombarded with a constant stream of content, making the attention span of people much shorter (Sriram, 2023, p. 76). Therefore, it can be quite challenging and difficult to fully capture someone's attention as they are roaming through social media platforms, and this is especially the case in TikTok (Flynn & Flynn, 2023).

TikTok is mainly known for its rapid-fire content consumption which can be endless as users can swipe up to see a new video pretty much forever as the algorithm works to provide its users with entertaining content. Artists who aim to promote their music on TikTok need to employ attention-grabbing strategies to stand out from the oversaturated pile of content.

This can for instance be done by leveraging bold and interesting visuals that will make the user watch the video. However, it has been discussed that in the online environment grabbing someone's full attention might be the hardest step of the whole process. Therefore, the adequate choice of words or attitudes shown in promotional content is integral in getting a consumer's attention (Pramita et. al., 2022, p. 490). Another recommendation is to spread a product through credible influencers (Pasaribu & Ronda, 2024, p. 1822). For example, having an influencer share a musician's song on Instagram could spike up the song's streams, as seen previously with various artists. In 2017 a young upcoming artist Khalid had incredible success because Kylie Jenner, a worldwide known influencer, used his song on Snapchat. The song's streams bumped up by 2690% (Horowitz, 2017).

2.2.2 Interest

The second stage of the AIDA model is Interest. Getting a user's attention on TikTok is not everything, as they might be at first grabbed in by interesting visuals or messaging, however, the content also needs a layer of interest in it. Interest is defined as a step where the marketer makes media of information that is interesting to the consumers (Hadiayti, 2016, p. 51). More so, it can also be described as a feeling of wanting to learn more about a product that is attractive to a consumer (Prasadyha et. al., 2022, p. 1623). It is argued that

this is a crucial step that a lot of marketers tend to leave out making their promotional content not as effective. (Hadiayti, 2016, p. 51).

In a world where any type of content on the homepage of a TikTok user gets only a fraction of time to sell itself to the user, maintaining an interest is crucial for retaining viewership and expanding the awareness of the brand, or a musician. In order to do this, artists who post promotional content on TikTok need to come up with creative yet relatable or interactive ways to captivate the audience's imagination and encourage further exploration. For instance, this could potentially be done by letting the audience get a look into the behind the scenes of the musician's creative process or by sharing a personal story related to the artist's musical career. It is also recommended to create a sense of hope or solution to create interest in a customer (Hadiayti, 2016, p. 51).

Another recommended tactic that is said to garner the interest of consumers in contemporary times is creating and promoting a product or service that is considered unique in their field. A need for uniqueness leads to consumers desiring products or services that appear special and not in the possession of others (Lynn & Harris, 1997, p. 602). Therefore, promoting products that appear unusual and original can be of great benefit. In the case of this study, promoting music as different than the ordinary radio song, or as different than the usual genre, can create a great basis for a successful track.

2.2.3 Desire

Following the stage of Interest, comes the stage of Desire which develops in the minds of the potential consumers, as they think about the product based on the previous stages. The stage of Desire centers on evoking a strong and emotional response and harboring a sense of longing or aspiration within the audience, especially in commercial culture (Bulut, 2016, p. 119). It is argued that with the introduction of online marketing, there are now many creative ways in which a product can be advertised in order to create a sense of desire, or simply, the feeling of wanting something (Hassan et al., 2015, p. 265). More so, it is said that desire is the motivating force behind a majority of today's consumption in general (Bulut, 2016, p. 119).

In the case of this study that delves into the marketing opportunities that TikTok provides for music artists, the platform indeed provides many opportunities for artists to gain a following and to make their songs heard. In order to get a TikTok user to listen to an

artist's song, the artists must tap into emotional triggers to bolster a meaningful engagement from the user's side. Simultaneously, attempting to impress the consumers and providing further details about the product is essential (Pramita et. al., 2022, p. 492). For instance, this could be done by showcasing the lifestyle that is associated with the artists in the form of a video or putting forward inspiring narratives that will speak to the audience's values.

2.2.4 Action

All of the previously discussed steps lead to the final destination of Action. Action is considered as the last and the most important step to the finish line, which is selling a product to consumers and generating profit (Pratiwi et. al., 2021, p. 2). Simultaneously, it is considered by some as crucial, since it signifies the ultimate goal of marketing efforts, which is to drive consumers towards making a decision (Kang, 2022, p. 816). The stage of Action is solely based on ensuring that consumers take action to decide on the advertised products or services.

In the case of TikTok and music promotion, this step would attempt to ensure that a TikTok user who is exposed to an artist's song on the platform, will actively transfer to a music platform of any sort and play the advertised song.

This can however lead to even further development in developing a relationship between the consumer and the artist. For instance, the consumer, based on the action of looking up an artist's song, might also be interested in other songs or projects that the artist has released leading to further action. Based on the stage of Action, artists can gain new followers, new listeners, more streams, and more recognition from the audience. However, as discussed previously in the stage of Interest, the switch from being on TikTok and transferring to another music platform should be quick, as it has been discussed that especially nowadays consumers can lose interest very quickly as the attention span of a TikTok user is much shorter (Hassan et al., 2015, p. 265).

Therefore, it is crucial for artists to provide tools and information that will make this process as short as possible. The online environment is especially considered a great place for putting consumers into an active position as they are called to action right away in comparison to traditional media (Ghirvu, 2013, 96). Including a swipe-up option that will automatically transfer the consumer to, for example, Spotify can be of great value as it makes the process for the consumer much easier and quicker. Including tools and steps such

as these can only help the upcoming artists expand the horizons of their music marketing. More so, it is also argued that online marketing is especially supportive of the stage of Action as it affords options for quick purchases (Hassan et al., 2015, p. 265).

Action can take multiple forms on TikTok, and audiences may also like, share, and endorse certain content. Also, social media has been shown to be a great platform for further development of word of mouth marketing. This was backed up by previous studies which suggested that social media platforms can majorly increase the impact and amount of word of mouth compared to previous more traditional forms of marketing (Broekemier et al., 2015, p. 48). This is because social media platforms encourage feedback from their users, for instance, through the comment section (Alalwan et al., 2017, p. 1181). In the case of TikTok and music artists, this would mean that a consumer of the artist's song would recommend that specific song to one of their friends. However, with the use of platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, or Snapchat, users can also share songs on their stories, making the word of mouth effect larger, as stories are seen by a consumer's followers and prompting other users towards action.

All of the previously discussed steps can serve as a powerful framework for leading artists in creating effective promotional strategies and campaigns via TikTok in order to engage with their audience in a meaningful way and also to attract new consumers. By aligning content strategies with all of the discussed stages of Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action, music artists on TikTok can optimize their promotional efforts and develop a more effective way of maximizing audience engagement. Therefore, this research will look into the ways in which artists utilize strategic steps in each of the four stages. Based on the AIDA model and related research, this study will utilize the AIDA model to determine what creative strategies the three selected artists on TikTok use to specifically garner attention, interest, desire, and action in order for TikTok users to listen to their music or to potentially become a fan.

2.3 Parasocial Interaction Theory

The second theoretical perspective relevant to this research is the parasocial interaction theory developed by Horton and Wohl in the year 1956. The parasocial interaction theory offers a nuanced understanding of the relationship dynamics between media personalities and their audience. Horton and Wohl describe this as an interaction where an individual cannot communicate with each member of the conversation

individually.

However, despite not being able to address each person individually, parasocial interaction is defined by its relative privacy, which makes each member feel as if they are present in the conversation (Horton & Wohl, 1956, p. 580). It is also important to note that this article describes interaction between a speaker and multiple listeners in an environment that is described as a live show, where people are physically present. However, in the context of TikTok, the speaker, or the artist, reaches its audience through a platform where no one is physically present, yet the message is transmitted (Chung & Cho, 2017, p. 481). Research by (Sutiono, 2024) found parasocial interaction to play a mediating role in the relationship between social media influencers and purchase intentions, highlighting their impact on consumer behavior. The concept of parasocial interaction has been linked to influencer marketing, where influencers leverage these one-sided relationships to build trust, and credibility, and ultimately drive purchase decisions (Garg, 2024, p. 11). Moreover, established parasocial interaction relationships have been shown to increase the likelihood of future purchases (Maharani, 2024, p. 2158). Therefore, despite the theory being coined in 1956 it still proves to be a valuable framework for parasocial interactions on social media.

At the core of parasocial theory lies the notion that individuals develop almost an artificial social relationship with media figures, perceiving them either as friends or acquaintances despite the absence of a genuine relationship between the two people. Later on, this theory was further developed by Hartmann and Goldhoorn in 2011 and given a more modern take. According to them, parasocial interaction can be identified by a felt reciprocity with a performing individual which puts forward a sense of mutual awareness, and attention (Dibble et al., 2015, p. 3).

With TikTok in the picture, where content creators, or in this case musicians, actively participate in engaging with their followers through creating videos or responding with comments, the parasocial theory can provide valuable insights into the mechanisms and processes through which artists develop a perceived connection with their fanbase. By doing this, the artists can create an invisible bridge between them and their audience, developing a sense of trust and intimacy (Kilipiri et al., 2023, p. 4).

Within the context of parasocial interaction theory, social media platforms such as TikTok serve as channels through which a consumer can nowadays create parasocial relationships with influencers or in this case, musicians. Similarly, many organizations

worldwide utilize social media also in order to contribute to the customer experience and customer relationship management. It is argued, that the more content is posted on social media platforms, brands are more likely to develop a deeper level of interactivity and associations with their customers (Alalwan et al., 2017, p. 1181). Therefore, it can be crucial for upcoming artists to communicate with fans as they can create a strong bond that will make them returning customers and someone who will potentially spread the word about the musician. Thus, it can be argued that more interactivity leads to better relationships with fans.

Showcasing your values and beliefs or giving a sneak peek into the behind the scenes of music production can have a great impact on the consumer, and therefore, on the brand as well. A strategy such as this one can also aid in creating a parasocial relationship with fans on TikTok. More so, it has been shown that brands that participate in such activities are thought of more positively (Karami & Naghibi, 2015, p. 91). While allowing the audience to get a look behind the curtain can lead to creating parasocial interactions it is also argued that such personal branding for small businesses can not only give more visibility but also offer a lot of freedom in the external expression of the brand and personal values (Taneja & Toombs, 2014, p. 252).

3. Method

This section of the thesis will discuss the process of analyzing the TikTok content of the three artists from start to finish. The methodology section of this paper outlines the systematic approach undertaken to delve into the intricacies of how music artists on TikTok promote their music in line with the AIDA model (Wijaya, 2012) and parasocial interaction theory (Horton & Wohl, 1956). This paper employs a qualitative content analysis in order to explore the nuanced ways in which the promotional strategies of the artists are executed on TikTok. Based on the literature review, a coding framework was created to uncover the hidden patterns behind music promotion on TikTok and its intricacies.

Qualitative content analysis was particularly suitable for this research since it is great at capturing subtleties and complexities and is described as a content-sensitive analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 108; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278; Cho & Lee, 2014, p. 3). This approach allowed for an in-depth analysis of visual and textual elements of TikTok content while also providing insights into how music artists generate attention, interest, desire, and action among their audience. More so, the parasocial interaction theory offers a lens through which the formation of perceived intimate relationships between artists and followers can be examined.

The following sections will discuss in detail the research design, sample selection, data collection, and the coding process undertaken in this study. By outlining each of these steps this section aims to provide a transparent framework for analyzing social media content within the frame of music promotion.

3.1 Sample Selection

As discussed in the introduction, this study focused on three upcoming music artists who consistently promote their music on TikTok and use it as a platform for promotional activities regarding their music. In order to pick suitable artists for this study, requirements were set, which would aid in selecting appropriate artists. The requirements were based on two aspects and those were the number of followers on TikTok, and the monthly listeners amount on Spotify. These two aspects were crucial in identifying the appropriate subjects for this study since this research is concerned with upcoming artists that have gained some recognition, however, they still are in the early stages of their music careers in terms of popularity.

The first requirement was for the music artists to have at least 10,000 followers on TikTok. By selecting 10,000 followers as the cut-off point, the study aimed to focus its attention on upcoming artists, yet, artists who have already demonstrated a capacity for audience engagement and influence, therefore, providing a solid foundation for this analysis. The second requirement was for the artists to have at least 50,000 monthly listeners on Spotify. Having 50,000 monthly listeners can be considered a good number because when an artist reaches these numbers it is possible to start earning around 500-1500€ monthly. While this number is not even remotely close to worldwide musicians who get millions of monthly listeners this is considered a good start for an upcoming artist (Walker, 2022).

After setting the sampling criteria three artists were identified on TikTok. This was done by purposive sampling but also with random sampling based on simply scrolling through TikTok and looking for artists with the set criteria. More so, another requirement was that each of the artists should be making a different type of music that is considered a popular genre. This criterion was set in order to capture diversity in the promotional strategies while looking at patterns that are reoccurring.

The first artist that was identified and fit all of the criteria was Renao. Renao at the moment of writing this research (i.e., May 2024) has 25,3 thousand followers on TikTok and 240,000 monthly listeners on Spotify. What is important to note is that these numbers can change very quickly and abruptly overnight as it was discussed with Lil Nas X in the introduction who blew up “overnight.” Renao’s bio on both Spotify and TikTok does not tell much about who he is or where he comes from. Therefore, it is difficult to give this artist an introduction. However, as will be shown later, Renao shares a lot of his personal information through TikTok videos which is going to be discussed later in the results section. What is known about Renao is that he mainly makes RnB music tied in with some aspects of indie music making for a quite original combination of genres. Renao’s highest streaming song is called “Nobody” and it currently has 13 million streams.

The second artist whose TikTok content will be analyzed is Jaydon Lewis. Jaydon Lewis currently has 155,3 thousand followers, which might seem like a huge difference compared to Renao, however, Jaydon Lewis has only 82,000 monthly listeners on Spotify. Therefore, having a high number of followers on TikTok does not automatically mean that an artist will have also a big number of monthly listeners. Jaydon Lewis specifically makes the Amapiano genre. He is known for remixing known and popular songs, but he also creates original productions. His highest streaming song “Don’t see you freestyle” currently

has about 1 million streams on Spotify. Jaydon Lewis states in his bio on Spotify that he comes from South Africa trying to bring his home nation's sound and culture across the world.

The third artist included in this study goes by the name FRVRFRIDAY (forever Friday). FRVRFRIDAY currently has 12,4 thousand followers on TikTok and has currently 1,2 million monthly listeners, which makes him the highest listened to artist out of the three. His highest streaming song "100 Rounds" has 22 million streams making him also the artist with the most streams. FRVRFRIDAY makes music that could be labeled as hip-hop but is also infused with RnB. He currently resides in Montreal and is an upcoming artist with a lot of potential.

3.2 Data Collection

Since this study is taking a look at the promotional strategies of artists on TikTok the data source of this study are the TikTok profiles of the artists. In order to find these intricate ways in which artists promote their music, the 25 latest posts from the artists were downloaded and analyzed using a coding table that will be discussed further in the method section. All of the videos and slides (TikTok also provides a function to upload a slideshow of at least two photos) were downloaded on May 6th, 2024. These videos were uploaded between 2nd December 2023 and the latest was uploaded on 30th April 2024. While some artists upload quite consistently and often, for instance, Renao who has since uploaded 20 videos, artists such as FRVRFRIDAY have only uploaded three new videos since May 6th.

All of the videos and slides were downloaded on May 6th, 2024, using two websites. Firstly, all of the videos were downloaded through *Tokdownload*. This website allows users to put in multiple TikTok videos links and download them at once, which was particularly useful for a study like this one. Therefore, all of the videos from the last 25 posts of each artist were put in, downloaded at once, and stored in three separate folders divided for each artist. Secondly, as mentioned in the previous paragraph TikTok also allows the function of uploading a slideshow of photos. *Tokdownload*, however, did not provide the function to download slideshows as well. However, another website similar to *Tokdownload* called *SnapTik* precisely afforded this function. Therefore, all of the slideshows from the past 25 posts of each artist were downloaded using this website and stored in separate folders of the three artists.

Further data that was collected apart from TikTok videos and slides were the titles of the videos and hashtags used by the artists. These hashtags were then stored in another batch of separate folders dedicated to each of the artists. The significance of the hashtags will be explained later on in the coding section of this thesis. More so, comments where the artists responded to TikTok users or fans were also recorded using the screenshot function and will also be discussed later on in this paper.

In terms of research ethics, this study analyzed publicly accessible content from TikTok. As the TikTok content used in the sample is freely available to everyone, it was deemed unnecessary to reach out to the three selected artists and obtain informed consent. To further ensure ethical integrity, this study made sure to not use any sensitive or private content. Only content that was published publicly and was deemed non-sensitive was included in the analysis, therefore, any potential ethical concerns were minimized.

3.3 Coding Process

The coding process began with developing a coding table that would be crucial in identifying key strategies that the artists utilize in their TikTok content. Having such a table was then instrumental in identifying patterns that the three artists have in common. More so, developing a coding table could then provide a more detailed overview of how each of the artists utilizes various strategies in order to gain a new following and more streams on streaming platforms. Therefore, the coding table was based on combining the theoretical frameworks used in this study, namely the AIDA model and parasocial interaction, as well as previous research on strategies how to reach the goals of each of the AIDA stages and the parasocial interaction.

The coding table was created using Excel for a clear and easy overview of all of the codes. The table was divided into five sections. The first four sections were focused on each of the AIDA model stages, therefore, Attention, Interest, Desire and Action. The last section was dedicated to parasocial interaction theory. There was also room left for any additional codes that would possibly be identified in the sample. These sections were put on the left side of the Excel table and were connected to each post from the specific artists. Since it would be too confusing and difficult to navigate in, three Excel files were created for each of the three artists. This way, each post of a specific artist could be inspected by looking at whether the codes of each section were present in the artist's video or slide.

The coding table was useful in looking at what posts had what number of codes embedded in them. For instance, if a video or a slide included visually appealing and attention-grabbing imagery a letter “p” was noted down into the according cell. More so, if this was the case in post number 1, “p1” was noted down in the cell. After analyzing the posts this was helpful in figuring out which post scored the most “points” in all of the coding sections. This was done by using the Ctrl + F function and typing in “p” together with the number of a post. This was done in all of the coding sections.

In general, the codebook served as a tool that enabled the study to compare and get an overview of which artist employs which techniques at which rate. Together with the codebook, additional qualitative observations were made, analyzing patterns that the artists share, but also looking at specific strategies used only by a specific artist. Although the nature of the codebook might seem quantitative at first, the conclusions were made based on qualitative observations of the promotion strategies employed by the artist. Furthermore, it is also important to mention that a certain aspect of a video could yield multiple effects and be coded as having several outcomes. For instance, if an artist shows visually eye-catching footage from behind the scenes this can have an effect on both the attention and interest. Therefore, one part of a video could be coded as having several outcomes.

3.3.1. Attention Codes

The first section, in the codebook was related to the attention stage of the AIDA model. In order to investigate whether some strategic forms of grabbing attention were present in an artist’s video, the section was split into five codes, those being: “Eye-catching visuals”, “Intriguing captions”, “Trendy or popular hashtags”, “Unique or unexpected content”, and “Content that conveys emotions or strong reactions”.

The first code of the attention stage was named “Eye-catching visuals.” This code was put into the coding table in order to determine whether a TikTok video or a slide included eye-catching visual aspects that would capture the attention of a user scrolling on TikTok. As (Pramita et. al., 2022) argued, showcasing the right attitudes whether they be visual or textual can have a major impact on grabbing a consumer’s attention. For instance, these could be visuals that rely on colorful visuals, or videos where people are showcased dancing in a club.

The second code in the attention stage was named “Intriguing captions (Text in the

video).” Similarly, as it was argued by (Pramita et. al., 2022) it is important to have an adequate choice of words in order to grab someone’s attention. This code was created to investigate whether captions in a TikTok video, which are quite often present in any type of TikTok content, had an effect on grabbing the attention of a viewer. Therefore, if interesting captions were present in post number 1, “p1” was noted down into the according cell as explained previously. For instance, intriguing captions can be lyrics from the promoted song, or the artist directly addressing the viewer.

The third code was labeled “trendy or popular hashtags.” This code was used when an artist used trendy or popular hashtags. Since I am a part of the audience of these artists, based on my pre-existing knowledge I know which hashtags are currently deemed popular.

The fourth code was labeled “unique or unexpected content.” Videos or slides that appeared unique whether by using an uncommon concept or unique storytelling were marked. The final code in the section of Attention was labeled “content that conveys emotions or strong reactions.” When a video evoked some sort of emotions and in turn grabbed the attention of a viewer the post was marked down using the previously explained process. Some videos were infused with humor, while some were infused with, for example, sorrow.

3.3.2 Interest Codes

The next section of the coding table was dedicated to the second stage of the AIDA model, Interest. While the Attention stage is the first step in potentially gaining a new follower and listener, the Interest stage is just as important as it is the next step in reeling in the TikTok user. Therefore, the interest section was created using six codes which were: “Behind-the-scenes content”, “Personal stories”, “Interactive elements”, “Emotional appeal”, “Uniqueness factor”, and “Offers or promotions for TikTok users”.

The first code in the Interest section was “Behind-the-scenes content.” As it was discussed previously by Hadiyati (2016), showing consumers the behind-the-scenes process can effectively develop an interest in the consumer, making them absorbed in the content. Therefore, videos or slides that included a sneak peek into the backstage of music production or for example, a concert were marked in the according cell, based on the post.

More so, promotional content with personal stories can also be a great way of fostering interest and inviting the consumer to explore further. Thus, a second code labeled

“personal stories” was added to the Interest section of the coding table. This code was noted down when an artist opened the door for the viewers to listen to the artist’s personal story whether it be tragic or happy. For instance, it will be shown how one of the artists used his story about visa problems to capture interest and make the consumers invested, wanting to learn more about the artist (artist Renao, post 9).

The fourth code that was added to the interest section was meant for pinpointing videos and slides that attempted to spark an interactive activity with the TikTok viewers. This code was named “Interactive elements”. For instance, interactive elements could be seen as challenges, polls, questions, or any form of interactive activity with the audience. For instance, it will be shown that artists attempted to develop a dance challenge to one of his songs. The next code in the Interest section was labeled as “emotional appeal.” This code was used in case an artist attempted to channel an emotional response in the viewer, which would in turn make them more interested in finding out more about the artist and his personal life. Emotional appeal could be in this context understood as attempting to evoke inspiration, motivation, or a feeling such as nostalgia.

More so, it has been shown that businesses that promote unique products can develop a great relationship with consumers. This is because consumers like to have a product that is deemed as unique and different from the rest of the products that other consumers have in possession. Not to be confused with the “Unique or unexpected content” code in the Attention stage, the fifth code “Uniqueness factor” aims to identify unique music and unique artistic habits that can create a feeling of interest in the consumer. The previously mentioned code is meant for identifying unique forms of TikTok content. For instance, if an artist promotes a song that sounds quite similar to a standard pop-radio song the code will not be marked. However, if the artists attempt to create something out of the ordinary and authentic this code will be used.

The final code in the interest section is labeled as “Offers or promotions for TikTok users.” As previously discussed, having another influencer promoting someone’s product can be a great way of garnering interest in for instance a song. Therefore, this code was developed in order to see whether artists ask other TikTok users or influencers to collaborate in any shape or form. For instance, if an artist shared a video looking for collaborations or partners in promotion strategies this code was be marked down in the according cell.

3.3.3 Desire Codes

Creating codes for the Desire stage was complicated as Desire is quite often described very similarly to the Interest stage. However, a set of codes was created in order to pinpoint when a feeling of desire is created in a consumer, looking at a musician's TikTok video. These codes were based on previous literature linked to developing a sense of desire in a consumer, the same way as the other AIDA stages were linked to previous research. These four codes are: "Lifestyle portrayal", "Testimonials or reviews from fans", "Exclusive content or offers", and "Teasers or previews of upcoming unreleased projects".

The first code in the Desire section of the coding table was labeled as "Lifestyle portrayals." Pramita (2022) argues that promoting a product together with an aspirational lifestyle can create desire in the consumer, therefore, this code was created in order to track down when an artist promoted a desirable image or music.

The second code in the Desire section was named "Testimonials or reviews from fans." Broekemier (2015) has argued that word of mouth marketing can be of great value for businesses and therefore music artists. Therefore, consumers commenting about the quality of the artist's music can bring in more fans and create a sense of desire in a consumer.

More so, Lynn and Harris (1997) showed that both interest and desire can be created by promoting products as exclusive or with a limited offer. Therefore, a third code labeled "Exclusive content or offers" was created so that content that was promoted as limited or exclusive was noted down. Similarly, this sense of exclusivity or having access to something unreleased was further expanded with the addition of a fourth code labeled "Teasers or previews of upcoming unreleased music." Therefore, this code was used when an artist on TikTok for instance showcased a sneak peek of upcoming music, creating desire in their already established fandom and also newcomers.

3.3.4 Action Codes

The final section of the AIDA codes was dedicated to the stage of Action. This section was made for the identification of prompts to action from the musicians who promote their work on TikTok. Therefore, four codes were created in order to determine the action aspect of promotional strategies on TikTok. The codes used in this section were: "Links to external platforms", "Instructions for engagement", "Urging viewers to stream a song", and "Urging viewers to share a song".

The first code was labeled “Links to external platforms.” This code was created in order to find out whether TikTok musicians prompt the audience to click on a link to be redirected to a song on Spotify, a personal website, or any sort of external link. As it was argued by Ghirvu (2013), online promotion affords a quick way of transitioning from the advert to the purchase option, therefore, this code was created. The second code utilized in the Action section was labeled “instructions for engagement.” This code was meant to capture any signs of instructions from the TikTok content creator attempting to guide the viewer to for instance, like the video, share the video, or to open an external link.

The third code in this section is also quite similar. The code “Urging viewers to stream a song” was created to detect any activity of prompting action of streaming an artist’s song on for instance Spotify or Apple Music. The fourth and last code of this section also follows the same logic but with the action of sharing a song.

3.3.5 Parasocial Interaction Codes

The final section of the coding table is dedicated to the parasocial interaction theory and how it is translated into real scenarios of promoting music online on TikTok. As has been shown creating a perceived relationship with a consumer online can lead to successful building of a fan base and expanding of it. Therefore, a set of five codes was created in order to determine in what ways musicians on TikTok create a sense of a friendly virtual relationship with their audience. As described by Horton and Wohl (1956) parasocial interaction is defined by its relative privacy, which makes each member feel as if they are present in the conversation. This could be done for instance by directly addressing the viewer as an acquaintance in the video or in other ways in which the viewer senses a feeling of a perceived relationship. Thus, the following codes were created: “Responding to comments”, “Creation of perceived intimacy or connection with the audience”, “Direct addressing of the viewer”, “Appreciation of fans”, and “Using relatable humor, memes to establish common ground with viewers”.

The first code in the section of parasocial interaction theory was labeled as “responding to comments.” This code was used when an artist responded to a comment from a TikTok user either thanking them for their praiseful comment, joking with them or simply sending an emoji. However, each of these examples can create a sense of a parasocial relationship with a person online. Furthermore, screenshots of the comment exchange between viewers and the artists were taken in order to further document and explain in what

ways these artists communicate with their audiences.

The second code added to the parasocial interaction section was labeled “Creation of perceived intimacy or connection with the audience.” This code was utilized to highlight each time an artist either with his responding to comments, with his story-telling techniques, or by addressing the viewer created a sense of a connection or a feeling of intimacy with the viewer. Strategies such as these can create a feeling of knowing the artists, despite never meeting them in real life.

The third code added to this section was concerned with the direct addressing of a viewer. Therefore, the code was named “Direct addressing of the viewer.” This code was marked when the artist directly addressed the viewer as if they were talking to them specifically. This can be done in many ways for instance, by the artists speaking and using pronouns such as “you,” or this could be done also by the use of captions. More so, this aspect could also be done by responding to a user’s comment.

The fourth code delved into the aspect of thanking and appreciating the musician’s audience. Therefore, a code named “Appreciation of fans” was added to the parasocial interaction section. Appreciating viewers and fans can also be done in many ways. For instance, an artist can directly thank a viewer by responding to their comment, or it can be done by creating a video that is dedicated to the musician’s fans and thanking them for their support. There are many ways in which this phenomenon can be brought to life, and this will be further discussed in the results section.

The final code added into this section, and the coding table as a whole was concerned with creating relatable scenarios by using widely used cultural jokes or memes to establish a common ground with the viewer and a sense of relatability with the artist. Therefore, a code named “Using relatable humor, memes to establish common ground with viewers” was added to capture exactly this phenomenon in the TikTok content of the musicians. Same as the previous code, this can be carried out in many different shapes and forms. For instance, an artist can release a video that in itself can relate to a popular meme, or this can be done by replying to a viewer in a specific way. These strategies will further be discussed in the results section, analyzing how artists establish a sense of common ground with their audience.

3.4 Recording Additional Insights

All of the discussed codes are meant to capture the various promotional strategies that artists utilize in order to grow as musicians and influencers. However, it is important to note that there are multiple ways to promote music online, and this coding table did not include all of these strategies. Although the codebook was comprehensive, it was not entirely exhaustive due to the platform's dynamic nature. Therefore, any substantial or uncommon creative promotional strategies were noted down under the coding table, in order to discuss an unordinary way in which an artist used TikTok to promote their music. This coding table provides a multitude of codes, however, there had to be more space for further promotional strategies that do not fit into the table. Therefore, any interesting or significant promotional strategies will be discussed in the results section. Ultimately, no new codes were added, indicating that the predefined codes were sufficiently capable of covering the identified strategies.

4. Results

After going in-depth through the method and research design the paper will move on to the results section. The purpose of this study was to analyze the creative ways in which music artists promote their music on the social media platform TikTok. Together with the theoretical frameworks of the AIDA model and the parasocial interaction theory, a coding table was constructed in order to provide a clear overview of the creative strategies that these artists utilize, and thus, answer the main research question.

4.1 Attention

As discussed previously, the attention section of the coding table included the following codes: “Eye-catching visuals”, “Intriguing captions”, “Trendy or popular hashtags”, “Unique or unexpected content”, and “Content that evokes emotions or strong reactions”. These codes were examined in relation to the posts of the three selected artists. While all of the artists came up with interesting and attention-grabbing ideas in their posts, the artist FRVRFRI DAY scored the highest number of points in the attention section.

When comparing the points that were recorded in the coding tables of each of the artists FRVRFRI DAY had 87 points, Jaydon Lewis had 79 points, and Renao had 64 points in terms of attention strategies. Each of the artists has shown to have a specific image and visual taste that they relate to the feeling their music exudes. For example, FRVRFRI DAY included eye-catching visuals in all of his posts, whether it be only still images or videos. While his music can also carry a positive mood, he predominantly makes darker music that feels more moody, intriguing and melancholic. He also carries on this feeling into his imagery and visuals, which usually carry darker tones as he mostly uses dark colors sometimes mixed in with brighter colors such as green or blue.

Contrary to FRVRFRI DAY, the artist Renao uses a very different color palette which also fits in with the style of his music. Renao uses more colorful imagery and mainly uses bright and flagrant colors, especially the color red. This might be the intention since Renao’s profile picture is a bright red picture, therefore, he might be developing a theme here and linking this color to his music. The coding table shows that Renao used eye-catching imagery in 14 of the 25 selected posts for analysis. Contrary to FRVRFRI DAY, who mostly uses heavily stylized visuals that all conform to a darker theme, Renao does the same but also tends to post pictures and videos from his everyday life that might not always appear

aesthetically eye-catching.

Jaydon Lewis also capitalizes on this aspect of attention-grabbing imagery as the table shows that 23 of his posts included eye-catching visuals. However, compared to the previous two artists Jaydon Lewis relies on completely different types of imagery and visuals. Most of his posts are not stylistically curated, such as posts from FRVRFIDAY, yet he maintains a consistent theme of posting mainly visuals that are related to meme culture. Jaydon Lewis recently released an Amapiano remix of the GTA: San Andreas main theme, therefore, most of his TikTok page contains images from the game. Instead of going for a color theme, the artist mainly posts video collages of other people either dancing or listening to music in combination with his songs.

Out of all the codes, “eye-catching visuals” is one of the codes that were marked down the most out of the whole coding table. Therefore, this shows that the artists are aware of how important it is to capture someone’s attention on TikTok and they in turn use visually interesting and attention-grabbing imagery. More so, together with interesting visuals, the artists also majorly capitalized on using intriguing captions. The code “intriguing captions” was again marked the most in the coding table for FRVRFIDAY. This shows that this specific artist is keen on making visually attractive content that is combined with interesting text in the video or a slide.

One common pattern regarding the code of “intriguing captions” is that the artists FRVRFIDAY and Renao mainly use the lyrics of the song that they are promoting as the captions in their posts. This was not the case in all of the analyzed videos, however, it can be seen that this is a recurring pattern among artists who promote their music on TikTok. More so, it is important to mention that all of the analyzed videos and slides contain music, mainly the music of the artists. It is possible that the lyrics of the song are included in the posts in order to make the viewer also read them out in their mind, and not just listen to the song.

Jaydon Lewis also uses many captions in his videos, however, he does not use lyrics. Instead, he utilizes his copy-writing skills in order to get the attention of the viewers. For instance, in one of his posts, he uses the caption: “OUR NEW FRIDAY ANTHEM” combined together with a visual of a DJ playing his song in a club (artist Jaydon Lewis, post 11). As mentioned, he also capitalizes on the meme culture. For instance, he uses quite often the skull emoji, which is frequently used by Gen Z and is meant to evoke laughter. More so, it is important to note that there are only a few cases, where the artists did not use any

captions in their posts. Thus, this signifies the importance of good attention-grabbing text.

The “Trendy or popular hashtags” code was also marked down quite often in all three coding tables. However, the coding table has shown that FRVRFRI DAY utilizes this function the most out of the three artists using popular hashtags in 23 posts. The hashtags that he used the most frequently were #rnb or #rnb2024. This way, a person who is looking for new RnB music will have a good chance of stumbling upon FRVRFRI DAY’s posts. Interestingly, the artist included hashtags in all of his posts, whereas Renao and Jaydon Lewis both used hashtags in only 11 of their posts. However, there is again a common pattern among the three artists. All of the artists used the hashtag #fyp. The abbreviation stands for “for you page,” which is the main page on TikTok where random videos based on TikTok’s algorithm are recommended to viewers. It is unclear what is the intention behind the use of this hashtag and whether using it will give the artists a better chance of being put on someone’s “for you page”, however, this was one recurring pattern (McLachlan, 2023).

While Renao did not use hashtags as often, he went for a different style. When promoting his music Renao used hashtags such as #omarapollo, #dominicfike, or #stevelayc. All of the mentioned names are those of worldwide known singers. The reasoning behind this choice of hashtags might be that Renao’s music feels quite similar to the music of the mentioned artists, therefore, making it more likely that a person who listens to Omar Apollo will also enjoy listening to Renao’s music. Jaydon Lewis also opted for a similar style of hashtags using #amapiano or #gta to promote his GTA remix.

While FRVRFRI DAY has been shown to be excelling in the Attention aspect so far, he scored the lowest score in terms of “Unique or unexpected content.” He has shown to be consistent in using eye-catching visuals and intriguing captions, however, it cannot be said that this content is unique. When looking at the profiles of the other two artists it can be seen that they share a similar concept of videos. They generally include visuals of the artists with their music playing in the background.

While FRVRFRI DAY does not often opt for a different style of videos, Jaydon Lewis on the other hand does. His content compared to the content of the other two artists makes his TikTok profile look almost like a meme-posting profile. However, he also occasionally posts a video of himself playing his song on a DJ controller. Despite the majority of the posts being humor-filled, it can be seen that his promotional content is generally more creative and enthusiastic. Renao also sticks to the similar formula that

FRVRFRIDAY mainly uses but he also includes videos out of the ordinary which also makes him stand out more as someone creative. For instance, one of his posts shows him and his friends having fun outside singing Renao's song that he promoted on TikTok (artist Renao, post 2). Scrolling through his profile page will make you every once in a while, look at content that seems unexpected. However, Jaydon Lewis excelled in this aspect by sharing meme-like posts that promoted his songs.

More so, the Attention aspect was also looked at from the perspective of conveying emotions. Similarly, FRVRFRIDAY did not stand out in this aspect. While Jaydon Lewis's content can appear humorous it does not always exactly convey emotions. Instead, Renao has shown to be a force in this aspect. 11 of his 25 posts were filled with emotions whether it be simply said sad or happy. Since Renao includes himself in all of his posts, his videos also gain another level of reaction. Renao talks a lot about his personal life as well, which is something that can bring out deeper emotions in a viewer, also making his story relatable. However, the aspect of personal stories will be discussed later on in this study.

It will be later shown that the Attention stage is one of the most developed ones in terms of the artists selected for this study. They all utilize eye-catching visuals with intriguing captions. More so, it can be seen that there is a clear pattern of music promotion on TikTok among artists. A post that includes either a slideshow or a video with interesting visuals, combined with the artist's music and lyrics has shown to be one of the most consistent ways an artist can promote their music. By simply playing the viewer a song and giving them the words to it with a visually pleasing background the artist introduces his music, lyrics, and the tone and mood of their music which is accentuated by the visuals. In terms of overall coding of the Attention section, FRVRFRIDAY comes in at first place, Jaydon Lewis at second and Renao at third.

4.2 Interest

Compared to the stage of Attention, it has been shown that the stage of Interest is not as developed as attention, however, it is still utilized by the three musicians on TikTok. In terms of points recorded in the coding tables, Renao had 38 points, Jaydon Lewis had 35 points and FRVRFRIDAY had 31 points. It has been argued previously that inviting the viewers to get a behind-the-scenes look into the life of an artist can be a great way of compelling more people to one's work. However, the artists selected for this study do not do this often, and when they do it is not exactly an in-depth look into the creative process of

making music or preparing for a tour. FRVFRIDAY showed some behind-the-scenes content but only very briefly. Pictures of the artist in the studio, or a video that shows the artist recording the song for about 15 seconds do not exactly show the creative process. Renao also did this very briefly, and Jaydon Lewis did not pay attention to this aspect at all.

More so, garnering interest can also be done by telling your audience personal stories, that can potentially make you emotionally connected to the artist and their work. Out of the three artists, Renao paid the most attention to this aspect. In his video, Renao explains how he moved from India to the UK in order to study and pursue a career in music. However, with his visa expiring soon Renao took this story to TikTok in order to share his story (artist Renao, post 9). He received a lot of praise and support from his fans and eventually found a way to stay in the UK. More so, he tied in this story with performing his first concert in the UK explaining how turbulent his career was so far, and thanking the fans. This way, Renao managed to garner interest from viewers and gain support. On the other hand, Jaydon Lewis and FRVFRIDAY did not share any personal stories at all.

It has been previously reported that TikTok and music are often connected by dance challenges. Among the three artists, Jaydon Lewis was the only one connected to such a phenomenon. His GTA remix garnered some attention from people around the world and somehow a dance was created to this song. However, Jaydon Lewis did not come up with this dance, it was the people liking the song who did. He shared two videos where two people were dancing to his song extending the reach of his song. Further interesting interactive elements came also from Renao. In one of his posts, Renao shared a snippet of his upcoming song and told his audience that if they guessed the release date of the song, he would personally send them the song before it dropped. This was quite an interesting way of not only garnering interest, but also creating a feeling of having something exclusively among the fans. More so, this strategy can also be considered original, since the other two artists did not use this strategy.

In terms of emotional appeal, Jaydon Lewis led the way as his posts are filled with humorous cultural references and memes. He did this mainly by using memes that are popular among Gen Z and relating it to his music. For instance, a famous meme from the game GTA: San Andreas where the main protagonist of the game says: “Ah shit, here we go again” was heavily used by Jaydon Lewis in the promotion of his GTA song remix. He also posted many photos and videos from the game attempting to give the viewer something familiar mixed in together with his song. On the other hand, Renao’s emotional appeal was

mainly directed towards melancholy and personal struggles. His music, compared to the music of Jaydon Lewis, feels more melancholic, slow, and very mellow. Therefore, he also channeled these emotions in his posts. In the case of FRVRFRIDAY, the artist more so focused also on a melancholic feeling sometimes tied in with loneliness. Compared to the humorous posts of Jaydon Lewis, and the colorful and mellow posts of Renao, the artist often used black and white visuals, suggesting a more of darker emotional appeal.

Interest is also created by promoting unique products. It can be said that all of the artists who are in the upcoming stages of their careers promote intriguing works of art. It is especially the diversity that the artists promote that can make them seem interesting and admirable in the eyes of viewers on TikTok. All of the artists have a set theme in mind. Their music exudes a certain feeling or a certain mood. However, it has been shown that Jaydon Lewis's music persona is more so based on meme culture and remixes of popular music. While he also makes original productions, it might be interesting to further take a look at what this means for the artist in the long run. Renao and FRVRFRIDAY take their careers and music branding more seriously as they rely on a specific set of emotional appeals and a specific atmosphere. Jaydon Lewis on the other hand takes his music branding more humorously, for instance remixing a song from GTA: San Andreas, which is considered a staple in the gaming community. Does this take away artistic value or credibility, and therefore attract fewer fans or is it the other way around? And how does this change the perception of an artist in the eyes of the audience?

This study has also shown that interest can be generated with the help of other people, more specifically an influencer (Pasaribu & Ronda, 2024, p. 1822) Therefore, it was also examined whether the selected artists were seeking a helping hand from other influencers, asking them to support their work. However, it has been shown that none of the selected artists aimed in this direction. Maybe they do this privately and reach out to influencers for such purposes or maybe they do not do this at all. All in all, nothing of such sort was spotted in the selected sample.

4.3 Desire

The coding tables have shown that in terms of points recorded in the coding tables, FRVRFRIDAY had 51 points, Renao had 35 points, and Jaydon Lewis had 29 points. It was previously discussed that word of mouth marketing or reviews from consumers can prove to be a great tool for shaping desire. In this case, the most frequent code recurring in all of the

selected content from the three artists was “testimonials or reviews from fans.” There have been only a few instances where the artists did not get any praise in the comments. Almost all of the posts contained positive comments about the artist or their music. Therefore, this proves that these artists must be doing something good. Not only does this make them look favorable in the eyes of casual viewers but this also builds a stronger sense of a fanbase.

More so, FRVRFRI DAY and Renao upload posts that often contain desirable lifestyles. It is especially FRVRFRI DAY who does this since he posts videos that represent lavish and a luxurious lifestyle which can be seen as aspirational by many. Their posts look stylish, and desirable as they show some brief instances of behind-the-scenes content where they for example are in luxurious hotels, expensive cars, and so on. This can however be seen the most with posts from FRVRFRI DAY who also sometimes uses photos of expensive sports cars in relation to his music.

Another tool for creating desire would be to post previews or teasers of unreleased songs. By doing this, the artist can create a desire to have something that is not yet available. There have been instances in the comment sections of these artists where people were begging the artist to drop the previewed song. As mentioned, all of the posts of these artists contained audio of either a song that has already been released or a song that is yet to be released. Therefore, there is another clear pattern among the three artists. By playing either released or unreleased songs, the artists directly expose the viewers to their work.

Another code that was included in the Desire section was “exclusive content or offers.” This code was barely spotted in the samples. However, there was one good example of this, and it came from Renao. As I have mentioned, Renao shared a post where he said that if someone guessed the release date of his song, he would send the song to that person, who would have it exclusively. This almost seems like a precedent in terms of creating a feeling of longing for something completely exclusive. This strategy might be great for the further development of a sense of desire and wanting something since it has been shown that having something exclusive is quite attractive for consumers. However, this phenomenon was identified only once in this sample.

4.4 Action

When it comes to Action, the coding tables have shown that in terms of points recorded in the coding tables, FRVRFRI DAY had 7 points, Renao had 1 point, and Jaydon

Lewis had 2 points. What might seem surprising, considering how much effort the artists put into the aspect of grabbing attention, is that the four codes in the action section were identified as the least out of all. The codes were concerned with prompting action to the viewers such as “Urging viewers to stream a song,” or giving people “Links to external platforms.” More so, it also included the codes “Instructions for engagement,” and “urging viewers to share a song.” However, these codes were barely marked down in the coding tables. In terms of points recorded in the coding tables, the difference is huge. For instance, Renao only urged the audience to stream a song only once as he commented “pre-save link in bio.” Before songs drop on streaming platforms it is possible to pre-save them so that when they drop you will already have the song in your library. More so, Jaydon Lewis also had only two of these codes marked in his coding table. FRVRFRIDAY came out on top, however, urging people to stream his song seven times in his 25 posts.

4.5 Parasocial Interaction Theory

The parasocial interaction section was concerned with identifying instances where artists create a sort of perceived relationship with their audience through TikTok. As a reminder, the codes that were used in this section were “Responding to comments,” “Creation of perceived intimacy or connection with the audience,” “Direct addressing of the viewer,” “Appreciation of fans,” and “Using relatable humor, memes to establish a common ground with the viewers.”

Jaydon Lewis was the artist who has shown the most parasocial interaction activity. This is also due to the nature of his content, which is mostly based on meme culture. Therefore, Jaydon Lewis scored high in terms of the code “Using relatable humor, memes to establish a common ground with the viewers.” However, he has also shown to be quite active with his following as he has responded to viewers via comment section in 8 posts. More so, the way he presented himself has created a sense of a perceived connection between him and the audience in 9 of his posts. Similarly, he also made sure to appreciate the fans who praised him in the comments, thanking them. This occurred 7 times in the 25 selected posts.

However, Jaydon created the highest feeling of a perceived relationship when he made a remix based on a comment from his fans. One of the fans suggested that he should make an Amapiano remix of a song by Ariana Grande. TikTok also affords a function where artists can respond to their viewers via a video message which is also a post on its own.

Therefore, Jaydon bolstered the parasocial relationship even more, by listening to his admirer and making a remix of the suggested song. This also bolsters the fan interaction even more, as it was seen in many of his videos how fans asked for a remix of a specific song. Thus, due to Jaydon's remix strategy, he does not only makes remixes based on recommendations from fans but also deepens the relationship between him and his audience, leaving the audience wanting more remixes.

Similarly, FRVRFRI DAY also used the video response option to answer his fan. One of his fans embraced how the artist dropped two songs shortly after each other by saying "BACK2BACK." In an appreciative response, FRVRFRI DAY responded with a video acting as a teaser for the next song (the post was deleted at the time of writing this section). Therefore, it can be seen here that the artist also cares about the connection between him and his fans as he shows a strong sense of appreciation. More so, he has proven this by responding to fans on 11 of his posts and showing a sense of appreciation for the fans on 7 posts. Not only that, but he also uses a wording tactic where he almost directly addresses the viewer, asking for an opinion. For instance, he shared a post where he wrote "thinking about dropping this next" and shared a preview of an unreleased song (the post was deleted at the time of writing this section). This way, he asked for a reaction from his audience. Therefore, with all of these examples, it can be argued that FRVRFRI DAY creates a strong sense of a perceived relationship between himself and his fans.

Rena o also follows these footsteps in his posts. While he does not utilize these steps as much, he still makes sure to appreciate his fans. Although he did not respond to comments on as many posts as FRVRFRI DAY he often showed appreciation of his audience via captions in a video. However, in one of his posts he used direct addressing the viewers in order to give them praise and thank them. One of his songs began getting a lot of attention so he said in his comment section: "you guys are streaming this like crazy" (artist Rena o, post 17). Therefore, Rena o also utilized the parasocial relationship with his fans, however, not as much, and in-depth as Jaydon Lewis and FRVRFRI DAY did in their posts.

5. Discussion & Conclusion

This study aimed to explore how music artists employ TikTok in order to promote their work, utilizing the theoretical frameworks of the AIDA model and the parasocial interaction theory. This study aimed to answer the research question: “What creative strategies do artists employ on TikTok to promote their music?” This aim was then made possible by analyzing the TikTok content of three various music artists who are active on TikTok and promoting their music there. After putting together a codebook and making qualitative observations of this content the analysis revealed several key strategies and patterns that the artists Renao, Jaydon Lewis, and FRVRFRI DAY use.

The study was based on the four stages of the AIDA model, thus, Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action. Therefore, a coding framework was developed and split into four sections each designated for the AIDA stages. More so, a fifth section was added to the coding framework specifically aimed to capture notions of parasocial interaction, based on the parasocial interaction theory developed by Horton and Wohl. Together, these sections in the coding framework were designed to analyze the TikTok content of the three selected artists, aiming to identify recurring but also authentic promotional strategies. Furthermore, additional qualitative observations were also made in order to analyze the ways in which music artists on TikTok promote their music.

5.1 AIDA Model

In terms of drawing attention, there were some recurring patterns among the three artists. Each of the artists relied on eye-catching visuals whether they acted serious and artistic or humorous. More so, the code “Eye-catching visuals” was the most used code appearing 62 times across the three coding tables. This aligns with the findings of Pramita et al. (2017), who emphasized the importance of choosing the right visuals or attitudes to capture audience attention on social media platforms. It has also been shown that the artists rely heavily on including captions in their posts, trying to make them intrigue in different ways which also aligns with Pramita et al. (2022) who argued about the significance of strategic use of text and choosing the right words. For instance, Renao and FRVRFRI DAY mainly used captions as a way to share the lyrics of the song playing in the background with the viewers. Jaydon Lewis mainly used captions in order to make a funny and relatable commentary in connection with the song that he was promoting. More so, the artists also used hashtags although not as often. FRVRFRI DAY used hashtags that would describe the

nature of his music such as #rnb2024 or #frenchsong. Jaydon Lewis also used the same tactic mainly using #amapiano to indicate the genre of his music. Renao would for instance use hashtags such as #stevelacy or #omarapollo to compare the mood of his songs to other established and popular artists. Therefore, capitalizing on using intriguing visuals and captions in combination with the artist's song are the main strategies artists employ to attract attention to their music.

The coding table has shown that Interest was not as majorly present as Attention. For instance, while FRVRFRI DAY had 87 points in the Attention section, he had only 31 points in the Interest section. This was the theme with the other two artists as well. The strategies in the case of interest varied. For example, Renao utilized sharing personal stories in order to create interest by talking about various things such as his problems with his visa in the UK. This is an aspect that aligned with the work of Hadiayti (2016) who highlighted the importance of personal stories, which can in turn create interest and a deeper connection in the consumer. On the other hand, FRVRFRI DAY scored the highest in terms of emotional appeal, since his posts which were visually curated could evoke emotions such as melancholy, and motivation together with the mood of his music. This aspect aligns with what Bulut (2016) argued, emphasizing the importance of emotional appeal in social media marketing. Jaydon Lewis also focused on the emotional appeal aspect, however his content mostly evoked humor. However, all three artists scored in terms of the "uniqueness factor". The creative works of these artists are diverse when compared to one another and it could be argued that authentic as well. Each of the artists builds upon a theme that their music and their music persona have established. Therefore, including personal stories in promotional content has been shown to be the stand-out strategy to garner interest. More so, it is also beneficial to focus on content that generates emotional appeal whether it is humor, inspiration, or melancholy.

The Desire section was similar to the interest section. However, there was a clear pattern here. It was previously argued by Karami and Naghibi (2015) that word of mouth marketing especially holds a lot of value in terms of social media promotion. More so, this argument was supported also by Broekemier (2015) who argued that social media platforms can majorly increase the impact of word of mouth compared to previous more traditional forms of marketing. In the case of this study, this was mainly seen under the code "testimonials or reviews from fans". As mentioned, these are upcoming artists who have however already managed to get some success and a following from their music career. It

was a common theme to see praiseful comments in the comment sections of each of the artists. This way, it could be argued that this is also a form of word of mouth marketing as the viewers are basically sharing reviews of the artist's song on their posts. Therefore, seeing praise from other people can make other viewers, not familiar with the artist, create desire and interest. More so, there was a common theme among all of the three artists. Each of the posts in the sample previewed either a released or an unreleased song. Therefore, each of the posts put the consumer in direct contact with the promoted song.

However, there was also one aspect of creating desire that can be considered out of the ordinary or authentic. The artist Renao came up with an idea that is in a way an interactive challenge that can create desire. Renao shared a post where the captions said if any of the viewers guessed the release date of the song that he promoted in the post, he would send the person the song before it dropped. Not only does this create desire, but also a feeling of exclusivity and having something that other people do not possess. This aligns with what was argued previously by Lynn and Harris (1997) that uniqueness can develop a sense of desire in a consumer. More so, this strategy also embraces the parasocial interaction aspect, as an artist sending a song to one of his fans can deepen the feeling of a perceived relationship between an artist and his fanbase. Therefore, this interactive aspect can also be seen as in line with the work of Horton and Wohl (1956) on parasocial interactions, enhancing perceived exclusivity and fan engagement. Thus, this study showed that comments or reviews from fans can help the most in creating desire in consumers. Furthermore, including interactive activities can also be a great way of generating desire and gaining more following as audiences strive for exclusiveness.

Surprisingly, the Action section was the least developed across the selected artists. Codes such as "urging the viewers to stream a song" were barely identified. This might seem surprising since it has been emphasized by Pratiwi (2021) that action is the most important stage in the AIDA model since it is the last step towards a consumer purchasing a product. However, there might be a few reasons why the artists opted this way. Firstly, it might seem annoying to the viewers to constantly hear "stream this song" or "share this song" (Smith, 2011, p. 494). It is important to keep in mind that even if the promotional strategies are great, the product itself also needs to be great in order to gain attention and popularity. Still, as I have mentioned, every post in the sample contained either a snippet of an already released song or a preview of an upcoming song that has not yet been released. In a way, it could also be argued that the action aspect already happens when a person watches a TikTok

from the artists. The person is already in the beginning stages of developing an acquaintance with the song. The goal of the artist is to make a viewer listen to the song and potentially become a fan. Therefore, previewing a song on TikTok can also be considered as prompting action.

It would also be productive to make it clear what is the name of the song and who is the author. This was seen mainly in the comment sections of the artists as fans often asked for information about the song. For some reason, most of the time the artists did not include this information either in the video itself or in the video's title. Therefore, including this small step could make a great difference. More so, this can be seen as another step in prompting action. Including a title that says "name of the author – name of the song, out now on all streaming platforms" could make the navigation of a new consumer much easier. More so, urging the viewers to stream a song and asking for support is also a simple step, however, something that the artists left out could benefit from in the future. More so, providing links to external platforms such as Spotify could also be of great value for the artist, since it has been emphasized by Hassan (2015) that social media provide a great opportunity for making quick purchases and transitions online. Ghirvu (2013) also highlights that the online environment is especially instrumental in putting consumers into an active position, making them able to act quickly. Therefore, music artists should prompt more action, and make the navigation of streaming a song easier in the future.

5.2 Parasocial Interaction Theory

In terms of the parasocial relationship, the artists showed various strategies on how to create a perceived connection between an artist and his audience. For instance, FRVRFRI DAY did this by mainly responding to the comments of his audience. He responded mostly to people who praised him and his music but also to people who asked about the name of the song so that they could stream it. He also put appreciation into his comments, thanking his fans and deepening the connection with them. Furthermore, in one of his posts, he also created this perceived relationship with fans when the captions stated "thinking about dropping this next" together with a preview of his upcoming song. This way, he in a way asked for opinions from his audience while also creating the desire to have something that is not available yet.

Jaydon Lewis, on the other hand, did this by creating a common ground with the

viewers by sharing posts having a meme template and nature. Compared to Renao and FRVRFRI DAY, Jaydon Lewis was the only artist to establish as much common ground doing it in 15 posts. More so, the artist also created a stronger sense of a virtual relationship by a feature that TikTok allows. On TikTok, it is possible to respond to a comment via a video. One fan asked for an Amapiano remix of Ariana Grande's song and Jaydon did this. More so, he posted it as a direct response to that comment. By doing this, Jaydon does not only show appreciation, and creates a deeper connection, but he also prompts more activity from his fans. Now that the fans see that he reads the comments and can react to a suggestion, fans can now suggest which song he should remix next. Therefore, this is a great strategy for also embracing interactivity from the fans.

Renao on the other hand did not stand out substantially in any aspect of the parasocial interaction. He responded to comments on a few posts and also gave his fans some appreciation. However, Renao showed a sense of deepening a relationship with an audience in a different way. As mentioned, he mainly relied on sharing personal stories, which is also a great of gaining not only attention and interest but also a deeper connection with his audience as he received a lot of support. However, this strategy may not be comfortable for every artist as lack of privacy can be a dangerous thing when an artist reaches popularity. Therefore, it could be argued that this strategy is mostly suitable for artists who are extroverted and feel comfortable about sharing information from their personal lives.

5.3 Limitations and Strengths

Taking all of this information into perspective shows that there is a multitude of ways to promote music on TikTok. Although this study uncovered both common patterns and out of ordinary strategies there were still a number of limitations in the way this research was conducted. First, this study focused only on three upcoming artists. Therefore, this study showed only a few ways of what is possible to do on TikTok with music. The artists have shown unique ways of both creating more attention for their music and creating a relationship with their audience. Second, only the last 25 posts were analyzed per artist. Therefore, it is entirely possible that many promotional strategies were not analyzed due to the sample size. Analyzing the promotional patterns of more artists would therefore bring more insights and uncovered strategies into the debate. Third, this study solely focused on TikTok. Therefore, looking into promotional strategies on other social media platforms

could bring deeper insights into the topic. And fourth, this research studied only one type of artist, described as upcoming, therefore, looking into more popular artists could also bring out interesting insights.

The artists have also shown a lot of similarities such as posting slideshows with visuals that evoke the feeling of the song and with lyrics that zoom in closer on what the artist is trying to say. However, it has clearly been shown that putting music into promotional content is crucial. It would seem counterproductive to only talk about a song and not preview it. This way, the artist introduces the song to the public immediately and also in a way prompts action. It is also important to emphasize that the three artists selected in this study are majorly talented, and skillful. Therefore, it is also instrumental to put a lot of effort into creating music apart from creating intriguing posts on TikTok.

This study is among the first to explore the topic of specific promotional strategies employed by music artists on TikTok. By focusing on this specific platform, the study provides insightful findings into the nature of digital marketing practices in the music industry. Furthermore, an extended codebook was developed in this study, allowing other researchers to replicate and build upon this study. More so, this study employed two theoretical frameworks, the AIDA model and the Parasocial Interaction Theory. Thus, this dual framework provides a robust perspective on how artists both attract and keep followers.

In terms of theoretical implications, this study has uncovered new insights into the promotional strategies effective on TikTok, that were previously unexplored. This study highlighted the importance of creating attention through various tools, such as using eye-catching visuals or intriguing text. Similarly, the study has shown the importance of creating interest and desire, using authentic strategies such as creating interactive challenges and creating unique content. Surprisingly, it has also been shown that the three selected artists majorly underutilized the stage of Action. Therefore, it would be further advised to expand on this aspect for instance by urging viewers to stream a song and instruct the viewers on what to do in order to play an artist's song. The findings of the study also confirmed that it is crucial to develop a parasocial relationship between an artist and their audience as this is a major factor in gaining success in the music industry.

5.4 Practical Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

The analysis revealed that the selected music artists use a multitude of strategies,

some very similar to each other, some authentic to the artist. The artists effectively use eye-catching visuals that depict the theme of the song that they are previewing. More so, these visuals also aid in creating a musical personality and set the mood of the artist's discography. The themes the selected artists employed varied. While FRVFRIDAY chose a darker theme, Renao opted for a more peaceful and melancholic theme and Jaydon Lewis opted for a theme based on memes and humor. It has been shown that the artists mainly put their effort into the attention-grabbing aspect as it was developed the most. Additionally, the study also found intriguing strategies in the aspect of interest and desire. Whether it was offers of exclusive content or the uniqueness factor these two aspects were also developed, however, not as much as the attention stage. What might come as a surprise is that the artists barely focused on prompting action. However, the study discussed how the artists already put the audience into direct contact with the promoted music when previewing music on TikTok. On the other hand, it is still advisable to prompt action more, as the platform's potential is not fully used. Additionally, the study highlighted various intriguing ways that can be used to develop a perceived relationship with a fanbase.

Furthermore, it seems that the main goal of the artists is to gain a following and expand their audience through the use of TikTok and its algorithms. Having more followers also grants new possibilities such as performing at concerts, selling merchandise, or getting more streams on platforms such as Spotify just to name a few opportunities. Therefore, it is crucial to expand on the aspect of action, which is not only considered the most important step but also a key step in gaining that audience that can in the future grant you new possibilities as an artist. Therefore, highlighting and developing the aspects mentioned in the previous paragraph is crucial in the rise to success in the music industry.

This study underscored the critical role of social media, particularly TikTok, in promoting music online. It provides a nuanced understanding of how for instance the AIDA model and Parasocial Interaction Theory can be leveraged in order to enhance marketing strategies or build a solid marketing strategy. More so, this study can be viewed as a source of valuable insights either for upcoming artists who want to make it big in the music sphere, or music industry workers who want to optimize their promotional strategies. Furthermore, this paper helped in filling out a gap in research on social media marketing in relation to music which did not get a lot of attention.

Although the findings of this study can be of value to artists, it would also be beneficial to conduct an effect study looking at another set of TikTok content from music

artists and analyzing which type of posts worked the most. For instance, it could also be interesting to look at various models that predict behavior and apply them to this topic. More specifically, the theory of reasoned action could be useful. More so, continuing with a follow-up study that would look into the effectiveness of the strategies employed by music artists would also be beneficial as it would show more precisely which strategies work in which ways. Another recommendation would also be to compare promotional strategies across different social media platforms. Since this study focused solely on TikTok, it could be insightful to analyze how promotional content varies on, for instance, Instagram.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provided a view into the ever-changing and dynamic world of social media marketing for music artists. Artists, by leveraging the theoretical frameworks of AIDA and the Parasocial Interaction Theory can enhance their promotional efforts and hopefully build deep and long-lasting connections with their audience, which can in turn reward the artist. As TikTok is still relatively a new social media platform, further research will be essential to adapt and refine these strategies ensuring their relevance, since the dynamic world of social media can change quickly, even overnight, similarly, to an upcoming artist's career.

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7. Appendix A

Note: At the time of submission, some of the videos of the artists were deleted by them. Such videos are marked with “[deleted at the time of submission]”. In case the reader wishes to see these posts, they are available as screenshots and the videos were downloaded.

Note: The coding table developed and used in this thesis is uploaded as a separate file to the thesis.

Overview of Used TikTok Posts:

FRVRFRIDAY Table

Post number	Title of the Post and Hashtags	Link to the post
1	#rnbmusic	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/video/7363747603403640069
2	you're not used to being lonely #fyp #rnb	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/video/7362998757207575814
3	what you want from me now #rnb #fyp	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/photo/7358584720390688006
4	what you want from me now #rnb #fyp	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/video/736291875723775614 [deleted at the time of submission]
5	said+done #fyp #music #rnb #altrnb #edmtok #bounce	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/video/7335921243574619397
6	Said+Done #fyp	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/video/733792624857461

	#rnb #music #bounce #altrnb #edmtiktok #edm	1307 [deleted at the time of submission]
7	🔪 #rnbmusic #frvr	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/video/736711462089818724 [deleted at the time of submission]
8	🔪 #rnb2024 #altrnb	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/photo/7317853078144692773 [deleted at the time of submission]
9	Can't wait for the next run 🤝 #rnbmusic #altrnb	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/photo/7373563078172692063 [deleted at the time of submission]
10	Replying to @kidnfinity pedal to the floor this year 🤝 #rnb2024 #fypage	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/photo/7394232550575172237 [deleted at the time of submission]
11	24frames #fyp #rnb #xyzbca	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/photo/7378232450785173997 [deleted at the time of submission]
12	got some more music on the way 🔪 #fyp #rnbmusic2024	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/photo/7378852622633049962 [deleted at the time of submission]
13	r�sonable #fyp #rnb #music #frenchsong	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/video/7379747603433643569 [deleted at the time of submission]
14	get that message off your mind	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/photo/73195360873930

	#fyp #music #altrnb #rnb #musictok	90970 [deleted at the time of submission]
15	said+done #fyp #music #altrnb #rnb #frvrfriday	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/video/736711792082218434 [deleted at the time of submission]
16	one more time #fyp #music #altrnb #rnb	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/photo/7307843601183049332 [deleted at the time of submission]
17	Track 4 on ep #fyp #music #frenchmusic	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/video/7315114620698627334
18	#fyp #music #frenchmusic	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/photo/7314443078142692613
19	cancel all your plans #fyp #music #playlist	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/photo/7314232550275173637
20	EP drops tonight Barely even touched the sky #fyp #music #frvrfriday #451	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/photo/7312536081793092870
21	CAUSE AND EFFECT EP 12/15/23 Dropping tomorrow night ❤️ ✂️	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/photo/7312279216844770566
22	BACK2ORBIT -	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/video/731067930027147

	FRVRFRIDAY Tryna hear this at the club ✂️ ❤️ #fyp #newmusicfrida ys #hiphop #rnb	4809 [deleted at the time of submission]
23	one more time to end the year #fyp #music #rnb	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/video/7310697300601474309
24	jacob's ladder on all platforms finishing the year with more music #fyp #music #frvrfriday	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/photo/7307852601633049862
25	jacob's ladder #fyp #viral	https://www.tiktok.com/@frvrfriday/video/7306969218577206534

Renao Table

Post number	Title of the Post and Hashtags	Link to the post
1	HOT STUFF JUST DROPPED TODAY!!! #newmusic #dominicfike	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/video/7364820307099618592

	#stevelacy #omarapollo	
2	PRESSSSSURE #acapella #boyz2men #renao #rnb	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/video/7363018061714050336
3	blank	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/video/7360253539119041824
4	posting from my ipad, will be back live in a couple weeks again. I miss talking to you guys heres a pressure	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/video/7356356722753113377
5	who adding this to the latenight bag #latenightmusic #rnb #brentfaiyaz	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/video/7354374806285978913
6	blank	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/video/7353962798377864481
7	i beeeeen cooooooking, its brown boy rock	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/video/7351592427385261345
8	ok #sza	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/video/7350785459271814432

9	🥰 thank u guys	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/video/7350011942683118881
10	yeh	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/video/7349922512257518880
11	🥰🥰🥰🥰🥰 🥰 i could cry u guys were beautiful #livemusic	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/video/7348587986268867873
12	cant not post for the homeslices #stevelacy #omarapollo #dominicfike #altrnb	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/photo/7364366255748353312
13	next week? #newmusic	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/photo/7363787342743637281
14	ooh what could the last picture be hinting at????? #newmusic #latenight #latenightmusic #rnb	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/photo/7360623234343030048
15	Im back, two new songs when do you want it ? #newmusic #stevelacy	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/photo/7359491060315245857

	#stevelayfans #omarapollo #dijon	
16	blank	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/photo/7358535873127959841
17	you guys are streaming this one like crazy 🙄🙄🙄🙄 #latenightmusic #rnbmusic #renao #brentfaiyaz	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/photo/7355534629639671072
18	blank	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/photo/7353685489343319329
19	shoutout jasmine #stevelay #montellfish #danielcaesar #omarapollo #frankocean	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/photo/7352547306752855329
20	blank	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/photo/7352196069389815072
21	we only promote songs that are out 🙄 #newmusic #latenightmusic #rnb #brentfaiyaz	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/photo/7350383374910967072

22	everyday we love	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/photo/7350240910610943265
23	alright time for new music 🗣️ #montellfish #indiainsinging	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/photo/7349634466698054944
24	new kinda crazy music out soon xxx and the first circle in london 🎵 #livemusic #stevelacy #stevelacyfans #	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/photo/7349534766208797985
25	oh wait is there new music round the corner? #newmusic #psychedelicmusic #rollingstones	https://www.tiktok.com/@renao2themoon/photo/7348779041262013729

Jaydon Lewis Table

Post number	Title of the Post	Link to the post
1	blank	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7337724857578474757?lang=en
2	thank you for 100k videos 💖 keep tagging me!!	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7335862781926706437?lang=en

	#gta #amapiano	
3	GTA Amapiano 🙄 #musiclovers #viral #amapiano #music #gta #fyp	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7335472620680350982?lang=en
4	killed it tho 🕯️ #fyp #kpop #yeonjun #txt #amapiano #xyzbca	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7335101585158098181?lang=en
5	big smoke? 🦴 #gta #gtasanandreas #music #gameplay #amapiano	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7332890440380927237?lang=en
6	blank	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7332875038665788678?lang=en
7	blank	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7331019633161407749?lang=en
8	blank	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7332875038665788678?lang=en
9	blank	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7329952688865676549?lang=en
10	blank	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7329937382390713606?lang=en

11	#fyp #amapiano #xyzbca	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7329923409238953221?lang=en
12	stream GTAmapiano for clear skin 🤔 #fyp #gta #amapiano	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7329906789682662662?lang=en
13	2005 amapiano over everything 😁	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7329891096396451077?lang=en
14	blank	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7329597192686046470?lang=en
15	blank	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7329581660830272774?lang=en
16	bro was flabbergasted 🤪 #fyp #imdontai #gta #amapiano	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7329566336487558406?lang=en
17	bro doesn't know what hit him 🤪 #fyp #kaicenat #gta #amapiano	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7329550674876796165?lang=en
18	bro was shocked 🤪 #fyp #imdontai #gta #amapiano	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7329535235236990214?lang=en

19	Replying to @Shop rite PepMan 🤝	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/video/7327714633773567238?lang=en
20	#fyp #xbyzca #trend #yeonjun #tomorrowxtog ether #txt #amapiano #tiktoksouthafri ca #gta	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/photo/7335490670217547014?lang=en
21	blank	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/photo/7334714972036959494?lang=en
22	GTA Amapiano before GTA 6 💀 #fyp #amapiano #gta	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/photo/7330277502440508677?lang=en
23	we got gta amapiano before gta 6 💀 #fyp #gta #amapiano #remix	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/photo/7328074775220227333?lang=en
24	GTA + Amapiano = GTAmapiano 💧 this song >>>	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/photo/7328050878076783878?lang=en
25	blank	https://www.tiktok.com/@itsjaydonlewis/photo/7329050898076783811?lang=en [deleted at the time of submission]

8. Appendix B

8.1 Declaration Page: Use of Generative AI Tools in Thesis

Student Information

Name: Eduard Bilý

Student ID: 699855

Course Name: Master Thesis CM5000

Supervisor Name: Dr. Suzanna J. Oprea

Date: 26/06/2024

Declaration:

Acknowledgment of Generative AI Tools

I acknowledge that I am aware of the existence and functionality of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, which are capable of producing content such as text, images, and other creative works autonomously.

GenAI use would include, but not limited to:

- Generated content (e.g., ChatGPT, Quillbot) limited strictly to content that is not assessed (e.g., thesis title).
- ~~Writing improvements, including grammar and spelling corrections~~ (e.g., Grammarly)
- Language translation (e.g., DeepL), without generative AI alterations/improvements.
- Research task assistance (e.g., finding survey scales, qualitative coding verification, debugging code)
- Using GenAI as a search engine tool to find academic articles or books (e.g.,

I declare that I have used generative AI tools, specifically Scite.ai, in the process of creating parts or components of my thesis. The purpose of using these tools was to aid in generating content or assisting with specific aspects of thesis work.

I declare that I have NOT used any generative AI tools and that the assignment concerned is my original work.

Signature: 

Date of Signature: 26/06/2024

Extent of AI Usage

I confirm that while I utilized generative AI tools to aid in content creation, the majority of the intellectual effort, creative input, and decision-making involved in completing the thesis were undertaken by me. I have enclosed the prompts/logging of the GenAI tool use in an appendix.

Ethical and Academic Integrity

I understand the ethical implications and academic integrity concerns related to the use of AI tools in coursework. I assure that the AI-generated content was used responsibly, and any content derived from these tools has been appropriately cited and attributed according to the guidelines provided by the instructor and the course. I have taken necessary steps to distinguish between my original work and the AI-generated contributions. Any direct quotations, paraphrased content, or other forms of AI-generated material have been properly referenced in accordance with academic conventions.

By signing this declaration, I affirm that this declaration is accurate and truthful. I take full responsibility for the integrity of my assignment and am prepared to discuss and explain the role of generative AI tools in my creative process if required by the instructor or the Examination Board. I further affirm that I have used generative AI tools in accordance with ethical standards and academic integrity expectations.

Signature: 

Date of Signature: 26/06/2024