From Printed Newspapers to Tiktok: an Analysis of Content and Preferences of University Students in Peru

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Abstract. During the Covid-19 pandemic, TikTok became famous as an entertainment platform at the beginning of 2020. Such has been its success that it has been the subject of international investigations to decipher its algorithm and functionality. However, research has been scarce in Peru, particularly in the area that links Massive Media with a digital audiovisual trend platform. This article aims to show how the development of 4 newspapers in Peru that have ventured into TikTok has been, analysing the substance and form of the content, as well as the opinion of university students regarding it. To achieve this objective, an interview guide has been used to analyse the categories from the perspective of university students between 18 and 25 years old, as well as two media tracking tables that allow defining the background and form of content published in the first 15 days of August from the profiles of El Comercio, La República, Trome and Perú21. The results show how newspapers publish content related to entertainment or infotainment as a curtain to progressively introduce relevant, informative content, as well as demonstrate that university students prefer to be informed directly through the traditional channel about TikTok, the latter being an audiovisual medium. It can be inferred from this that newspapers are striving to enhance their TikTok participation to obtain more loyalty and trust from their audience on this channel.

Keywords: Mass Media, TikTok, information, infotainment.

1   Introduction

As a result of the confinement generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Internet users sought to escape social oppression through the humorous and irrational aspects of new digital platforms and technologies [1]. In particular, those short videos published on an emerging social network at the beginning of 2020: TikTok [2], [3], [4], which offers various creation tools that allow you to generate potentially attractive content for free [5]. However, its main characteristic is its personalised algorithm, which has been studied by various academics [6], [7].

In terms of context, TikTok has gained popularity, capturing a wide variety of audiences worldwide and, especially in Latin America, where it was determined that the average consumer uses the application seven times a day. The main factors of use are the ease of accessing content personalised by artificial intelligence, the interface based on musical content and the creative nature offered by the editing tools [8]. On the

other hand, in Peru, between 2021 and 2022, the number of users over 18 on TikTok reached 12.17 million, representing 55.6% of the total Internet users in the country [9]. Peru is among the top five countries using TikTok (47%). For news consumption specifically (27%) [10], which arouses the interest of the media for adapting and incorporating their informative content on this social network through an infotainment narrative [11], [12], thus providing a new approach to their image on TikTok [13],[14] without affecting the integrity of the news [15],[16].

As for the background, it is known that the social network highlights its ability to recommend personalised videos based on the user's usage and interaction time, which generates an anaesthetic effect in the user [17],[7]. Likewise, the migration of newspapers to TikTok is driven by the need to attract and retain a young audience, predominantly multi-screen users [18],[19]. That allows media outlets to extend their content to multiple channels within the platform [20],[21]. In addition, factors such as the economic tools for content production and the feedback space offered by TikTok, where the published content can interact with the audience [22],[23],[24],[25],[26], [27],[28], are relevant in this process. It is important to note that online media maintain their identity and reputation through their multiple channels on the Internet, seeking to offer socially relevant content that reflects a reality close to the viewer [29],[30],[31],[32]. On the other hand, it is known that TikTok is the fourth social, messaging, and video network, which is most used for news consumption. According to a survey by a research centre, 95% of participants say they watch videos as a means of information. Of them, 85% consume at least one short video per week, while 39% do so daily [10]. This data about the application and its consumer use motivates media outlets to adapt and retain TikTok's audience [33],[34],[35]. Although the migration of print media to TikTok is a relevant global issue, in the Peruvian context, this issue has yet to receive the attention it deserves.

Nowadays, despite international research that addresses journalistic inclusion and transmedia [4],[28],[36], the research landscape in the Peruvian context needs to be improved. Although research on this topic is scarce in our country, the percentage of Peruvian users who use TikTok for information is significant (27%). Therefore, it is pertinent to study the migration of the media, especially the press, to TikTok and analyse the audience's reception of this audiovisual content.

The general objective is to analyse the communication of 4 newspapers belonging to the Mass Media of Peru in the contents of the TikTok social network. The specific objectives are to define what content is addressed by the Mass Media of Peru on TikTok, identify the forms of content presented by the Mass Media of Peru on TikTok, and determine how university students on TikTok react to the content published by the Mass Media of Peru on said social network.

This explains why the research focuses on migrating journalistic content to TikTok in Peru, analysing recurring themes and production strategies. It uses a mixed-methods approach, including data analysis of four Peruvian newspaper profiles on TikTok and interviews with university student consumers of the platform. The results will help identify the position of the press on TikTok and how students perceive it.

2   Methodology

Based on the research objectives, it has been decided to establish a mixed methodology since it allows the integration and discussion of the results obtained by qualitative and quantitative methods to achieve meta-inferences of the object or phenomenon analysed [37]. In this particular case, we seek to demonstrate what the participation of newspapers in TikTok has been like and how it is perceived according to the opinion of university students. Under this, concerning qualitative analysis, the selected paradigm is of a qualitative interpretive type, which seeks to understand social facts from the study of the subject in question to the elements with which it interacts and interprets [38], [39], [40]. Likewise, regarding the quantitative approach, it has been decided to use the positivist paradigm since it's based on the objectivity and generalisation of the data collected [37].

On the other hand, given that this topic has been little explored, the present academic work has an experimental approach [37]. It uses a mixed methodological strategy since it allows for explaining social events from an internal perspective and through the analysis of documents [41], [42]. It is also based on objective and verifiable information. It was decided to use a case study design to understand the reason for a specific social phenomenon[43], such as the migration of mass media to a digital space, its way of communicating, and the perception it generates in users.

The qualitative interview has been chosen as the primary data collection technique, allowing users' opinions on the three study categories to be analysed: the background content, the form of the content, and the perception of university students towards including informative content on TikTok [37]. This technique facilitates exploration through everyday stories about social events, offering an approach to the beliefs and opinions of users regarding the audiovisual digitisation of information content [44]. It was applied to a convenient sample of 8 university students from various faculties, active on TikTok, and users of the physical and digital versions of at least one of the newspapers in the sample. The selection focused on Centennial students, representing the group with the highest predominant use of TikTok [28], [45]. Finally, open coding was narrowed to select and label the emerging concepts in the interviewees' responses.

Similarly, two media tracking tables based on the model of Pavel Sidorenko-Bautista, Nadia Alonso-López, and Fábio Giacomelli have been adapted in 2021 [36] for quantitative data collection. These tables allow us to analyse the content and form of the content of four Peruvian newspapers active on TikTok: Trome (trome. pe), El Comercio (elcomercio.pe), Perú21 (diarioperu.21) and La República (larepublica.pe), which makes it possible to monitor the behaviour of newspapers on their digital platforms [46]. The newspapers were selected according to their relevance in ranking the most read in Peru [47]. Although Diario Correo also appears in the ranking, it does not have an official profile on TikTok. Likewise, the selection criteria were based on the five physical newspapers with a tremendous weekly reach in their digital version, including the daily Gestión [10]. However, unlike the selected newspapers, Gestión joined TikTok in 2024 without having the verified account badge. Finally, it was decided to carry out the analysis of the media publications on TikTok in the first 15 days of August 2023, a short period to deny any pattern in the media publications or themes forced by some business interest or politician [10], [48].

Finally, the interview guide was validated and approved after making the corrections suggested by the teacher and evaluating judge, Laura Escobar Goicochea, an expert in Public Relations and Cultural Management and a teacher at the Peruvian University of Applied Sciences. Furthermore, with the validation of the media tracking tables, the instrument was validated by Doctor Fábio Giacomelli, professor and researcher at the Universidade da Beira Interior, who is also one of the authors of a similar research carried out in 2021, which served as a starting point for the preparation of the tables of the present investigation.

3   Results

3.1   Contents addressed by the Mass Media on TikTok

The Mass Media sector in Peru, especially the print press, is undergoing changes and adaptations due to media convergence with new digital platforms. A preliminary media tracking was conducted using a table to assess the substance of the content published on the official TikTok accounts of four newspapers.

Table 1. Type of content addressed by 4 Peruvian newspapers on TikTok in the first 15 days of August 2023

Diaries in TikTok	Contents	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Informative videos	Infotainment videos
El Comercio *elcomerciope*	CP	3	-	2	-	1	4	2	1	12	1
	RC	4	-	4	1	-	-	13	6	19	9
	COP	1	-	5	2	3	-	10	3	17	8
La República *larepublica.pe*	CP	1	2	3	-	-	-	5	-	8	3
	RC	4	5	8	-	-	-	8	6	17	14
	COP	1	1	2	1	-	-	7	5	12	5
Perú 21 *diarioperu21*	CP	9	-	2	-	-	-	4	3	17	-
	RC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	COP	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	-
Trome *tromepe*	CP	-	-	2	-	-	2	2	1	4	3
	RC	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	2	1	5
	COP	-	-	1	-	-	-	6	2	2	7

(CP) TikTok's content | (RC) Reply to comments on TikTok or other social networks | (COP) Content coming from another platform

A) Political issues | B) Health issues | C) Topics of social interest | D) Sports | E) Technology | F) Own information | G) Other topics | H) Compilation of various topics

Tab. 1. Sidorenko et al. (2021)

The results demonstrate that most published content belongs to the "G" category (other topics). In this category, informative and infotainment content was linked to Show biz

and trends, categorised as fast content [2],[36]. This associates TikTok as an escape space where users solely seek content that allows them to relax from their daily routines [3]. Trome and La República are the media outlets that have extensively covered these topics. However, there is also content related to daily insecurity, which demonstrates the presence of socially relevant content, resembling its development in the physical format of the newspaper [26].

Following this, we find the "H" category (compilation of various topics) and the "C" category (topics of social interest), in which all four newspapers participated by producing content focused on animal abuse and teenage pregnancy, among others, which had high levels of views and interaction, thus motivating the audience to take on the role of prosumer from a virtual space [5], [22]. This, in turn, allows for a closer approximation to reality for the user than other informational topics [31], [32].

On the other hand, only three out of the four newspapers publish content related to national and international politics. Perú21 contributed most of the videos (11 out of 20) on this theme. This finding provides a closer perspective on the focus that Perú21 gives to its TikTok account. However, in contrast, Trome was the only newspaper that did not incorporate political content into its TikTok profile.

Finally, while there is a majority of informational content from El Comercio and Peru21, situations such as those of La República and Trome suggest that infotainment is beginning to gain relevance in the editorial decisions of these media outlets, with infotainment content being predominant on Trome's TikTok profile.

3.2   The form of content published by Mass Media on TikTok

About what has been previously discussed, this section addresses how the presentation of these contents has varied, namely, the type of content published and the tools employed to create a compelling narrative in short news videos.

Table 2. Tools used by 4 Peruvian newspapers to create their content on TikTok in the first 15 days of August 2023

Diaries in TikTok	Types of videos	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
El Comercio	Informative videos	-	7	6	-	12	9	14
elcomerciope	Infotainment videos	-	2	4	-	1	2	8
La República	Informative videos	-	8	2	-	15	1	11
larepublica.pe	Infotainment videos	-	4	5	-	10	-	3
Perú 21	Informative videos	-	5	-	-	4	11	-
diarioperu21	Infotainment videos	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Trome	Informative videos	-	1	-	4	-	-	2
tromepe	Infotainment videos	-	1	-	-	7	3	6

1) Use choreography | 2) Use texts as primary support | 3) Use popular and comic sounds | 4) Use lip sync | 5) Use voice-over as the main narrative | 6) Use a person as a direct speaker | 7) Use dynamic and rhythmic editing

Tab. 2. Own Preparation

First, according to Table 1, Peruvian newspapers tend to prefer content related to Replicating Comments on TikTok or content from other social networks (RC) [20]. This is due to the multi-screen effect, where media outlets reuse material published on their Instagram accounts or websites. Additionally, some have live channels on their websites, which are utilised and republished in a summarised manner on TikTok. This, in turn, contributes to enriching the digital ecosystem of the respective media outlet [21],[24].

Regarding the tools used, Table 2 shows that, although there might be more than two tools used in a publication, some are more frequent than others, and some are hardly used. Newspapers have discarded the use of choreography in producing informative and infotainment videos. At the same time, lip synchronisation on TikTok has also been used very little, with Trome being the only one using it for educational and 2D animated content. On the other hand, the most used tool, especially by El Comercio and La República, is voice-over as the main narrative when presenting news, followed by dynamic and rhythmic editing through the multiple editing, assembly, and sound tools offered by TikTok. This format demonstrates that media outlets opt for immediacy and dynamism in the production of their content, as they seek to work the informative material in such a way that it is easily understandable for the user [4], serving as specific support for those contents that do not require extensive development of the news [17].

Finally, Perú21 is the newspaper that most extensively employs direct exposition to communicate news, evidenced in 11 of its 20 videos. These videos highlight the continued use of an expositor as the central axis in narrating relevant, informative news, which is crucial in transmitting news in traditional media, such as television newscasts [36].

3.3   Opinion of university students regarding the inclusion of informative content on TikTok

In the last two years, Peru's citizens with an active profile on TikTok reached 12 million users. Of this total, 38% belong to the "Centennials" generation, the most participative generational group on the platform. This shows that young people aged 13 to 29 are the main protagonists of TikTok, being the focus of attention for large companies and media outlets seeking to integrate into digital platforms.

University Students' Opinion: The substance of the content.

Regarding the types of content consumed on TikTok, university students consider that the main focus of the social network is oriented towards entertainment or infotainment since they indicate that these are the main categories of content they consume on TikTok. However, they also point out that they occasionally consume informative content. This data was evidenced by students who mention the types of content they consume, such as recipe books, tourism, etc., which allows them to distract themselves in their daily lives [3].

When university students watch the news media, El Comercio and La República are the top viewed, followed by El Trome. Some interviewees recall

associating these newspapers with their parents, who used to buy them in physical format, providing them with their first experience with the media.

Regarding the perception of truthfulness in informational content, university students consider the content to be partially truthful. First, they associate truthfulness with the trajectory and social commitment of the media since their inception in print [32]. This positions El Comercio and La República as reliable sources. Second, they support truthfulness by seeking additional information, especially in relevant news.

University Students' Opinion: The form of the content.

Regarding understanding informative videos on TikTok, university students indicate that short videos make it easier to comprehend news by presenting them simply and quickly. They associate the information as concise and direct, and some mention that the videos get "straight to the point." This meets the generation's expectations, which seeks immediacy and dynamism in daily content.

Regarding the TikTok production tools used by the print media, university students mention a triangulation between images or videos, dynamic editing, and voice-over with text support. They consider the support between these tools crucial, as each reinforces the other. Additionally, they highlight fast-paced videos and attractive titles that pique the user's curiosity [19], [36].

Regarding the creation of new communication by newspapers, university students believe that the content they publish on TikTok allows them to communicate more concisely and quickly. They emphasise the need for old media to adapt to new trends to meet the demands of contemporary audiences, who seek fluid and informative communication in short periods [15]. They consider that nowadays, media outlets must adapt to trends to be appealing.

Regarding the perception of the presentation of informational content on TikTok, university students perceive the informational content on TikTok as fast and concise, associating them with "straight to the point," avoiding secondary details, and feeling that they are made especially for them [4].

Opinion of university students regarding the inclusion of informative content on TikTok: Inclusion and reliability of content

Regarding university students' opinions on the inclusion of informational content on TikTok by mass media, they mention feeling calm and satisfied with the migration of these media to a social network with massive reach [18], [19], as they consider they adapt to create a narrative scheme that enriches the dissemination of stories in a short video format [33], [34], [35]. Some mention that they do not watch the news on television, and including TikTok allows them to stay informed.

When it comes to whether university students believe newspapers on TikTok lean more towards info entertainment, the majority do, arguing that they do so to fulfil their role of informing [11], [12], but also entertaining on a social network with this characteristic, thus creating an anaesthetic effect that fosters user loyalty to the newspaper's profile [3], [13], [14]. However, a counterargument indicates that

newspapers use TikTok as an additional channel within the social media ecosystem, leveraging the tools and narrative it offers to engage with the audience.

Finally, Regarding the perception of reliability on TikTok compared to traditional newspapers, university students consider the news published on this platform to be partially reliable. They prefer to verify this content in print or through various digital channels such as websites [17]. They also highlight the importance of not relying solely on information from a single source and prefer to contrast it with other sources. They assess reliability based on the relevance of the news, choosing only to get informed on TikTok when the news is of lesser social importance [4], [15].

4   **Conclusions**

The research allows for a comprehensive analysis of content migration from four Peruvian newspapers to TikTok, which is focused on three key aspects: the background of the videos, the form of the content, and the perception of university students about the inclusion of content. Informative on this platform. These categories explore recurring themes in the content and how the media adapts to audiovisual communication on TikTok. Furthermore, by considering the opinions of university students, the position of the target audience is revealed, which allows feedback to the newspaper profiles.

Concerning the content of the four newspapers analysed during the first 15 days of August, informative videos on social issues are more significant. This shows that El Comercio (30%), La República (37%), and Trome (68%) choose to publish informative videos with entertaining nuances to make them more attractive. Sometimes, they focus entirely on entertainment, such as celebrity gossip and trends. This reflects the use of TikTok as an application where users prioritise entertainment, but about which the user can also inform themselves since the students reveal that they not only follow trends but also tutorials or video blogs that allow them to learn more about an issue. El Comercio and La República particularly evidence these types of videos. However, some media publish merely informative videos to maintain their identity and social character as a newspaper, as is the case of Perú21, mainly focused on political issues.

Regarding the form of the content, these are presented following the TikTok narrative, using tools from this platform for the benefit of more effective communication with TikTok users. La República and El Comercio prioritise the use of voice-over as the main narrative of the news (49% and 20%, respectively), as well as the use of dynamic and rhythmic editing in the development of their content (23% and 33% respectively). Besides the visual factor, these tools allow an attractive triangulation that generates consumer interest in university students. Likewise, these tools enable informative videos on TikTok to be categorised as "fast" and "concise", which go "straight to the point", which satisfies the consumer's information needs through a new way of communicating. However, in particular, in situations in which the news requires rigorous treatment, the presence of a direct presenter who explains a news item in detail is used, as is the case of Perú 21 (55%).

Finally, researchers have determined that university students react positively to the content newspapers publish on TikTok. Those interviewed feel calm, believing

the media are adapting to continue informing and maintaining user trust. However, there is still scepticism regarding the reliability of the news published on this social network since it is considered that the platform needs to allow relevant news to be explored in depth. For this reason, some students use traditional formats, such as newspapers or television and simultaneously TikTok, to corroborate the information received in one media to another quickly. However, when it comes to socially relevant news, university students consider it appropriate to use TikTok to stay constantly informed. Finally, there are divided opinions on whether newspapers use TikTok to promote infotainment. Some believe this to be true, but others associate it as a channel within a digital media ecosystem for each newspaper to feed its information simultaneously.

In short, newspapers are altering the user experience on TikTok, moving it from a purely entertainment platform to one with a continuous integration of informative content. Consequently, they choose to publish infotainment content, using lures for users to consume other purely informative viUsers users still prefer to verify relevant information through traditional newspaper channels. This research is helpful since it carries out a comprehensive analysis of migration to TikTok. Likewise, it is focused on the platform's critical aspects, the content's substance and form content, and the relevance of the objective audience based on university students. In the same way, it allows an approach to the relationship between informative content in this platform and its audience in the Peruvian context.

It's suggested to conduct future research on news development news in traditional and digital newspapers to analyse the loyalty factors of users segmented by generational types on each platform. In addition, it is necessary to examine the role of TikTok in the mass media to determine if it serves as an additional channel or if it has a defined focus on the part of digital content creators in Peruvian newspapers. Finally, the limitations of this study include the failed attempts to interview profile managers on TikTok and the need for more research on the topic in the Peruvian context, for which we had to resort to purely statistical data at the national level and gain insight into Internationaltional on the use of TikTok to achieve conducive content for this rese.

Acknowledgements

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