

Chapter 10

TikTok Content Categories and User Engagement Behavior: Alisha Lehmann – Celebrity Athlete and Influencer

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of TikTok content categories on user engagement behavior on the official TikTok account of Alisha Lehmann. Analyzing 91 videos via multiple regression analysis, the research uncovers practical insights for content creators and marketers, as well as theoretical findings for academics. Notably, Alisha Lehmann's active professional life, showcasing her athletic prowess, emerged as the most influential category, driving engagement across views, likes, comments, saves, and shares. Videos emphasising her personal life through aesthetics also impacted video shares and saves to a certain degree. Additionally, non-active or non-sport professional life content garnered attention, especially in likes and comments. In contrast, TikTok games and promotional content had limited impact, emphasizing the importance of a balanced content strategy that integrates personal and professional aspects for athlete influencers. These findings provide guidance for optimizing online presence, aligning content with audience interests, and fostering brand loyalty on TikTok.

INTRODUCTION

The rise of influencer marketing has transformed the landscape of digital marketing and social media engagement, with platforms like TikTok playing a pivotal role in reshaping how individuals interact with brands and public figures (Haenlein et al., 2020; Brooks et al., 2021). This chapter explores the intricate relationship between content categories on TikTok and user engagement behaviors (Abidin, 2020), specifically on the official TikTok account of Alisha Lehmann, a renowned celebrity athlete and

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influencer. In an age where influencers and brands wield great power on social media, understanding how the different types of content affect the way users behave upon consuming such content becomes crucial (Newman et al., 2013; Dolan et al., 2015; Doyle et al., 2020).

As the boundaries between celebrity and influencer blur, empirical research is essential to comprehend how content categories influence user behavior on TikTok (Zuo & Wang, 2019; Su et al., 2020; Barta et al., 2023). This study is motivated by the need to provide empirical evidence and insights into the specific content categories that drive user engagement on the platform, enabling a more informed and strategic approach to influencer marketing. Thus, the research objectives of the chapter include (1) investigating the influence of individual content categories on Alisha Lehmann's official TikTok account and (2) identifying which content categories exhibit the strongest impact on user engagement and to what extent, allowing for more effective content strategy recommendations.

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, multiple regression analysis is chosen to examine the causal relationships between TikTok content categories and user engagement behaviors, because it enables the investigation of the combined effect of multiple independent variables, i.e., content categories, on dependent variables, i.e., user engagement behaviors (Vale & Fernandes, 2018; Saunders et al., 2023). This statistical approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the causal relationships between content categories and user engagement, ensuring a more robust and accurate analysis of Alisha Lehmann's TikTok account dynamics. Based upon the collected data and its respective analysis, the chapter discusses theoretical findings and practical implications that enable content creators and marketers to craft adequate influencer marketing strategies in the context of an athlete.

BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

Content and User Behavior

Influencer marketing leverages the social media influence of individuals with large and engaged followings to promote their own or a collaborating brand's products or services by reaching a targeted audience (Haenlein et al., 2020; Leban & Voyer, 2020). Influencers can harness their credibility and social media reach to effectively drive brand awareness, engagement, and sales of products or services they promote directly or indirectly (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). New facets added by social media have also enhanced the way people are entertained, inform themselves, or escape day-to-day routines, which has enabled influencers and brands alike to choose from a wider spectrum of marketing and communication channels to achieve respective business objectives (Kietzmann et al., 2011; Batra & Keller, 2016; Appel et al., 2020).

Social media has further transformed the way viewers consume and experience spectator sports (Sanderson, 2011). Fans can engage with their favorite athletes and teams through various social media channels to feel close to them before, during, and after a main event, e.g., a game of basketball or a football match (Sutera, 2013). Such user engagement can be encouraged through different kinds of media contents, which may be informative, affective, social, or aesthetic in nature (Chen et al., 2021; Gómez-Suárez & Veloso, 2020). These characteristics form the foundation of a brand experience, which can foster fan satisfaction and loyalty (Schmitt, 1999; Brakus et al., 2009; Pine & Gilmore, 2020). Consequently, social media experiences are characterized by what is published on a given channel through content that may follow a conscious or unconscious strategic categorization by an athlete or brand (Hu et al., 2014; Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2016). At the same time, the various types of content that support

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