

WOMEN COMMUNICATORS IN TIKTOK. KEYS FROM THE TRACEABILITY OF THE INFORMATION WITH A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The main studies on social media agree that the time spent on them is increasing year on year compared to the time spent on traditional media (Ortega, Padilla & Vaquerizo, 2021; Padilla & Rodríguez, 2022; Rodríguez Hernández, 2022a). This change refers to audiences of many age strata, not just the alpha, centennial and millennial generations (El Habchi & Padilla, 2020; Ortega & Rodríguez, 2021; Padilla Castillo, 2023). On the other hand, the change is seen as negative, as if the information on networks were of poorer quality, more biased and with more hoaxes and fake news (Bernárdez, López & Padilla, 2021; Rodríguez Hernández, 2021; Requeijo, Padilla & Díaz, 2022; Rodríguez Hernández, 2022b). However, this proposal opts for an objective exploration, without previous negative or positive hypotheses, to study the possible paradigm shift and the characteristics and circumstances of this information on networks with a gender perspective. Specifically, it focuses on an analysis of TikTok and the 1-minute news programmes in Spanish, which have become one of the most successful formats on the Chinese social network. In them, women communicators offer short, 60-second news programmes, summarising current affairs for their audience. Through the results of the study, this paper argues the importance of gender's perspective is even more important to keep in mind when the possible change of paradigm of audiences in TikTok and other social media.

TikTok is a social networking platform that focuses mainly on the creation and sharing of short videos (1, 3 or 5 minutes). Although TikTok users include people from different professions and fields, communication professionals still seem reluctant to appear on this social network. The same is true for many companies and official institutions, which do not want to open an account or which open an account, often receiving a lot of criticism from the audience, which wrongly associates TikTok with a lack of seriousness (Ortega & Rodríguez, 2021; Rodríguez Hernández, 2022c; Padilla Castillo, 2023). However, we believe that this social network should be studied as the mass communication phenomenon that it is; and despite its errors or possible ethical problems, its audience and engagement data make such an analysis necessary. Even more so when the latest global reports continue to point to the growth of young and adult users (alpha, millennial and centennial generations), and how they choose the application over traditional media to get information on current affairs in general or on specific topics. As many academics and practitioners say, TikTok is not a social network of people dancing.

This work is part of a coordinated project between Spain, Portugal and the United Kingdom, whose main objective is to study the traceability of information in order to combat disinformation among citizens. European bodies have set out different initiatives to combat disinformation and promote free access to information. However, the recommendations do not always become obligations, they are very varied and sometimes local, and not enough

improvements have been made to improve journalistic dynamics and citizens' knowledge of public information. At the same time, social networks and the appearance of news on media accounts, together with premium subscriptions to digital newspapers, have made the situation more complex. In these circumstances, it is understandable that the 1-minute news programmes on TikTok are multiplying in versions and number of viewers, as they stand as a fast, convenient alternative, adapted to each person's schedule and habits.

To understand the possible change of paradigm and this new infotainment format, a mixed methodology is used: quantitative exploration of accounts and audiences in TikTok of the most successful news programmes in Spanish with women communicators; qualitative analysis of styles, video formats, use of infographics and emojis, presenters' styles and topics covered with a gender perspective. The field study covers the 30 female tiktokers that summarise, in Spanish, the daily news in 1-minute news programmes, with the quantitative and qualitative items described above.

The results show higher audiences than Kantar Media and EGM data for Spanish news programmes; high audience engagement in terms of interactions and comments; and a surprising coincidence of topics between 1-minute news programmes and, at the same time, between TikTok news programmes and traditional media news programmes. Traditional media news anchors often have specific and traditionally established roles, reporting on current events, politics, entertainment, sports and other relevant topics. These professionals are trained in telegenic and possess specific skills in journalism, effective communication and on-camera verbal and non-verbal communication.

However, the female communicators of these new TikTok news programmes do not have the same training and their audience, in some cases, is in the millions. Among the keys to their success, we can find several possibilities: they offer informative and relevant content for their community; they are concise and direct, with short and impactful messages; they visually support their words with filters and visually striking backgrounds; they develop more varied and natural body languages, with different gestures and postures compared to traditional news programmes; they emphasise certain news by playing with their tone of voice; they bring their personality and opinion to the news narrative; they manage to create a sense of closeness or familiarity with the user; they employ humour and make the news seem even enjoyable.

This work has been supported by the Madrid Government (Comunidad de Madrid-Spain) under the Multiannual Agreement with Universidad Complutense de Madrid in the line Research Incentive for Young PhDs, in the context of the V PRICIT (Regional Programme of Research and Technological Innovation). Call PR/27/21. Title: "Traceability, Transparency and Access to Information: Study and Analysis of the dynamics and trends in the area". Reference: PR27/21-017. Duration: September 2022 - December 2024. Funding of 43,744.22 euros.

KEYWORDS: TikTok, News programmes, Information, Traceability, Female communicators.

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