



TikTok content strategies of the main universities in Spain

Estrategias de contenido de las principales universidades españolas en
TikTok

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Abstract

Universities are developing content strategies on social media platforms such as TikTok in an attempt to establish a stronger connection with their target audiences (especially younger generations), differentiate their brand, and build their reputation. This article examines the use of TikTok by universities in Spain, and the main content themes, formats and narratives found in their communication strategies. The study analysed 227 TikTok posts from the profiles of four Spanish universities during the second semester of the 2022/2023 academic year. The results show a predominance of entertainment content based on platform-specific codes and trends, such as memes, student interviews and daily routines (trends, shitposting). The study also found a predominance of short-duration videos, and content featuring hosts/experts.

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Resumen

Las universidades están desarrollando estrategias de contenido en redes sociales como TikTok para lograr una mayor conexión con sus públicos objetivos (especialmente, las nuevas generaciones), conseguir diferenciación y construir reputación. Por ello, se plantea analizar la relevancia que tiene TikTok entre las principales universidades españolas, así como clasificar las tipologías de contenido predominantes en el contenido que producen y caracterizar los formatos y narrativas más destacados en sus estrategias de comunicación. Para ello, se han analizado 227 publicaciones de TikTok en perfiles de cuatro universidades españolas pertenecientes al segundo semestre del curso 2022/2023. El análisis muestra una priorización por los contenidos de entretenimiento que apelan a códigos y tendencias propios de la plataforma, como memes, entrevistas a estudiantes o su día a día mediante trends y shitposting. También destaca la presencia mayoritaria de conductores/expertos en las piezas analizadas, así como el predominio de vídeos de corta duración.

Palabras clave: marketing universitario, estrategia de contenido, narrativas, tipologías de contenido, formatos, TikTok

1. INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions have transcended their traditional role as mere entities for creating and spreading knowledge, evolving into brands competing for a place in the global market (Rodríguez and Cerdá, 2023). Organizational changes and educational model shifts, the new offer of university degrees, the unstable demand for undergraduate studies, along with increased competition from the private sector and growing reputational rivalry driven by specialised rankings, make it essential for universities to prioritise institutional communication to fulfil their mission (Capriotti et al., 2023). Universities operate in dynamic and challenging environments, so strategic management and branding have become crucial (Jevons, 2006; Ferreiro, 2018). University leaders and those associated with higher education institutions must understand that building a brand allows for the creation of an identity, a unique DNA that expresses the institution's reason for being, distinguishing it from other universities that offer the same services and/or products (Del Río et al., 2017).

The need for brand building by academic institutions helps social media (Moreno and Blanco, 2022; Capriotti et al., 2024a; Capriotti et al., 2024b), especially TikTok, to emerge as platforms that allow for greater connection with their target audiences, particularly with students and potential students from the new generations of content consumers (Alarcón and Barrera, 2017).

To understand the strategies implemented by the leading Spanish universities on TikTok, this research sets out three objectives:

1. Identify how relevant the TikTok network is among the major Spanish universities.
2. Catalogue the main types of content that universities address when creating content on TikTok.
3. Define the main features of the formats and narratives used in these new communication strategies.

In the following section, a theoretical framework appears through a review of key reference works on issues related to brand building in the university context, the consumption habits of new generations, and the rise of formats and narratives adapted to communication on social media. The sample and the units and variables of analysis for the study are detailed, followed by the presentation of the results. The paper concludes with a discussion and conclusions section, followed by a compilation of the bibliographic references cited in the text.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Branding and Marketing in university institutions

Applying marketing strategies in universities helps make them more attractive as investment options for businesses and government entities. University leaders must incorporate strategic plans that allow for the positioning and visibility of the university brand through innovative actions (Peralta and Linares, 2013). By improving the institution's academic image, a more positive relationship with its environment is fostered, which influences the employment opportunities of its graduates, as they are associated with a high-reputation institution. Despite marketing being established as an essential tool for universities to reach and strengthen their position in the educational market, its application in university management models remains limited, and few strategies have been implemented to generate value (Gómez et al., 2020). The use of marketing techniques in universities, particularly in public ones, is controversial because the perceived value of education is distinct from that of traditional products.

Marketing and universities should not be seen as opposing elements but as a necessary synthesis. A multilateral approach to brand building is suggested, which allows for value co-creation with the participation of multiple stakeholders and the need to increase the engagement and performance of internal university members in Branding strategies (Ferreiro, 2018). In the face of these challenges, institutional communication and communication conducted in the digital environment emerge as an essential tool for managing relationships with various audiences.

2.2. Young audiences - Generation Z and Generation Alpha

One of the priority interest groups for communication developed by universities is the young audience. This audience, as part of the university community or as future students, can be classified into Generation Z (born between 1994 and 2010) and Generation Alpha (born between 2010 and 2024) (Ramírez-García et al., 2022). These generations are digital natives, influenced by constant interaction with technology and digital communication from an early age, which shapes new ways of connecting, learning, and understanding the world around them. This is why, in a digital context, the cultural and cognitive evolution of Generation Z and Generation Alpha emerges as a highly relevant phenomenon (Doardi, 2021; Olvera, 2022). These generations are used to communicating, interacting, generating, and constantly sharing content while their lives revolve around mobile devices and social media (Álvarez et al., 2019).

In today's digital culture, the rise of TikTok stands out. This platform, which presents itself as "the leading destination for short videos recorded on mobile devices" (TikTok, 2021), aims to facilitate the creation and viewing of videos, usually for entertainment, with a maximum duration of 60 minutes. Users typically consume content on this social network seeking escapism and an opportunity for social interaction, although they also prioritize the platform for staying informed about current events (Estéfano and Iranzo-Cabrera, 2024). As for video creation, the motivation comes from the desire to meet self-expression needs (Omar and Dequan, 2020).

In 2021, TikTok launched a new initiative focused on education and learning through the social network with the hashtag #AprendeEnTikTok. This hashtag aims to complement traditional teaching through a creative format that leverages instant feedback, playful and entertaining content, an attractive interface, and the ability of users to create authentic content (Middleton, 2022). This way, the platform positions itself as an endless source of new narratives, thanks to the vast amount of user-generated content, overcoming the limitations of dissemination without necessarily being a scientist (Vásquez González, 2021).

Therefore, research on Generation Z and Generation Alpha is crucial for establishing an effective relationship between universities and young people, the ones shaping digital culture and communication in society. This requires understanding their needs and preferences.

2.3. New formats and digital narratives

Hypermediality and digital technologies have revolutionized the production, distribution, and consumption of media content while enabling new forms of interaction between content creators and audiences (Jenkins et al., 2015). Moreover, social networks are the privileged setting for the attention economy. Besides, they generally tend to attract the user's attention. Digital transformation and the rise of social networks emerge as the main reconfiguring factors of these processes, fostering the development of a more

interactive and participatory communicative ecosystem and encouraging unprecedented global connectivity (Casero-Ripollés, 2010; Salaverría, 2010; Villafañe et al., 2020).

The new formats being experimented with are adaptations of traditional content to the digital environment, as well as disruptive proposals that move away from the classic genres of journalism: photo galleries, timelines, news alerts, newsletters, podcasts, bots, game news, or memes are some of the types supported in the new context to meet the demands of new generations, enhancing user experiences through formats that integrate video, audio, text, and interactivity (Trillo and Alberich, 2020; IAB Spain, 2023). If there is one common element in the new narratives, it would be the predominance of the audiovisual format to meet the growing demand of audiences, emphasised by the dominance of social networks (Blanco and Palomo, 2019; Zomeño and Blay, 2021). Its main distinguishing feature would be its short duration, limiting the length of videos to avoid boredom, disconnection, or fatigue from viewers, and emphasising the ability to assimilate new concepts (Micó and Masip, 2008; Gértrudix et al., 2017).

In higher education and communication with young audiences, it is essential to recognise the evolution of university communication models to adapt to the changing expectations of younger generations (Aguilera Moyano et al., 2010). To achieve this, institutions are increasingly turning to the creation of content that is organically integrated while becoming part of the ongoing conversations with their audiences. As Pulizzi (2013) suggests, content strategies should focus on creating valuable experiences through engaging, highly shareable content that is, above all, centred on helping consumers.

These findings support the need to investigate further how these new formats can be adapted to the university context and used effectively to communicate with university students. In light of these challenges, and despite the increase in research in this area in recent years, Zeler et al. (2023) argue that research on university institutional communication is still in its early stages but holds high potential growth, driven by the inclusion of the digital dimension in the field of study.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Objectives

To understand the strategies implemented by the leading Spanish universities on TikTok, this research sets out three objectives:

1. Identify how relevant the TikTok network is among the major Spanish universities.
2. Catalogue the main types of content that universities address when creating content on TikTok.
3. Define the main features of the formats and narratives used in these new communication strategies.

To achieve the proposed objectives, a study based on a mixed methodology combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches has been chosen. A content analysis of TikTok posts from the most prestigious Spanish universities has been conducted, examining both quantitative units of analysis (ranging from posting frequency to video duration) and qualitative units (such as production quality or using visual and typographic resources).

3.2. Sample

A prestigious university ranking and its various characteristics have been used to define the sample: the QS World University Rankings 2023. This ranking brings together the best universities in the world based on six indicators: academic reputation, employer reputation, student-to-faculty ratio, citations per researcher, and the ratio of international faculty and foreign students (Riesco, 2022).

According to the QS World University Rankings 2023 at the national level, we identified these 10 universities as the best:

Table 1. Best Spanish universities in QS World University Rankings 2023 (source: Riesco, 2022)

1.	Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona
2.	Universidad de Barcelona
3.	Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
4.	Universidad Complutense de Madrid
5.	Universidad Pompeu Fabra
6.	Universidad de Navarra
7.	Universidad Carlos III de Madrid
8.	Universidad Politécnica de Cataluña
9.	IE University
10.	Universidad Politécnica de Valencia

Subsequently, academic institutions that do not have official TikTok profiles or whose follower count is below 1,000 users have been excluded. After applying both criteria, four universities were selected for the study: Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV, @upv), Universitat de Barcelona (UB, @unibarcelona), Universidad de Navarra (@universidaddenavarra), and Universitat Pompeu Fabra (@upfbarcelona).

Regarding the defined time frame, the second semester of the 2022/2023 academic year was used as a reference, analysing the posts from the institutions published between January 7 and May 31, 2023. This period was selected for the study because, in the previous months, the strengthening of the content strategy of some educational institutions, such as UPV, had been identified. The resulting sample consists of 227

videos, of which 140 belong to UPV, 41 to UB, 28 to UNAV, and 18 to UPF. The analysis took place in August and September of 2024.

Table 2. Presence on TikTok of the best Spanish universities (source: elaborated by the author)

		TikTok profile	Followers	
			n	>1000
1.	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona	No	-	-
2.	Universitat de Barcelona	Yes	3157	Sí
3.	Universidad Autónoma de Madrid	No	-	-
4.	Universidad Complutense de Madrid	Yes	473	No
5.	Universitat Pompeu Fabra	Yes	1421	Sí
6.	Universidad de Navarra	Yes	2724	Sí
7.	Universidad Carlos III de Madrid	No	-	-
8.	Universidad de Politècnica de Catalunya	No	-	-
9.	IE University	No	-	-
10.	Universidad Politècnica de València	Yes	15.1 K	Sí

3.3. Instruments of analysis

To address the first objective, "Identify the level of relevance that the TikTok platform has among the leading Spanish universities," quantitative units of analysis will be used to assess the volume of posts from the selected profiles and the main interaction variables with TikTok users.

- Number of publications.
- Frequency of publication.
- Followers.
- Likes.
- Comments.

Regarding the second objective, "Catalog the main types of content addressed by universities when creating content on TikTok," the proposal by Zomeño and Blay-Arráez (2021) has been used as a reference. This proposal identifies the most commonly used formats and types of content by media for distribution on social networks. Some categories suggested in this content typology have been applied in this

study, such as Interviews and News (originally "Social Video-news" in the referenced work).

Additionally, the contributions of Capriotti et al. (2023) and Blanco-Sánchez and Moreno-Albarracín, B. (2023) have been considered to identify the usage value and discursive purpose of the content types published by universities on social media. For our research, we have selected those based on teaching, research, and organisational aspects.

Finally, regarding the formal analysis of the sample pieces to address the third objective, "Define the main characteristics of the formats and narratives used in these new communication strategies," the presence of the elements listed in Table 3 has been studied. These elements are established in the research on the outreach posts on TikTok by leading international universities, conducted by Cuesta-Martínez and Zomeño Jiménez (2023).

Table 3. Variables used for formal content analysis (source: Cuesta-Martínez and Zomeño Jiménez, 2023)

Variables	
Duration	
Use of Presenters/Experts	
Level of achievement	
Visual elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Images - Resource Videos - Emoticons
Typographic elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subtitles - Overprints

4. RESULTS

4.1 Publication frequency and key metrics

First, and addressing the first of the proposed objectives, we observe that only 5 of the 10 universities initially selected have a TikTok profile (see Table 2). Furthermore, it is worth noting that several academic institutions with an official account on the platform have a limited community of followers at the time of the study (such as the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, with only 473 followers).

As shown in Table 4, the Universitat Politècnica de València (@upv) has the highest number of posts published during the analyzed period, reaching 140 videos with an almost daily publication frequency (1 video every 1.02 days). The profile has 15,300 followers and attained 276,712 interactions, including likes and comments. The second educational institution with the highest volume of videos published on TikTok is the Universitat de Barcelona (@unibarcelona), with 41 posts (1 video every 3.52 days). Its official account is followed by 3,157 users and has reached 78,550 interactions.

Third, the Universidad de Navarra (@universidaddenavarra) published 28 videos during the analysed period (1 every 5.14 days). It had 2,724 followers and a total of 8,819 interactions. Finally, the institution with the fewest TikToks published is the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (@upfbarcelona), with 18 pieces (1 every 8 days). Furthermore, the number of followers (1,421) and total interactions (4,793) is the lowest among the four institutions analysed (see Table 4).

Table 4. Key metrics of the universities studied (source: elaborated by the author)

Analysis variables	Universities			
	Universitat Politècnica de València	Universitat de Barcelona	Universidad de Navarra	Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Posted videos	140	41	28	18
Frequency of publication	1,02	3,52	5,14	8,00
Followers	15.300	3.157	2.724	1.421
Likes	275.411	66.958	8.958	4.663
Comments	1.301	11.592	101	130

Figure 1. Videos posted
(source: elaborated by the author)

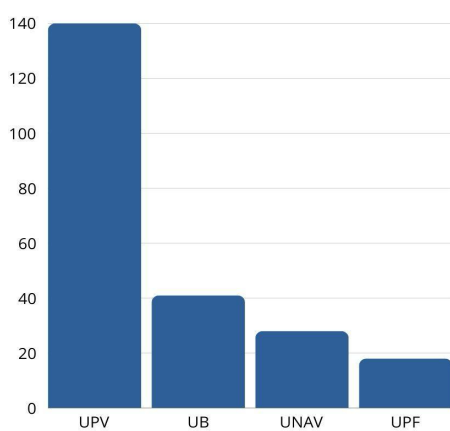


Figure 2. Number of follower
(source: elaborated by the author)

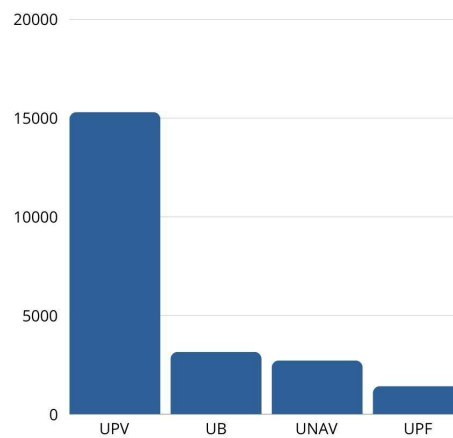


Figure 3. Average Likes
(source: elaborated by the author)

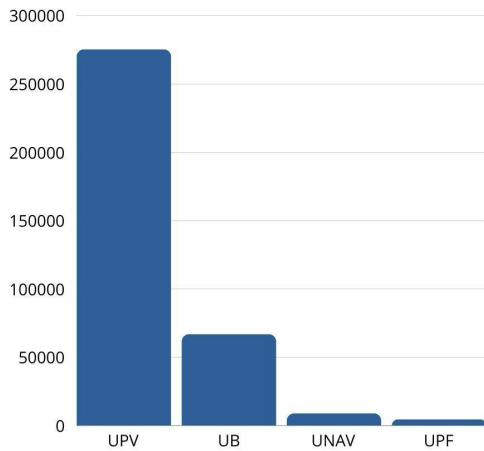
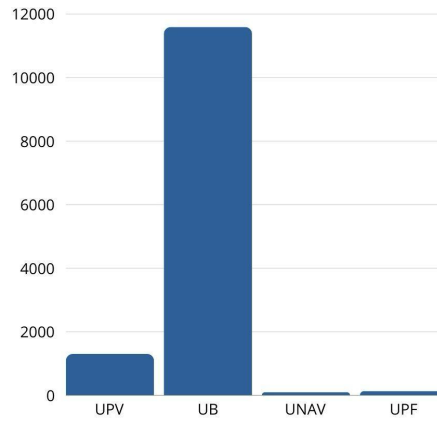


Figure 4. Average comments
(source: elaborated by the author)



4.2 Major types of content

Regarding the content types used to implement the communication strategies of the universities analysed it is significant to highlight a clear trend towards narratives channelled through formats typical of the TikTok platform. The following content types are identified in this research:

Table 5. Types of content analysed (source: elaborated by the author)

Type of content	Description	Percentage
Memes	Content that humorously addresses all audiovisual trends and cultural traits, to entertain students and generate connection with the community.	n=63, 27,8 %
Student interviews	Content created by and for students in which a questionnaire structure is created on any subject that may or may not be related to the university environment. Its purpose is to entertain and sometimes inform.	n=40, 17,6 %
University and campus	Content focused on promoting and publicising the university and all its facilities.	n=39, 17,2 %
Dissemination	Content related to informing and communicating knowledge produced by the university to keep the curiosity of the university community awake.	n=23, 10,1 %

Activities and services	Content created to promote and advertise the activities conducted at the university.	n=23, 10,1 %
Academic degrees	Content promoting academic degrees and training offered by the university.	n=16, 7,1 %
Day to day life of the students	This content shows the experience of students at the university and provides advice for future students. Its purpose is to truthfully inform and promote the university to future clients, making the students protagonists.	n=11, 4,8 %
Competitions	Content focused on generating a call to action for students, promoting a simple action in exchange for a prize related to the university or external.	n=7, 3,1 %
News	Content to inform about events and facts occurring inside and outside the university to keep the university community informed about everything happening around them.	n=5, 2,2 %

Figure 5. Types in UPV
(source: elaborated by the author)

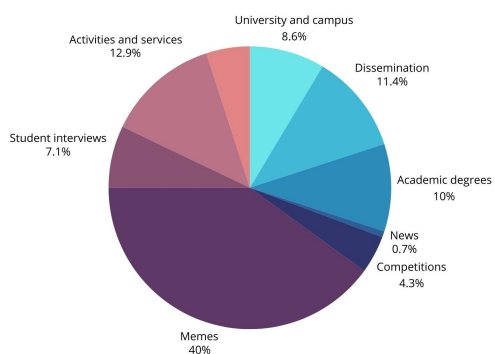


Figure 6. Types in U
(source: elaborated by the author)

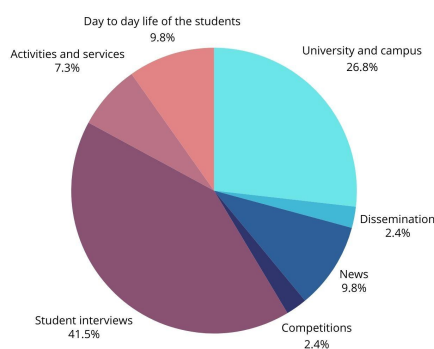


Figure 7. Types in UNAV
(source: elaborated by the author)

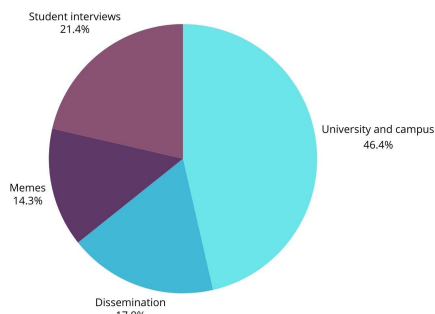
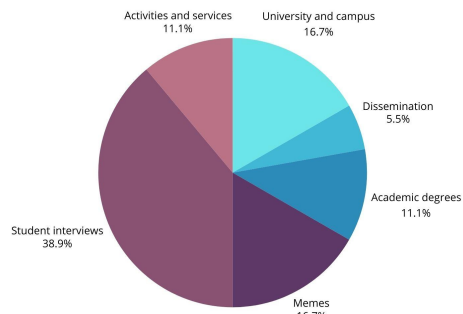


Figure 8. Types in UP
(source: elaborated by the author)



The meme is the most common content type among the studied sample (n=63, 27.8% of the analysed content) (see Table 5), with particular prominence at the Universitat Politècnica de València (n=56, 40.0%) (see Figure 1). In the other institutions, its presence is lower, not exceeding 20% of their posts. Notably, the Universitat de Barcelona does not publish any pieces of this type.

The type of content depends on the elements, codes, and humorous language about the university, its students, and what happens in the degree programs, easily connecting with its audience. Its purpose is to entertain, and its narrative aligns seamlessly with the language typical of the TikTok platform, making it relatable for users. Its intention is twofold: on the one hand, to showcase and express the identity of the students; on the other hand, to engage and integrate the university community.

Figure 9. Meme published by the Universitat Politècnica de València (source: Universitat Politècnica de Valencia, 2023)



The second most commonly used content type by the analysed universities (n=40, 17.6% of the analysed content) (Table 5) is student interviews, with notable emphasis in the cases of Universitat Pompeu Fabra (n=7, 38.9%) (Figure 4) and Universitat de Barcelona (n=17, 41.5%), where it accounts for more than a third of their posts (Figure 2).

The topics covered in the interviews vary between university-related topics, degree studies, personal matters, and issues linked to commemorative dates and special occasions. Within the latter subcategory, the Valentine's Day tribute piece from the Universitat de Barcelona stands out. In this piece, students were interviewed about this festivity. This content has the highest interaction according to the analysed material, receiving 11,300 likes and 63 comments.

Additionally, "University and campus" is a regular content type among the analysed universities (n=39, 17.2% of the analysed content), particularly by the Universidad de Navarra (n=13, 46.4%) (see Figure 3) and the Universitat de Barcelona (n=11, 26.8%) (see Figure 2). Its purpose is to promote the educational and supplementary facilities offered by the various university campuses, targeting platform users who may potentially become students in the future.

Within this content type, certain pieces encourage attendance at open house events or invite users to explore the exhibition spaces managed by educational institutions. It is also worth noting the adoption of TikTok tendencies, or "trends," to enhance the aesthetic or idyllic character associated with university spaces, using language that resonates closely with the Generation Z audience.

As seen in Table 5, dissemination emerges as a regular content type, clearly aiming to share qualitative content. This content focuses on the transfer of results and scientific advances achieved in the research conducted at the universities. The Universidad de Navarra is the most committed to this type of content (n=5, 17.9%) (see Figure 3). Contrarily, the Universitat Pompeu Fabra stands out for not dedicating posts to dissemination.

Unlike some content types detailed previously, "Activities and Services" has merely informational value, as its pieces aim to keep the university community aware of everything happening within the university. Despite having a lower presence (n=23, 10.1%) (see Table 5), it is developed by all institutions in the sample except for the Universidad de Navarra. Educational institutions use this content type to inform students about activities such as sports services, forums, fairs, or temporary events held on campus. Some pieces, like the informational TikTok from the Universitat Politècnica de València about the upcoming Art Market, stand out for generating high user interaction, totalling 7,785 likes and 44 comments.

Informational pieces about the academic offerings provided by the analyzed institutions are one of the less common content types in the sample (n=16, 7.1%) (see Table 5), primarily because the Universitat de Barcelona and the Universidad de Navarra do not

have videos of this content type. Although this category is only practised by the Universitat Politècnica de València and the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, it is worth noting the variety of narratives used to present the content: one can find trend-following approaches (as seen in the "University and Campus" category), and "best moments" (or highlights) of studying a particular degree or interviews with faculty and students in the context of university fairs.

Content about student life, which aims to present university life attractively and provide instructions and advice to students, only appears at the UPV and UB. These pieces typically feature activities in the city where the institution is located, easy recipes, experiences in student apartments, or routines led by a student. By combining entertainment with practical information, this category targets prospective students or those in the early years of their higher education.

Like the previous category, Contests is a content type developed only by the Universitat Politècnica de València and the Universitat de Barcelona. As seen in Table 5, with a lower presence in the studied sample ($n=7$, 3.1% of the analysed content), this type of piece encourages student participation in exchange for university merchandise or other external rewards. The winning audiovisual responses made by students may, in turn, be reposted on the university's profile as original content, offering the potential for user interaction.

The News category is the least used content type by the studied universities ($n=5$, 2.2%) (Table 5), though it has a notable presence on the TikTok profile of the Universitat de Barcelona ($n=4$, 9.8%) (see Figure 2), which even has a section called "La buena noticia de la semana" ("The Good News of the Week"). In this section, two professors periodically inform the university community about a positive event that has occurred or will happen at the educational institution.

4.3. Designing formats and narratives on TikTok

4.3.1 Short formats

After analysing the content, we can observe a strong presence of short formats, with average durations ranging from 13 to 47 seconds. However, the UPV profile stands out among the other universities for its use of brief narratives, due to the large number of "Meme" posts, which typically last less than 10 seconds per post.

Among the pieces analysed, 23.8% ($n=54$) exceed one minute in length. The content types with the lengthiest average duration are "Dissemination" and "Interviews with Students." The lengthiest piece of content analysed is 2 minutes and 36 seconds, created by the Universidad de Navarra (UNAV).

4.3.2 Narratives by the expert and/or presenter

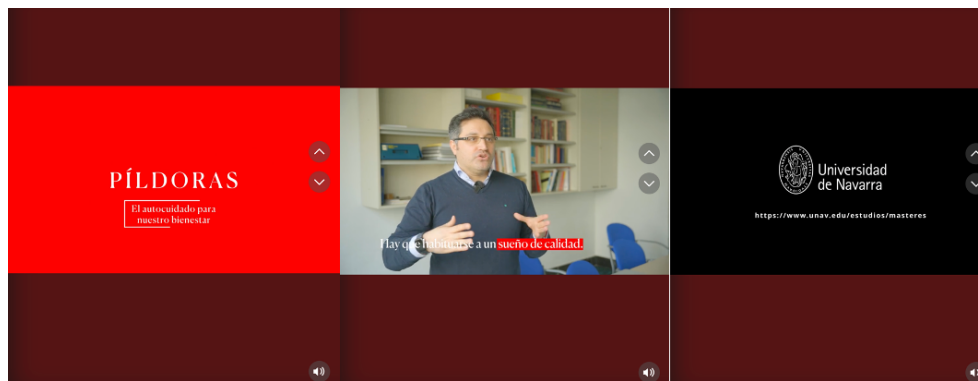
All the analysed universities use a representation led by a presenter or expert when creating their narratives. The content types in which this figure is most prominent are

"Dissemination" and "Interviews with Students," where their informative, guiding, and educational purpose is enhanced by the credibility and trust conveyed by the specialised hosts in the studied pieces.

Regarding outreach, the presenter speaks directly to the content consumer. While the presenter's style tends to be similar across all the cases analysed, the most notable differences emerge in the type of figure taking the lead. In the case of the UPV, the educational TikToks are led by students, who provide more detailed information on topics of interest to the university community based on research.

Similarly, the outreach content from UNAV is presented by the institution's teaching and research staff. The TikToks inform about the latest research results carried out at the university and involve the authors in the process of transferring the information.

Figure 10. Use of experts in UNAV's informative pieces (source: Universidad de Navarra, 2023)



In the content type "Student Interviews," the role of the presenter is highly significant, as they are the person who, through questions, can offer advice, share experiences, and help students make decisions about the educational offerings. They provide insights into university life and student experiences and encourage interaction and the exchange of information between prospective students and those already part of the community. The presenter plays a key role in creating an engaging and informative environment, bridging the gap between potential and current students.

Finally, it is worth noting that in some of the TikToks analysed by the Universidad de Navarra and the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, the presenter is replaced by the generative voice provided by the content platform.

4.3.3 Cultural references in narratives: Trends and shitposting

Cultural references in TikTok content narratives within the selected university profiles serve as a connection between the audience and the university. The aim is to create a sense of belonging by using references that are recognisable and familiar to current or

prospective students, thereby developing an emotional bond that can ultimately encourage engagement.

Likewise, TikTok trends stand out; these are concepts, challenges, dances, songs, phrases, or any other element that has become popular and widely adopted by the platform's user community. These trends are distinguished by their rapid spread and virality, as they are shared and recreated by many people. The university that most frequently taps into this cultural reference is the Universitat Politècnica de València, which often aligns itself with a trend popularised on the social network to promote its academic offerings, such as the Fine Arts degree program.

In addition, shitposting (the intentional posting of content that is deliberately low-quality or in poor taste) is used by the analysed universities to create a stronger connection with the Generation Z audience. The content type that most embraces this cultural reference is Memes, where the goal of satire and irony is achieved through audiovisual references to movies and TV series, often depicting everyday situations experienced by students or through low-quality photos that capture familiar feelings to the student body.

4.3.4 *Graphic elements*

Graphic elements are predominantly present in the analysed content. Typographic resources such as text overlays and banners are predominant, aiming to provide extra information to the viewer, such as introducing the piece's content, the university it belongs to, or significant concepts addressed in the video. Among the graphic resources, the inclusion of images and short video clips is standard, ensuring they don't distract the viewer from the post's main focus. It's also worth mentioning the use of emoticons in much of the content to establish a stronger connection with the younger audience. Additionally, animations with typographic blocks and transition effects, including cuts, zoom-ins, and zoom-outs, add a dynamic touch to the videos.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

TikTok has become a key platform for promoting the university experience to future generations, establishing an authentic connection without appearing intrusive or superficial. The current environment demands a more approachable focus (Aguilera Moyano et al., 2010), centred on the student as the main protagonist, offering information, experiences, and a sense of belonging. The use of presenters or experts has become an essential element for reaching university profiles, as they bring dynamism to interviews or explanations, facilitating a more direct connection with the audience while becoming a key figure in content creation. Additionally, they help personalise the university's identity on the platform.

In terms of its attributes, short formats emerge as the most suitable option for creating narratives on the platform. In the context of Generation Z, where immediacy is a crucial

value, short content generates more interaction than longer formats. This type of format meets the need to capture attention quickly, as highlighted in the research of Micó and Masip (2008) and Gértrudix et al. (2017).

Another important aspect is the inclusion of graphic elements, which play a fundamental role in the design of narratives and content, as without them, videos tend to become monotonous. In contrast, images, videos, music, and sound effects enhance interaction and add dynamism to the audiovisual narrative, making the content more engaging and effective (Trillo and Alberich, 2020; IAB Spain, 2023).

In terms of narratives, the meme stands out for its excellent reception among students. Since TikTok is particularly geared towards entertainment, this format achieves high interaction, especially when dealing with topics related to university information, news, or events. Furthermore, humour and irony, in the form of "shitposting," are used by universities to capture students' attention. Student interviews are another highly effective content type. This content, which is relatable and engaging to students, fosters a sense of community and visibility. Scientific dissemination is an area under development for many universities and has grown significantly in recent years. Transferring knowledge to society is key for universities, and content creation on TikTok helps position them as essential players in promoting research and scientific outreach.

In conclusion, TikTok emerges as a valuable tool for university communication, especially among young audiences such as Generation Z, offering the opportunity to implement new communication strategies.

Given the relative novelty of the social network TikTok, few of the universities included in the sample have profiles on this platform, which is recognised as a limitation of the research. In addition to the small sample size (and the existing one), other limiting factors of the study include the short analysis period and the lack of comparison with other periods. The work could have been enriched by incorporating user perceptions through a qualitative analysis of comments or student interviews. Similarly, the lack of comparison with other social media platforms reveals a limitation of the research.

Due to TikTok's enormous potential as an emerging tool and the ongoing process of communicative adaptation that academic institutions are undergoing on this platform, it will be necessary to continue researching how universities' content strategies, both Spanish and international, evolve, as it is still in development.

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