

Impact of Expressed Emotions (EE) in TikTok Beauty Influencers' Content
on the Degree of Engagement: the Moderating Effect of Inclusive Marketing
Factors (IMF)

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved ones whose unyielding love, support, and encouragement have enriched my soul and inspired me to pursue and complete this research.

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, companies using social media are looking for innovative ways to improve engagement on their pages. Previous studies show the positive effect of eliciting emotions on engagement in image- and text-based platforms. This study uses TikTok, a short-form, video-based application, to investigate the effect of verbal- and non-verbal emotional expressions (EE) in video content on social media engagement and examines the moderating effect of Inclusive Marketing Factors (IMF) on this relationship by analyzing the videos published by the top 20 American beauty influencers in TikTok. Results show that using Emojis, an indicator of non-verbal EE, can positively influence the number of likes and shares. Additionally, Emotional Intensity (EI), as an indicator of verbal EE, has a positive, significant effect on the number of likes. However, the presence of IMF negatively moderates the relationship between EI and the number of likes, and EI and the number of shares.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

EE	Emotional Expression
IMF	Inclusive Marketing Factors
EI	Emotional Intensity
AI	Artificial Intelligence

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Social media refers to technologies that facilitate the exchange of information and ideas through virtual networks (Dollarhide, 2021). Over the last decade, social media has evolved into an important driver for receiving and spreading information in different domains, such as business, entertainment, science, crisis management, and politics (Stieglitz, Mirbabaie, Ross, & Neuberger, 2018). One reason for the popularity of social media is the opportunity to create and share public messages at a low cost, which has made it an important part of the lives of young adults (Vannucci, Ohannessian, & Gagnon, 2019). Social media promotes information dissemination, discussion, collaboration, and content generation. According to Global Statistics (2022), there are 270.1 million active social media users in the US in 2022, which accounts for 80.9% of the total population of this country. The annual growth in active social media users is 12.5%, with more than 30 million new American users added in 2021.

Social media has become a common tool for establishing relationships between consumers and businesses as well as between citizens and public services, because social media platforms naturally lend themselves to enhanced opportunities for value co-creation and enhanced engagement opportunities by allowing customers and firms to interact with one another in a real-time setting (Dessart, 2017; Yang, Lin, Carlson, & Ross, 2016; Balaji & Roy, 2017). As such, recent years have seen a dramatic increase in businesses using social media for marketing purposes such as advertising, communicating, and engaging with customers. Many businesses believe that social media is a cheaper, faster, and more effective way to make the best use of network effects, attract customers and achieve marketing outcomes compared to traditional methods (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013).

However, in order to achieve the positive outcomes of social media, it is important to create content that fulfills the target market's ultimate needs, attracts users' attention, and evokes their engagement (Weerasinghe, 2019).

Nowadays, image- and video-based platforms such as Instagram, Pinterest, and TikTok that create content such as images and GIFs are growing fast compared to traditional text-based social media platforms (Ding & Syed, 2022). For instance, despite the recent launch of TikTok, it has become one of the most popular applications in the world and is ranked the seventh most downloaded app of the past decade. In 2020, TikTok had 689 million active users. This number increased to 1.2 billion active users in 2021 and is expected to reach 1.8 billion by the end of 2022 (Iqbal, 2022). Hundreds of millions of users actively upload, watch, and browse videos and memes in this application (Weimann & Masri, 2020). With the growing number of active users, TikTok has been able to rapidly increase its revenue generation in the past few years. In 2019, it generated 350 million, which increased to \$2.6 billion in 2020 and \$4.6 billion in 2021, a 142% increase year-on-year (Iqbal, 2022).

A large number of videos on social media that become viral are created and shared by influencers. Influencers are leading creators that actively make and upload informative or entertaining posts of their personal experiences or reviews of products and services (Masuda, Han, & Lee, 2022; Lim, Radzol, Cheah, & Wong, 2017). They possess the power to influence viewers' purchasing decisions due to their authority, appearance, knowledge, position, or relationship with their audience (Geyser, 2022). Influencers can create trends and generate a large number of enthusiastic followers who eagerly engage in their pages and share, comment, or like their content. Brands favour social media influencers as

companies can utilize influencers to stimulate more purchases of their products and services and gain the advantage of a ready-made target audience (Boerman, 2020; Trivedi & Sama, 2020; Martínez-López et al., 2020).

Social media influencers make relationships with their audience by conveying their emotions. Emotions in content can be expressed using non-verbal (visual, graphical, etc.) and verbal expressions. Based on the Emotional Contagion Theory, when viewers are exposed to content with certain emotions, they can have a corresponding change in their emotional state because they *"automatically mimic and synchronize expressions, vocalizations, postures, and movements with those of another person's and, consequently, converge emotionally"* (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1993, p.96). In addition, according to the theory of social functions of emotion (Morris & Keltner, 2000), one's emotional expression affects others who observe it. This theory asserts that the social context might trigger relational problems that would lead to an emotional expression. When someone involved in the context uses emotional expressions, others will respond to the emotional expressions by behavioural change. In the context of online live streaming and social media, several studies also found that the aroused emotions in viewers can affect their engagement behaviours and encourage them to view more or less of the content (Lin, Yaho, & Chen, 2021; Ko, Kim, & Kim, 2022). However, relatively limited attention has been provided to the effect of emotions on online engagement in new short-form and video-based social media platforms such as TikTok.

Additionally, diversity and inclusion are two of the most important elements that can boost engagement and are now being increasingly seen as important marketing factors in many industries (Downey, van der Werff, Thomas, & Plaut, 2015; Hannon & D'Netto, 2007). In

the context of social media and influencer marketing, the importance of diversity and inclusion increases as people from different ages and various cultural and racial backgrounds have access to social media and can view the influencers' content. Showing more diversity in posted content would expand the range of target audiences as more people would feel related and associated with the content, which could increase the total size of the potential customer pool (Södergren & Vallström, 2020). In addition, racially and/or physically diverse influencers can create content or express their emotions (EE) in more diverse ways (e.g., using body language or facial expressions that can be more liked and welcomed by some under-represented groups). Based on prior literature (Salsabila & Apriliyanty, 2022; Södergren & Vallström, 2020), diversity and inclusion in content could strengthen the relationship between verbally and non-verbally expressed emotions (EE) in content and engagement as more diversified groups of content viewers can relate to the content and, subsequently, engage in influencers' pages through liking, commenting, and sharing behaviours (Wiklund, 2022; Salsabila & Apriliyanty, 2022). However, little research effort has been made to investigate the effect of inclusive marketing factors (IMF) on social media engagement in past studies, especially in the context of new short-form and video-based social media platforms such as TikTok.

Therefore, given these observations above, I seek to fill the research gap identified and investigate the research questions; *1- How do the TikTok Beauty Influencers' Emotional Expressions affect the degree of engagement? 2- Do the Inclusive Marketing Factors (IMF) have a moderating effect on the aforementioned relationship?* This study will contribute to the body of knowledge on the role of emotions on social media and social media engagement, as well as the literature on diversity and inclusion. It will also provide

influencers and social media marketers with several practical implications on how to improve customer engagement on social media.

This study is structured as follows. It begins with providing a theoretical background of social media engagement, emotional expression (EE) embedded in online content, and inclusive marketing factors. Then, it describes the research methodology, data collection and sampling, and measurement and operationalization of variables. Next, the results are analyzed and discussed, followed by the research findings. At last, contributions and potential limitations are explained, and future research directions are presented.

CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW ON USER ENGAGEMENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA

A plethora of studies have attempted to develop, investigate, and analyze the antecedents of social media users' degree of engagement. In order to find and address the gap in the current literature on engagement in social media, I conducted a literature review on the influencing factors for user engagement in the context of social media and reviewed the 29 empirical papers published in the last ten years (2012 to 2022). Table 1 summarizes the literature on the antecedents of engagement and emotions in social media and outlines how the current study is related to and differs from the extant literature. Although there has been extensive research interest in engagement and social media within various academic fields, relatively limited effort has been made to examine the effect of emotions on online engagement in new and emerging social media platforms. In particular, to the best of our knowledge, there is no study that has investigated the influence of Emotional Expressions (EE) on followers' engagement in TikTok. Moreover, in terms of post format in prior research, investigating the effect of EE on engagement rate through analyzing videos alone has been done only once (Lin, Yao, & Chen, 2021), showing the lack of investigation on this topic. I also summarized the other factors that are found to influence engagement in social media. As shown in Table 1, there is a paucity of research examining how inclusive marketing factors (e.g., diversity of the influencer (racial, gender, etc.)) would affect followers' emotional state and engagement behaviours. As mentioned in the introduction section, this study proposes a research model on the relationship among emotions, user engagement, and the inclusive marketing factor to address the research gap identified from

my literature review. The following sections will present theoretical background on social media engagement, emotions embedded in social media content and inclusive marketing factors.

Table 1 – Literature review on emotions and engagement in social media

Studies	Type of study	Platform	EE in the content (IV)	Engagement (DV)	Emotion type with a more substantial effect on engagement	Engagement metrics	Other antecedents of engagement	Post format	Key findings
Oliveira et al. (2022)	ESSA ¹	Twitter	Yes	Yes	NA (Not applicable)	Number of likes and shares (retweets)	NA	Text	Higher emotional positivity leads to a lower number of retweets and a higher number of likes.
Abbas et al. (2021)	ESSA	Instagram	Yes	Yes	Negative	Sum of the total number of likes and comments	Format, tone	Image/ Video	A greater number of interactions for Instagram posts with negative emotions compared to those conveying positive or neutral emotions.
Casaló, Flavián, and Ibáñez-Sánchez (2021)	ESSA	Instagram	Yes	Yes	Positive	(U-CTR) for engagement — that is, any click on the advertisement by a unique	Creativity	Image	The direct effect of followers' perceptions of the creativity of brands' Instagram postings on the generation of positive emotions, therefore positive responses, and higher interaction intention.
Deng, Hine, Ji, and Wang (2021)	ESSA	Facebook	Yes	Yes	NA	Number of likes, comments, and shares	Complexity (post length/ average sentence length/long words/hashtag/at-mention) + Informality (informal expression/contractions/ personal pronouns)	Text	Using positive (negative) emotional words significantly increases (decreases) the number of likes. No significant impacts of emotional words on the number of shares and comments.
Deng, Wang, Rod, and Ji (2021)	ESSA	Twitter	Yes	Yes	Positive	Number of likes and shares (Retweets)	Complexity and Informality	Text	Tweets with more emotional communications lead to a higher number of likes and retweets (more engagement).
Lee and Theokary (2021)	NA	NA	NA	NA	Positive	NA	NA	NA	More positive emotions lead to a higher number of views.
Li, Ji, Tao, and Chen (2021)	ESSA	Facebook	Yes	Yes	Negative	Number of likes, comments, and shares	Post type, hashtag, URL, mention, word count	Text	Emotionally charged messages generated more likes, shares, and comments. In addition, negative posts lead to a higher engagement rate compared to positive ones.
Lin, Yao, and Chen (2021)	ESSA	A popular live-streaming platform in China	Yes	Yes	Positive	Number of clicks and shares	NA	Video	The broadcaster's emotions help attract viewer tips (a measure of viewer behaviour) and stimulate viewer's liking and chatting (measures related to viewer attitude). A happier broadcaster makes the audience happier and begets intensified viewer activities, particularly tips. In addition, broadcasters reciprocate viewer engagement with more smiles.
McShane et al. (2021)	ESSA	Twitter	Yes	Yes	Positive	Summing the number of comments, shares, and all	Emoji count, time of the year, links, hashtags, user mentions, character count, word count,	Text	The more emoji (as an interactive feature) is presented, the more feeling of enjoyment and playfulness is made, which in turn will lead to a higher number of likes and shares.

¹ Empirical Study with Statistical Analysis (ESSA)

Studies	Type of study	Platform	EE in the content (IV)	Engagement (DV)	Emotion type with a more substantial effect on engagement	Engagement metrics	Other antecedents of engagement	Post format	Key findings
						reactions (like, love, Haha, wow, sad, and angry)	day of the year, day of the week, the weekend of the year, the month of the year, year		
Shahbaznezhad , Dolan, and Rashidirad (2021)	ESSA	Facebook and Instagram	Yes	Yes	NA	Number of likes and comments	Platform, format	Image/ Video	Emotional content negatively impacts liking behaviour (in photo format) and positively impacts commenting behaviour (in video format).
Stsiampkouska ya et al. (2021)	ESSA	Instagram	No	Yes	NA	Number of likes and shares (retweets)	Posting frequency, Content change	Image	Emotions mediate the effects of social media engagement on posting frequency and content change. Feeling excited and enthusiastic after receiving more engagement than expected. Feeling sad and upset after receiving less engagement than expected.
Vafeiadis and Xiao (2021)	ESSA	NA	Yes	Yes	Positive	Number of likes, comments, and shares	Rebuttal evidence type, involvement, and NFC	Text	One's emotional reactions (e.g., happiness and interest) can evoke positive behavioural intentions like social media engagement.
Berg, Forest, and Stenseng (2020)	ESSA	Intervention by Instagram	Yes	No	Positive	Physical activity engagement	Adaptive motivation	Image	Positive emotions like enjoyment, happiness, and satisfaction lead to higher engagement.
Buffard and Papasava (2020)	ESSA	Facebook and LinkedIn	Yes	Yes	NA	Unique click-through-rate	Gender, age, demographic characteristics	Text	The use of emotion in social media messaging can have a positive effect on conversion and engagement if it is in the audience's native language.
Li and Xie (2020)	ESSA	Twitter and Instagram	Yes	Yes	NA	Twitter: Number of likes and shares (retweets) + Instagram: Number of likes	Hashtag, time, length	Image	The positive effect of positive content on liking and negative content on sharing. In addition, other text-related characteristics (including the number of emoji, the inclusion of hashtags, and the number of words) have significant effects on liking or sharing.
Rietveld et al. (2020)	ESSA	Instagram	Yes	Yes	Positive	Sum of the number of likes and comments	Visual brand centrality, visual product centrality, textual brand mention, textual target audience mention, textual product mention	Text/ Image/ Video	Emotional appeals influence customer engagement more than informative appeals for both visual and textual modalities.
Stone and Can (2020)	ESSA	Twitter	Yes	Yes	NA	Number of views	Other LIWC variables (affective processes, drives, past tense, religion, word per sentence)	Text	Tweets with both positive (e.g., happiness, excitement) and negative (e.g., anxiety, anger) emotions lead to a higher engagement rate.

Studies	Type of study	Platform	EE in the content (IV)	Engagement (DV)	Emotion type with a more substantial effect on engagement	Engagement metrics	Other antecedents of engagement	Post format	Key findings
Weismueller et al. (2020)	ESSA	Twitter	Yes	Yes	Positive	Tips (virtual gifts)	Authority: number of followers, Clout, political extremity	Text	Content with positive emotions has a higher effect on engagement compared to negative emotions.
Dolan, Seo, and Kemper (2019)	ESCS ²	Facebook	NA	NA	NA	Conversion Rate (CVR) — when a user successfully fills out a lead generation form.	NA	Text/ Image/ Video	Entertaining content (as a form of emotional appeal) influences engagement in the form of likes but does not affect active engagement in the form of comments.
Keib et al. (2018)	ESSA	Facebook and Twitter	NA	NA	Positive	Number of likes, comments, and shares	NA	Text	Posts containing positive images elicited a higher level of visual attention than those with negative or no images, which led to higher intentions to click and share posts with positive images.
Klassen et al. (2018)	ESSA	Facebook and Instagram	Yes	Yes	Positive	Number of likes and shares (retweets)	Strategies used, Organization type	Text/ Image	Posts eliciting positive emotions had a significant relationship with the total number of interactions of Facebook posts, but not of Instagram posts.
Jaakonmäki, Müller, and Vom Brocke (2017)	ESSA	Instagram	Yes	Yes	Positive	Number of likes, comments, and shares	Most common words, Images, classes	Text/ Image	Emojis that express positive emotions (e.g., relief, love, joy) increase engagement.
Tafesse (2015)	ESSA	Facebook	Yes	Yes	NA	Number of likes and shares	Brand post (BP) content type, BP interactivity, BP novelty, BP consistency, BP vividness	Text/ Image/ Video	Humorous, funny, and artistic content (entertaining) is more likely to be liked (but not shared) on Facebook than more serious content involving products and prices (informational content).
Kramer, Guillory, and Hancock (2014)	ESSA	Facebook	Yes	Yes	NA	Number of likes, comments, and shares	NA	Text/ Image	Fewer emotional posts (whether positive or negative) would lead to less engagement.
Lee, Hosanagar, and Nair (2014)	ESSA	Facebook	Yes	Yes	NA	Sum of the likes and comments	Informative content (price, product features...)	Text	Emotional content induces a higher number of likes and comments.
Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan (2013)	ESSA	Twitter	Yes	Yes	NA	Number of likes and comments	Hashtag, URL, follower, activity	Text	Twitter messages that are emotionally charged generate more shares compared to neutral ones. No support for the notion of negativity bias regarding retweet quantity and retweet speed (i.e., people do not tend to pass along negative content more and at a faster pace than positive content).

² Empirical Study with Case Studies (ESCS)

Studies	Type of study	Platform	EE in the content (IV)	Engagement (DV)	Emotion type with a more substantial effect on engagement	Engagement metrics	Other antecedents of engagement	Post format	Key findings
Swani, Milne, and Brown (2013)	ESSA	Facebook	Yes	Yes	NA	Number of likes	Corporate brand name, product, direct calls to purchase	Text	Using emotional content in messages generates more likes, whereas using corporate brand names in messages reduces the number of likes. In the B2C setting, emotional content generates more likes than in B2B firm Facebook pages, and it generated more engagement (likes) in services versus product pages.
Berger and Milkman (2012)	ESCS	New York Times/Articles	Yes	Yes	Positive	Number of shares	NA	Text	Emotionally charged content (either positive or negative) is more viral than content that does not evoke emotion. However, positive content is more viral than negative content.

2.2 ONLINE USER ENGAGEMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

“Everyday connotations of engagement refer to involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, absorption, focused effort, zeal, dedication, and energy” (Schaufeli, 2013, p. 29). Engagement can be categorized and analyzed at different categories and levels. One of these categories is online engagement. Online engagement can be considered *“a multidimensional concept subject to a context-specific expression of relevant cognitive, emotional and/or behavioural dimensions”* (Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić, & Ilić, 2011, p. 260). Many studies have provided different definitions for online user engagement and suggest numerous factors that can affect it. For instance, Tafesse (2015) defines engagement as behaviour that represents the audiences' act of actively seeking, processing the information out of, and responding to the user- or brand-generated content.

Online engagement can take many forms, from surfing the web to favouriting a Tweet. In this study, I particularly focus on social media engagement. Social media engagement reflects the user's interaction with an influencer's or company's social media content, which can be expressed on cognitive, emotional, and/or behavioural levels. Achieving high engagement has been recognized as one of the most critical objectives of social media marketing strategies (De Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012). Many companies and brands use influencers' endorsements to stimulate more product purchases as influencers have the power to increase engagement and affect the purchasing decisions of followers due to their positions or relationships with their audience (Geysler, 2022). This study focuses on this type of content and analyzes the (potential) customers' engagement with companies' posts or influencer-generated content that favour specific brands and companies.

The content viewer's reaction(s) to posted content (e.g., clicking the 'like' button, adding comments, sharing the posts, etc.) depends on the content. The more the content is intriguing, attractive, and exciting, the more the users react and engage in the content (Tafesse & Wood, 2021; Casalo et al., 2021). For instance, brand posts that are spirited, youthful, and imaginative can inspire and excite viewers, which in turn would increase their reactions. When viewers are excited about and interested in the content, they engage more through liking, commenting, and sharing (Kessinger, 2022). Being exposed to content with positive emotions will arouse positive emotions in viewers, leading to a higher intention of engaging and purchasing the products and services (Vafeiadis & Xiao, 2021; Jaakonmäki, Müller, & Vom Brocke, 2017). Previous studies provide evidence of content engagement's positive effect on sales performance and branding goals (Ha, Kankanhalli, Kishan, & Huang, 2016; Hudson, Huang, Roth, & Madden, 2016). Therefore, content engagement can affect the success of social media marketing (Schreiner & Riedl, 2019).

Previous studies also have explored various antecedents that influence the degree of social media users' engagement, such as social media post characteristics (e.g., post length, post type) and marketing efforts (e.g., inclusiveness, creativity) (Maxwell & Carboni, 2016; Smith, 2018). For example, for social media post characteristics, multimedia features and post type (e.g., videos and images), interactive features (e.g., external links, hashtags, and mentions), and posting time (e.g., peak hours and workday) were found to increase engagement (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013; Guo & Saxton, 2018). Elkbuli, Santarone, Meneses, & McKenney (2021) demonstrated that using specific hashtags on Twitter would significantly increase the engagement between users, which is measured by the number of tweets and retweets (shares). In addition, the reception of likes, comments, and shares have

been used as key indicators of engagement of social media users, and they constitute an essential feature of social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021; Deng et al., 2021). The content created by companies is another factor that can affect engagement. For instance, Herrera, Carrillo, Herrera, and Villar (2020) found that experiential marketing in an online advertising environment focused on generating fun, unexpected content with a lasting impression would influence consumer engagement with brands. In addition, Casalo et al. (2021) assert that the creativity of brands' Instagram postings directly affects the generation of positive emotions, positive responses, and higher interaction intention.

In summary, these studies have provided good knowledge about what leads to social media engagement. Engagement is shown as an action, cognitive expression, or emotional expression (Li et al., 2021; Abbas et al., 2021). In this study, I would like to elaborate more on the importance of emotional expressions (EE) used in content for engagement on social media. In the following paragraphs, I introduce the literature on the role of EE on social media posts in affecting the degree of engagement of a user and develop this topic.

2.3 EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIONS EMBEDDED IN ONLINE CONTENT AND USERS' ENGAGEMENT

Online content refers to *"any material available on the Web, including text, images, animations, music and videos"* (YourDictionary, n.d.). Peters, Chen, Kaplan, Ognibeni, and Pauwels (2013) propose that content characteristics (e.g., interactivity, vividness, usefulness), content domain (e.g., topic, public vs. personal), and content sentiment (i.e.,

positive, negative, or neutral) are important factors to consider in the case of text-based content. This study focuses on the content sentiment (emotion), as many studies consider it as an important trait of content (e.g., the sentiment of a social media post) (Schreiner, Fischer, & Riedl, 2021; Nanne, Antheunis, & van Noort, 2021). Analyzing EE and the sentiment of content can help businesses better gauge customer satisfaction and improve customer loyalty by tracking what types of engagements positively resonate with their loyal customers the most. In addition, it can predict the likelihood of continued engagement by allowing businesses to guide the customers' sentiment growth (Eric, 2022).

Emotion has two valences: positive and negative, and each of these two valences consists of some discrete emotions. Positive emotions are defined as mental experiences that are both intense and pleasurable and can be expressed with joy, surprise, and affection (Waldron & Krone, 1991). Negative emotions are defined as unpleasant, often disruptive, emotional reactions (Davis, n.d.) or unhappy emotions that people use to express their negative feelings toward an event or person (Ackerman, 2019). It can be expressed with anger, sadness, fear, and shock (Waldron & Krone, 1991).

Emotion can be expressed using non-verbal (visual, graphical, etc.) and verbal expressions (Fernández, Carrera, Sánchez Fernández, Paez, & Candia, 2000; Berry & Pennebaker, 1993). Verbal EE is defined as using words to communicate one's emotions to others, and non-verbal EE is defined as showing our feelings through physical actions and expressions without using language, such as facial expressions, emojis, hand gestures, etc. (Van Kleef, 2021; StudySmarter, n.d.). Nowadays, with technological advancement in content writing, the use of emojis as non-verbal expressions has increased as emojis possess similar neural responses to face-to-face communication, has become important in maintaining

interpersonal relationships (Bai, Dan, Mu, & Yang, 2019), can effectively express the sender's emotions (Alshenqeeti, 2016), and are rarely ambiguous in delivering user's intended message (Tandyonomanu, 2018).

In general, the process of expressing and reacting to emotions can be grouped into three different levels: 1- felt emotion, 2- Emotional Expression (EE), and 3--reaction to the expressed emotion. 1- Felt emotion is a state or feeling incurred by an external factor and is not expressed at will (Ackerman, 2018). It is the internal emotional experience that is not socially important until it is expressed. 2- The next level of this process is EE which happens when the person expresses internal emotions. EE is embedded in a voice, text, video, emoji, picture, etc., in any type of media. This level considers emotions as attitudes or responses to a situation or an object, like judgments or products being advertised (Ackerman, 2018). Most current scholars focus on the second level of emotion (EE) and analyze the emotions expressed as an outcome or result of something (Keltner, Sauter, Tracy, & Cowen, 2019; Grabowski et al., 2019). 3- The third level of this process is the reactions to the emotion expressed (e.g., engagement, cognitive reactions, emotional reactions, etc.). At this level, people start to emotionally or cognitively react to the emotions that are already expressed by others.

According to the emotional contagion theory (Hatfield et al., 1993) and the theory of social functions of emotion (Morris & Keltner, 2000), EE can help individuals know other people's emotions and beliefs, can make people respond emotionally to the emotional expressions (even when those displays are presented subconsciously and the perceiver cannot describe what he or she has seen), and can operate as an incentive and affect other individuals' behaviour. These theories assert that one's emotional expression affects others

who observe it. People often respond to or even match the emotions they sense in others (EE) with their own emotions instead of rationally or cognitively responding to them, or they react to EE more cognitively by generating dialogues (Lee et al., 2010). In the context of social media, when they hear, feel, or see the EE, they react to them through activities such as liking, commenting, and sharing behaviours. Many studies are focused on the reactions to EE and consider EE as a content characteristic (e.g., the sentiment of a social media post) that can affect people's interaction intentions (Schreiner, Fischer, & Riedl, 2021; Nanne, Antheunis, & van Noort, 2021).

In this study, EE is analyzed through words spoken and used by a TikTok influencer in a video (verbal expression) and emojis used in the caption of a video (non-verbal expression). Emojis, as a form of typographic displays, are increasingly being used to convey EE in social networks as they are considered the universal language of the internet (Insights, 2021) and have become an effortless way to reveal emotions (Vidal, Ares, & Jaeger, 2016). Their presence in content can facilitate the communication process as they can be interpreted by people from all different cultural backgrounds, sub-groups, ages, etc. In addition, this study uses the Emotional Intensity (EI) of content as the indicator of verbal EE, as it has been constructed as a combination of positive and negative emotions that are verbally expressed in videos. Quite a few studies that have attempted to analyze the effect of verbal and non-verbal expressed emotions embedded in online content on user online engagement show the importance of developing, investigating, and conducting research on this topic. For instance, Berger and Milkman (2012) show that news articles that are higher in Emotional Intensity (EI) and arousal are more likely to go viral and be shared by users. Stone and Can (2020) and Lee et al. (2014) assert that any presence of emotional content

in posts leads to higher engagement, and the inclusion of persuasive content – like emotional and philanthropic content – induces a higher number of likes and comments. In addition, according to Yu (2014), followers are more likely to engage in social media platforms when they are more pleased and aroused. Moore and McFerran (2017) found that using emotional, social, cognitive, and descriptive words affects consumer engagement in online word-of-mouth (WOM). Recently, Lin et al. (2021) found that broadcasters who show more smiles in their live streams reciprocate viewer engagement. Abbas et al. (2021) noted that provoking viewer engagement through posting strategies that target their emotions is the most effective way to generate more interaction on Instagram. According to Deng et al. (2021) and Weismueller et al. (2022), viewing social media content that has a high degree of EI would cause emotional arousal in the viewer. Based on the mentioned studies, the emotional contagion theory (Hatfield et al., 1993), and the theory of social functions of emotion (Morris & Keltner, 2000), I argue that in the context of influencers who mainly post short-form video content in video-sharing social media, the emotions they verbally express and use in their content would positively increase engagement on their pages. The emotional arousal encourages the viewer to react to the content and the EE in it, leading to a higher engagement rate (measured through the number of likes, comments, and shares). Therefore, I hypothesize that:

***H_{1a}**: EI (verbal EE) usage in a short-form video post by an influencer increases the number of likes on that post.*

***H_{1b}**: EI (verbal EE) usage in a short-form video post by an influencer increases the number of comments on that post.*

H_{1c}: EI (verbal EE) usage in a short-form video post by an influencer increases the number of shares on that post.

In addition, the presence of emojis, as non-verbal and visually-expressed emotions, is found to be positively associated with user engagement (Jaakonmäki, Müller, & Vom Brocke, 2017; Ko, Kim, & Kim, 2022), and more emoji usage would lead to a higher number of likes and shares (Li and Xie, 2020; McShane et al., 2021). In text-based social media, it is found that the presence of emojis reduces the reader's information overload (Ko, Kim, & Kim, 2022). Previous studies assert that the text's length, as a part of the information characteristics of text-based content, would negatively affect the degree of engagement as the excessive amount of information can make the readers tired and decrease their engagement intentions (Alboqami et al., 2015; De Vries et al., 2012). In addition, emojis instill a sense of playfulness in social media (Zhang, Wang, & Li, 2021). Playfulness is defined as "*the extent to which the individual is curious regarding an interaction and finds an interaction enjoyable and interesting*" (Moon & Kim, 2001, p. 219). The presence of emojis can bring hedonic values and create a playful, enjoyable feeling (McShane et al., 2021) that is considered a positive form of EE. Based on these studies, I argue that the presence of emojis, as another part of the information characteristic in content, can reduce the amount of information given through text, thus, reducing the readers' information overload. In addition, it can create a sense of playfulness and joy which takes the effect of emotional contagion (Hatfield et al., 1993) and social functions of emotion (Morris & Keltner, 2000) in that the EE embedded in the emoji would increase the reactions of the content viewers of the short-form video posts, thus, increasing the

degree of engagement. Based on the above-mentioned studies related to the relationship between non-verbally expressed emotions and engagement, I hypothesize that:

H_{1d}: Emojis (non-verbal EE) usage in a short-form video post by an influencer increases the number of likes on that post.

H_{1e}: Emojis (non-verbal EE) usage in a short-form video post by an influencer increases the number of comments on that post.

H_{1f}: Emojis (non-verbal EE) usage in a short-form video post by an influencer increases the number of shares on that post.

2.4 INCLUSIVE MARKETING FACTORS AND USER ENGAGEMENT

In recent years, some marketers have been active in providing differentiated appeals to different ethnic consumer segments, with global brands such as Coca-Cola and L'Oreal entering the local political and social debates and giving voice to their multicultural customers. This "*deliberate effort by marketers to reach a group of consumers presumably due to their unique ethnic characteristics*" is known as ethnic marketing (Cui, 2001, p.23), and it is motivated by the increased ethnic diversity across the world.

Mono-ethnic marketing is shown to have positive effects when the target audience and endorser share the same interests and are in the same cultural or ethnic groups (Appiah & Liu, 2009; Karande, 2005; Khan et al., 2015). However, the literature has implied the negative consequences of this marketing strategy. Burton (2002) points out that ethnic marketing communications often target pre-defined ethnic groups to use broad racial and

ethnic categories that disregard the complex variety within each ethnic segment and identity. This may underrepresent certain consumer segments and add to misunderstood cultural nuances, stereotyping, and consumer prejudice (Licsandru & Cui, 2019; Davidson, 2009).

In the context of social media, mono-ethnic marketing may lead to the feeling of exoticization, exclusion, and un-relatability (Schroeder & Borgerson, 2005). The negative consequences of mono-ethnic marketing have attracted practitioners' and companies' attention to utilizing inclusive marketing and embracing diversity. Diversity incorporates all the elements that make individuals unique from one another, including but not limited to age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, skin colour, gender, body type, socioeconomic status, physical abilities, religious beliefs and more (Wiley, 2020). When companies or influencers use inclusive marketing, it emphasizes that they recognize and value different groups of people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and locations and strive to represent all of them (Unknown (Indeed), 2022). Inclusive marketing allows influencers to expand the range of their target audience and appeal to many groups that have been stereotypically portrayed or historically underrepresented. It would let them show diversity awareness, reach a wider audience, and build a brand's image and reputation as someone who accepts and respects inclusiveness (Indeed, 2022). Successful influencers can relate to their audiences, which adds a level of trust and authenticity that can hardly be gained through traditional forms of advertising and content creation (Kim & Kim, 2021; Reinikainen, Munnukka, Maity, & Luoma-Aho, 2020). When social media users are exposed to brand campaigns and influencers that create content that reflects diverse communities, elevates diverse voices and role models, decreases cultural bias, and leads

positive social change through thoughtful and respectful content, they would experience a higher sense of relatability (Södergren & Vallström, 2020). Diverse users feel more associated with brand campaigns that practice inclusiveness as they feel that they have been recognized and heard (Wiklund, 2022; Salsabila & Apriliyanty, 2022). It would make the followers more eager to follow the content and pay attention to it and, therefore, more intended to engage in brands' pages through liking, commenting, and sharing the content (Salsabila & Apriliyanty, 2022; DePalma, 2020).

Racially and/or physically diverse influencers create content or express their emotions (EE) in diverse ways as well (e.g., using body language or facial expressions familiar and relatable between one ethnicity). Based on prior literature (Salsabila & Apriliyanty, 2022; Södergren & Vallström, 2020), I argue that cultural, racial, and physical diversity and their relatable elements expressed and presented within the video content can attract a broader spectrum of followers, speed up the reaction time, and increase the degree of engagement as the familiarity would help members of diverse communities to have an easier understanding and a higher sense of relatability (Sanders, 2021; Dimitrieska, Stamevska, & Stankovska, 2019). As such, the higher degree of inclusive marketing factors in terms of visible cultural, racial, and physical diversity in a short-form video post will make the relationship between EE and the degree of engagement stronger. Therefore, I hypothesize that:

***H_{2a}**: IMF used in a short-form video post by an influencer strengthens the relationship between EI (verbal EE) and the number of likes on their pages.*

***H_{2b}**: IMF used in a short-form video post by an influencer strengthens the relationship between EI (verbal EE) and the number of comments on their pages.*

H_{2c}: IMF used in a short-form video post by an influencer strengthens the relationship between EI (verbal EE) and the number of shares on their pages.

H_{2d}: IMF used in a short-form video post by an influencer strengthens the relationship between Emojis (non-verbal EE) and the number of likes on their pages.

H_{2e}: IMF used in a short-form video post by an influencer strengthens the relationship between Emojis (non-verbal EE) and the number of comments on their pages.

H_{2f}: IMF used in a short-form video post by an influencer strengthens the relationship between Emojis (non-verbal EE) and the number of shares on their pages.

In order to show the relationships hypothesized are non-spurious, four control variables (hashtag, at-mention, number of people in the content, and the existence of music) were added to three dependent (engagement) variables. Figure 2-1 shows the research model.

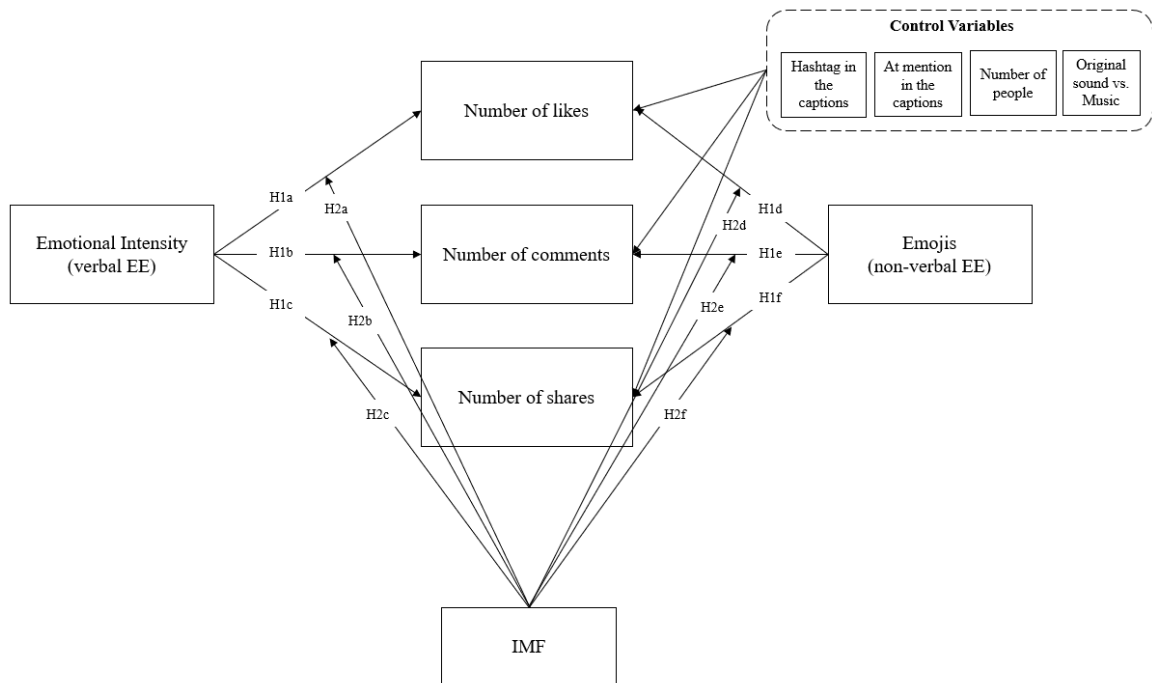


Figure 2-1 Research Model

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study collects data from the top 20 American beauty influencers' pages in the TikTok application as samples (more information about the influencers can be found in Table 2) and uses video sentiment analysis utilizing SpeakAI software (<https://speakai.co/>) and human coding. Then, SmartPLS 4.0 is used to analyze the Partial Least Square (PLS) techniques and test the hypotheses.

3.1 DATA SOURCE AND DATA SAMPLING

The unit of analysis is a short-form video posting made by influencers in the beauty industry, which is the target population of this study. The data have been collected from the beauty influencers' pages in the TikTok application. This video-based social media platform has been chosen for this study since its rich content format (videos) better allows for influencer marketing than traditional, simple text-based platforms such as Twitter. In addition, TikTok has the youngest user base, which makes it more suitable for this type of marketing since young adults are more susceptible to celebrities' influence and show more engaging behaviours, such as liking or commenting on a post (Haenlein et al., 2020). TikTok has become one of the world's most popular mobile short-video applications (Quinn, 2022), as it first allowed users to quickly create and upload videos that could only be a maximum of 15 seconds (Meng & Leung, 2021). Short videos tend to be more creative and can attract and hold followers' attention for a longer time, as they need short attention spans (Meltzer, 2018). In addition, the ability to use copyrighted music and the all-knowing algorithm (an algorithm that finds a stream of videos based on the user's interests) are among the other reasons for TikTok's popularity (Quinn, 2022). According to

DataReportal (2022), TikTok had one billion global monthly active users in September 2021, ranking it 6th among the world's most 'active' social media platforms. 419.7 million (43.3%) of these users are young individuals aged from 18 to 24 that, according to studies, are more susceptible to getting influenced by others (Schulenberg et al., 1999).

Specifically, the TikTok posts made by the top 20 beauty influencers (based on their number of followers) in the United States of America during the two-month from April 1st, 2022, to May 31st, 2022, were chosen as the sampling frame as the TikTok's generation Z penetration is highest in the USA. This country has the most active TikTok users aged 18 and above (Dean, 2022). In April 2022, 136.4 million American users have actively been using this application to create, upload, or share online content (DataReportal, 2022). Based on the observations, the number of posts that a top TikTok beauty influencer creates varies from around 5 to 100 per month. I decided to randomly collect around 300 videos (up to 15 videos per influencer) published in the mentioned time period to analyze the relationship between EE, the degree of engagement, and inclusive marketing factors. However, the total collected sample was 272, as some of the top 20 selected influencers had published less than 15 posts in the mentioned period. The link of each video, the influencer's ID, and other directly observable factors (e.g., the number of engagement measures, emojis, the number of followers, followings, and the number of likes that the influencer has, etc.) were recorded manually for further analysis. The top 20 TikTok beauty influencers chosen for this study are listed in Table 2.

Table 2 – The top 20 TikTok beauty influencers chosen for this study.

Account's name	Influencer's name	Number of followers	Number of total likes to the account	The number of influencers' posts analyzed in this study
addisonre	Addison Rae Easterling	88.7 M	5.8 B	15
avani	Avani Kiana Gregg	42.6 M	2.9 B	15
jamescharles	James Charles Dickinson	37.4 M	1.1 B	15
meredithdubury	Meredith Duxbury	15.9 M	523 M	15
mikaylanogueira	Mikayla Nogueira	13.4 M	934.7 M	15
emmycombss	Emmy Combs	9 M	272.3 M	15
sydney_art	Sydney Morgan	8.4 M	209.2 M	15
hudabeauty	Huda Kattan	8.2 M	164 M	15
hynam	Hynam Yarbro	6.2 M	287.7 M	10
nikkietutorials	Nikkie de Jager-Drossaers	6.1 M	137.3 M	9
victorialyn	Victoria Lyn	5.3 M	123.5 M	15
amandadiaz	Amanda Diaz	3.9 M	118.9 M	15
makeupbyruthie	Ruthie (last name not found)	3.8 M	159.5 M	15
patrickstarr	Patrick Simondac	3.1 M	51.3 M	15
keilidhmua	Keilidh Mua	2.8 M	95 M	15
bilintinamakeup	Valentina (last name not found)	2.5 M	67.9 M	15
jeffreestar	Jeffrey Lynn Steininger Jr.	2.3 M	18.1 M	10
pauliesfx	Paul Jutras	1.8 M	21.8 K	6
mannymua733	Manny Mua	1.5 M	32.8 M	15
sidneycumbie	Sidney Cumbie	1.5 M	23.2 M	15

Source: <https://www.tiktok.com/>

As mentioned, SmartPLS 4.0 was utilized to examine the relationship between two independent variables of EE, three dependent variables of user engagement, and IMF. The dependent variables (number of likes, comments, and shares) in the original dataset were normalized (divided) by the number of followers of each influencer as, regardless of the impact of the independent variables (verbal and non-verbal EE), DVs could be directly related to and influenced by the number of followers. Based on the observations, the influencers with a higher number of followers tend to have more likes, comments, and shares on their pages. In other words, the higher the number of followers of an influencer, the higher the chance of having more engagement on their posts. In addition, in the original dataset, some variables range between several hundreds of thousands and several millions (e.g., the dependent variables), while other dataset ranges from 0 to 100 (e.g., emotional intensity). Therefore, log transformation was applied to the variables to transform skewed datasets to achieve some degree of normality and reduce the extreme level of variations in the variables while still extracting the appropriate variations from the variables. For example, 2.6 million ‘likes’ posts were first normalized by the number of followers and then multiplied by 100k. In the next step, the Excel Log function was used, and the log transformation was applied to the DVs. EEs, on the other hand, were transformed using the natural log as the scale of data was smaller. After the log transformation, the extreme level of variations in the variables got reduced and the final values calculated for dependent (engagement) and independent (EE) variables ranged from around 0 to 10, providing us with the appropriate variations needed to analyze the data. In this study, measurement property assessment (i.e., reliability and validity) is not required as all the variables used

are single-item measures. The details of variable measuring processes are presented in the following section. Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables.

Table 3 - The descriptive statistics of the variables

	Variable	Mean (original)	Standard Deviation (original)	Mean (after log transformation)	Standard Deviation (after log transformation)
EI (the combination of positive and negative emotions)	Positive emotions	22.858	22.635	5.3	2.98
	Negative emotions	49.018	33.595		
	Likes	269426.663	519034.083	2.933	0.634
	Comments	1668.161	4076.394	0.757	0.448
	Shares	1845.408	6504.959	0.657	0.533
	Emojis	0.536	0.499	NA	NA
	IMF	8.365	1.039	NA	NA
	Hashtag	0.613	0.487	NA	NA
	At mention	0.455	0.498	NA	NA
	Original vs. Music	0.466	0.499	NA	NA
	No. people	1.448	1.225	NA	NA

3.2 MEASUREMENT AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF VARIABLES

3.2.1 Emotional Expression (EE)

As mentioned, emotions can be expressed verbally or non-verbally. For analyzing the verbally-expressed emotions, I used sentiment analysis to examine the Emotional Intensity in TikTok videos. Emotional Intensity is measured with SpeakAI (<https://speakai.co/>), a transcription software that is focused on sentiment analysis and uses audio-to-text transcription to analyze the emotions verbally expressed in the videos. This software first converts all audio and words spoken in videos into text, then analyzes the texts to extract key topics and their relative sentiment. Based on the text analysis, SpeakAI categorizes emotions into three different groups – positive, neutral, and negative emotions. It calculates the percentage of each type of emotion by counting the number of words with positive, negative, or neutral emotional connotations compared to the whole text in a video. The software extracted the video's length, percentage of emotions, etc. In the next step, the percentages of positive and negative emotions were transformed using the natural log in order to reduce the extreme level of variations in the variables (further explanation is provided in section 4.1). The output numbers were then added together and considered as the Emotional Intensity (EI) of the content. The non-verbal expressed emotions were examined by the existence of emojis. The presence or lack of emojis in each video was manually checked and coded as either 0 (no emojis) or 1 (presence of emojis).

3.2.2 Engagement

Based on prior research, the number of likes, comments, and shares in social media applications are considered as indicators of engagement (Li et al., 2021; Vafeiadis & Xiao, 2021; Yu, 2014). Each indicator represents a different level of engagement (Ji et al., 2017).

According to Meng and Leung (2021), a user's engagement level may vary based on different activities on a post. Liking, for instance, requires minimal effort for a user to express agreement or support through a single click. On the other hand, sharing involves more willingness to promote a post than liking. Commenting indicates the highest level of engagement as it requires more physical and emotional effort to express a user's thoughts in text format. Based on these studies, the dependent variables (engagement rates) are operationalized and measured using the number of likes, comments, and shares in a post. Engagement data for each post was manually collected.

3.2.3 Inclusive Marketing Factor (IMF)

According to the guideline posted by the Canada Research Coordinating Committee (CRCC) for the applicants to New Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF) competitions on the Government of Canada's website, diversity is defined as differences in race, skin colour, place of origin, religion, immigrant and newcomer status, ethnic origin, ability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and age. As I am analyzing influencers' videos, I adjusted some of these diversity factors and categorized them into groups that can be visibly examined from short-form video posts. For instance, it is hardly possible to recognize a person's religion in the beauty content. In this study, appearance, ethnicity, race, etc., are analyzed by rating the skin colour and body type (Obese vs. Not obese) of the people in the videos. The skin colour factor is measured using the guideline provided on the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) website. In addition, age, gender, language, and disabilities are analyzed as other forms of diversity. Disability is considered any physical or mental condition that is visibly limiting a person's movements, senses, or activities and can be visually recognized in a video. Each inclusive marketing factor

reflects the sum of the values graded and assigned to each sub-category, divided by the number of individuals appearing in the video. For instance, IMF values of 6, 8, and 10, computed for each of the three individuals appearing in a video, would produce a final IMF value of $(6+8+10)/3 = 8$ for the post. The values are descendingly assigned based on the degree of inclusiveness of the sub-category in the society to ensure that IMF can act as a true indicator of diversity. The more inclusive the sub-category, the lower the assigned value. For instance, the Gender factor has been categorized into male, female, and minor gender group sub-categories. As the population of male individuals in society is higher than female and minor gender groups, the male sub-category is graded as 1, while female and minor gender groups are graded as 2 and 3, respectively. Based on the assigned values, the IMF factor can range from 6, the lowest level of inclusiveness, to 18, the highest level of inclusiveness. The detailed criteria and grading scale are listed in Table 4 and Table 5. A research assistant, who does not know the research questions of this study, was hired to rate the content based on the mentioned inclusive marketing factors. Detailed criteria were given to the rater to avoid any personal judgements and assessments.

Table 4 - The detailed criteria and assigned values for each IMF sub-categories

Skin Type	Gender	Language	Age	Body Type	Disability
1-Pale white	1-Male	1-English	1-Young	1-Not obese	1-No disability
2-White to light beige	2-Female	2-Non-English	2-Old (look 50 or older)	2-Obese	2-Disability
3-Beige	3-Minor gender groups				
4-Light brown					
5-Moderate brown					
6-Dark brown/black					

Table 5 - The detailed criteria for the "Skin Type" factor (FDA, 2019).

Skin Type	Skin Color	Reaction to Sun Exposure
1	Pale white	Always burns - never tan
2	White to light beige	Burns easily - tans minimally
3	Beige	Burns moderately – tans gradually to light brown
4	Light brown	Burns minimally - tans well to moderately brown
5	Moderate brown	Rarely burns - tans profusely to dark brown
6	Dark brown or black	Never burns – tans profusely

3.2.4 Control variables

Some peripheral factors could affect the engagement of social media users (liking, commenting, and sharing content). For this reason, I decided to control four variables to see if the EE variables are non-spurious in affecting the degrees of engagement with the existence of the four variables. 1- Hashtag (#) in the caption: According to Li and Xie (2020), the inclusion of hashtags (#) in the caption has significant effects on liking or sharing behaviours. The number of likes, comments, and shares acts as indicators of social media engagement (our dependent variable), and the presence of hashtags directly affects these indicators. For this reason, I controlled, coded, and counted the hashtag usage for each time the (#) symbol is used in a post's caption. (1: the presence of hashtags in the caption, 0: no hashtags in the caption). 2- At Mention (@) in the caption: according to McShane et al. (2021), user mentions (@) have been demonstrated to affect the number of likes and shares on Twitter. Therefore, I controlled this variable and coded it based on the usage of the (@) symbol in the caption of a video. (1: the presence of at mention in the caption, 0: no at mention in the caption). 3- Original sound vs. Music in the video: since the TikTok platform allows users to use copyrighted music in their content, many influencers create more videos using this feature instead of talking in the video. Using music in the video makes content creation easier as the amount of effort needed to talk and communicate with the followers decreases. However, talking in videos and having a human voice to tell the story will help create a human-to-human connection and make communication easier, positively affecting engagement behaviours. In this study, the original sound is considered as any audio that has not been added to the content and can naturally be heard from the video (from a person talking to the sound of a truck in the

street). I consider this construct a dummy variable and check, control, and grade videos according to the following criteria: (1: original sound in the video, 0: music in the video).

4- The number of people shown in the video: the number of people shown in the video that are either talking to the camera or being passive participants has also been controlled and added to the Excel file for further analysis.

Table 6 shows the operational definitions and measurements of variables.

Table 6 – Operational definitions and measurements of variables

	Name of variables	Conceptual definition	Operational definition	Measurement
IV	EE (Verbal and non-verbal)	The internal emotions expressed by people in online content can be expressed either verbally or non-verbally.	The verbal and non-verbal sentiments extracted from each video.	
	-EI (verbal EE)	Using language and words to communicate our emotions to others.	The Emotional Intensity (EI) existed in a video calculated using the SpeakAI software.	Combining the percentage of positive and negative emotions in a post calculated using the audio-to-text transcription function of SpeakAI software to analyze a video's EI.
	-Emojis (non-verbal EE)	Expressing our feelings through visual and physical actions without using language, such as facial expressions, emojis, hand gestures, etc.	Emojis used in the caption of a post as a non-verbal way of expressing emotions.	Manually coding emojis and grading them as 0-lack of presence of emojis, 1-the presence of emojis in the caption of a post.
DV	Engagement	The degree to which people reacted to an online content		
	-Likes		The number of likes of a post	Manually collecting the number of likes that a post has.
	-Comments		The number of comments on a post	Manually collecting the number of comments that a post has.
	-Shares		The number of shares of a post	Manually collecting the number of shares that a post has.
MV	IMF	The marketing factors in a video that show diversity and inclusion.		Each factor reflects the sum of the values graded and assigned to each sub-category, divided by the number of individuals appearing in the video (the detailed criteria regarding the grading of IMF values can be found in Table 4 and Table 5).
	-Skin type		The skin type of the people shown in the video	Using a human coder to grade the skin type of the people shown in the video (from 1-Pale White to 6-Black).
	-Body type		The body type of the people shown in the video	Using a human coder to grade the people's body type (1-Not obese, 2-Obese).
	-Gender		The gender of the people shown in the video	Using a human coder to grade the gender of the people shown in the video (1-Male, 2-Female, 3-Minor gender group).
	-Age		The age of the people shown in the video	Using a human coder to grade the people's age (1-Young, 2-Old - looking like they are in their 50's or over).
	-Language		The language that is used in the video	Using a human coder to grade the language that can be heard in the post, either spoken by the

	Name of variables	Conceptual definition	Operational definition	Measurement
				people or the music played in the video (1-English, 2-Non-English)
	-Disability		Whether the people in the video have or show any sign of disability.	Using a human coder to grade the existence or lack of existence of people with disability in the video (1-No disability, 2-disability)
CV	Control Variables			
	-Hashtags (#) in the caption		Inclusion or lack of inclusion of hashtags in a video's caption	Manually coding hashtags and grading them as 0: no hashtags in a caption, 1: Inclusion of hashtags in a caption.
	-At Mention (@) in the caption		Inclusion or lack of inclusion of At Mention in a video's caption	Manually coding at mentions and grading them as 0: no at mention in a caption, 1: Inclusion of at mention in a caption.
	-Original sound (talking) vs. Music in the video		Whether the video has the original sound and a person is talking or music is used in the video.	Manually coding the sound of the videos and grading them as 0: Video with music, 1: Video with the original sound
	-Number of individuals		Number of individuals shown in the video	Using a human coder to count the number of individuals in the video

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

4.1 DATA ANALYSIS

Utilizing SmartPLS 4.0, the direct relationships between IVs and DVs were tested with control variables, followed by the analysis of the moderating effects of IMF. A bootstrapping algorithm analysis (5000 resamples), which reports the path coefficients (β) and the significance levels (t-values) for each relationship, was used to analyze the data, leading me to the following results.

The following table shows the inter-correlation matrix among the used constructs.

Table 7 – Construct inter-correlation matrix

	AtMention	Comments	Emoji	Emo-Int	Hashtag	IMF	Likes	NoPeople	Shares	Sound
AtMention	1									
Comments	-0.143	1								
Emoji	0.081	0.062	1							
Emo-Int	0.045	0.058	0.098	1						
Hashtag	0.225	-0.169	0.096	-0.01	1					
IMF	0.078	0.185	0.123	0.013	0.143	1				
Likes	-0.126	0.737	0.148	0.233	-0.246	0.096	1			
NoPeople	0.014	-0.066	-0.009	-0.067	0.025	0.006	-0.083	1		
Shares	-0.11	0.688	0.126	-0.044	-0.045	0.179	0.618	-0.085	1	
Sound	0.135	0.027	0.027	0.451	0.121	0.026	0.098	0.048	-0.068	1

According to the analysis of the direct relationships between EE and Engagement variables with four control variables (Hashtags in the caption, At mentions in the caption, original sound vs. music, and the number of people in a video), the relationship between "Emojis" and "Number of likes" and the relationship between "Emojis" and "Number of shares" are significant at the level of 0.01 and 0.05 (with the t-values of 2.755 and 2.433, respectively).

In addition, the relationship between "Emotional Intensity (EI)" and "Number of likes" is strongly significant at the level of 0.001 (t-value=3.971). In sum, H1a, H1d, and H1f are supported.

Among all four control variables, "Hashtag in the caption" has the most significant relationship with the DVs. "Hashtag in the caption" has significant relationships with "Number of likes" and "Number of comments". In addition, the relationship between the "Number of people" and "Number of shares", the relationship between "at mention in the captions" and "Number of comments", and the relationship between "At mention in the captions" and "Number of shares" are also significant. There is no significant relationship between the "Original sound vs. music" variable and any of the dependent variables. Testing the model with the direct relationships showed that the three abovementioned relationships are still significant over and above the impact of control variables.

Moderating effect test is also done with the 'moderating effect' function provided by SmartPLS 4.0 using the bootstrapping algorithm (5000 resamples). Analysis shows the negative moderating effect of IMF on the relationship between "EI" and "Number of likes" (significant at the level of 0.05, with the t-value of 2.117) and the relationship between "EI" and "Number of shares" (significant at the level of 0.1, with the t-value of 1.825). The slope between "EI" and "Number of likes" and the slope between "EI" and "Number of shares" with varying degrees of IMF by +/- one standard deviation are displayed in Figure 4-1 and Figure 4-2, respectively. As shown in Figure 4-1, one standard deviation decrease in the degree of IMF (red line) would result in a larger slope with more steep between EI and the number of likes. In contrast, one standard deviation increase (green line) has made the slope smaller and flatter, which shows that IMF negatively moderates the relationship between

EI and the number of likes. The higher the degree of IMF in content, the weaker the relationship between EI and the number of likes. The same result is found for the relationship between “EI” and “Number of shares.” As shown in Figure 4-2, the main relationship between EI and the number of shares was slightly negative and not significant (blue line). However, one standard deviation increase in IMF (green line) makes the relationship significantly negative, and the slope between EI and the number of shares becomes steeper. It means that IMF negatively and significantly moderates the originally insignificant relationship between EI and the number of shares which was not originally significant.



Figure 4-1 The simple slope analysis of the relationship of EI and No. Likes (varying IMF)

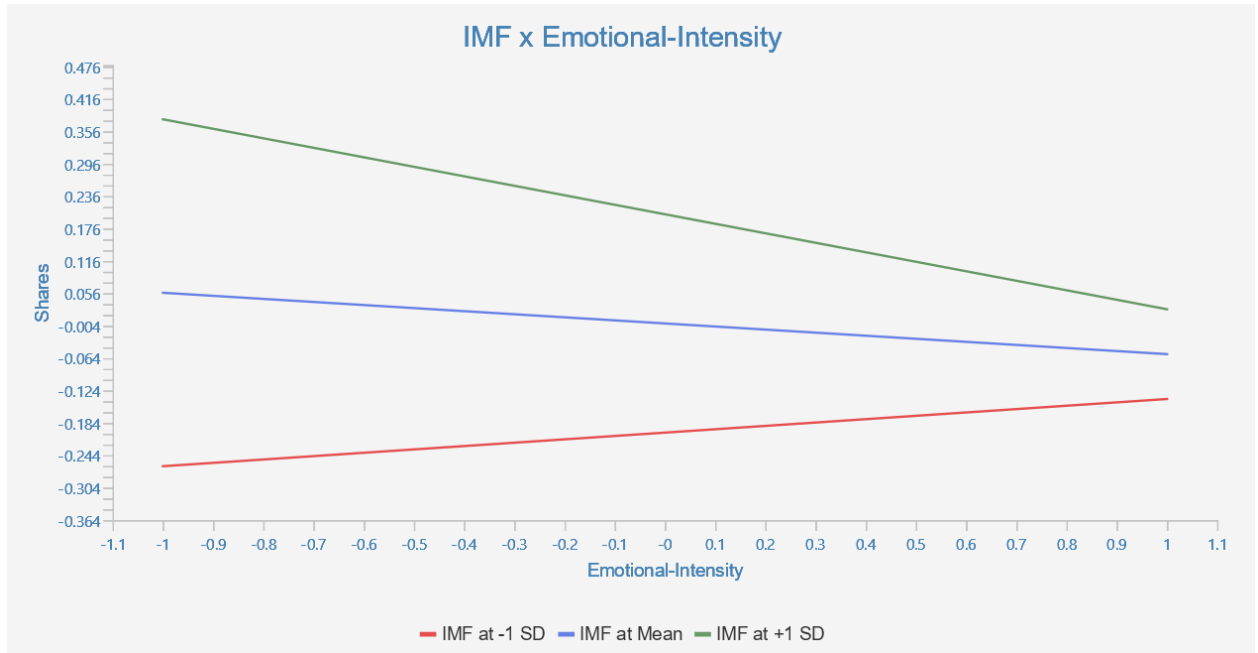
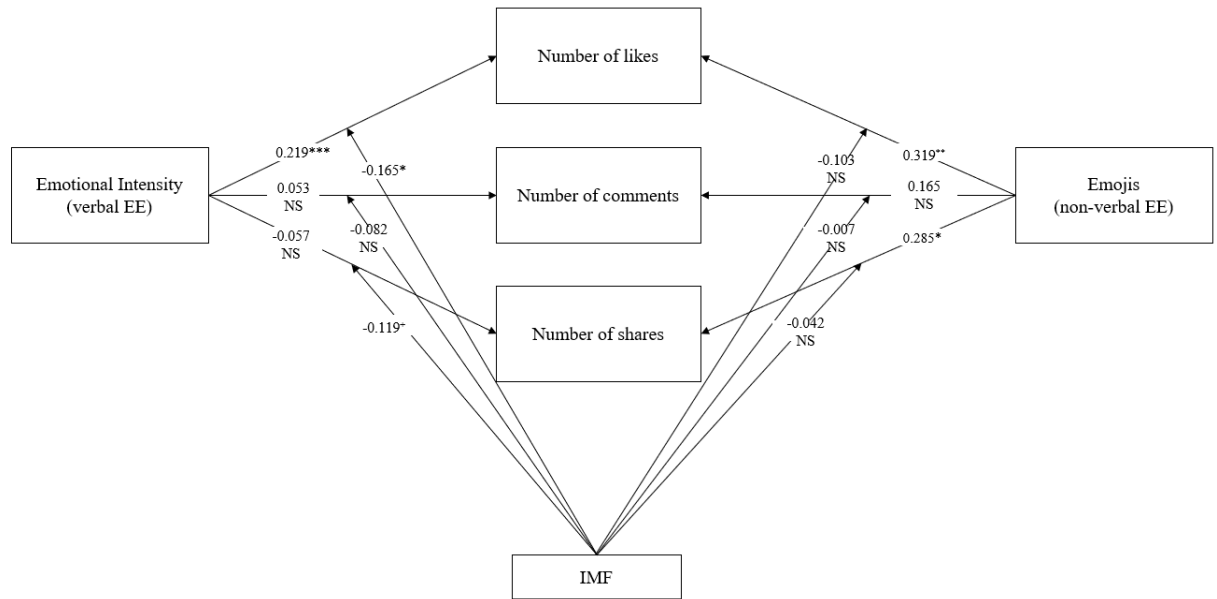


Figure 4-2 *The simple slope analysis of the relationship of EI and No. Shares (varying IMF)*

In general, the presence of IMF in the content makes the relationship between "EI" and "Number of likes" and the relationship between "EI" and "Number of shares" weaker, which means that IMF is a supplementary factor for the relationship between EI and two abovementioned engagement variables. However, the IMF has no moderating effect on the relationships between "Emojis" and any of the dependent variables. Detailed interpretations of the results are presented in the following section.



Note: † = $p < 0.1$, * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$

Figure 4-3 Structural Test Results

4.2 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Table 8 summarizes the results of hypothesis testing.

Table 8 – Results of hypothesis testing

	Path coefficients	T-values	Results
H1a: EI → Number of likes	0.219	3.971***	Supported
H1b: EI → Number of comments	0.053	0.898	Not supported
H1c: EI → Number of shares	-0.057	0.973	Not supported
H1d: Emojis → Number of likes	0.319	2.755**	Supported
H1e: Emojis → Number of comments	0.165	1.360	Not supported
H1f: Emojis → Number of shares	0.285	2.433*	Supported
Moderator			
H2a: IMF * EI → Number of likes	-0.165	2.117*	Not supported (significant)

	Path coefficients	T-values	Results
H2b: IMF * EI → Number of comments	-0.082	1.299	Not supported
H2c: IMF * EI → Number of shares	-0.119	1.825 ⁺	Not supported (marginally significant)
H2d: IMF * Emojis → Number of likes	-0.103	0.749	Not supported
H2e: IMF * Emojis → Number of comments	-0.007	0.051	Not supported
H2f: IMF * Emojis → Number of shares	-0.042	0.325	Not supported
Control variables			
Hashtags in the caption → Number of likes	-0.496	4.406 ^{***}	Significant
Hashtags in the caption → Number of comments	-0.315	2.510 [*]	Significant
Hashtags in the caption → Number of shares	-0.059	0.449	Not significant
AtMention in the caption → Number of likes	-0.199	1.631	Not significant
AtMention in the caption → Number of comments	-0.246	1.987 [*]	Significant
AtMention in the caption → Number of shares	-0.216	1.727 ⁺	Marginally significant
Original sound vs. music → Number of likes	0.107	0.807	Not significant
Original sound vs. music → Number of comments	0.103	0.761	Not significant
Original sound vs. music → Number of shares	-0.058	0.415	Not significant
No_People → Number of likes	-0.064	1.006	Not significant
No_People → Number of comments	-0.061	1.267	Not significant
No_People → Number of shares	-0.083	1.797 ⁺	Marginally significant

Note: ⁺ = p < 0.1, * = p < 0.05, ** = p < 0.01, *** = p < 0.001

Based on the results, Emotional Intensity (EI), as an indicator of verbal EE, is positively and strongly associated with the number of likes (Hypothesis 1a is supported). It shows that, in the context of TikTok beauty influencers, the more the influencers use emotional words and express verbal emotions in their content, the more the followers engage in their pages through liking behaviours. However, there is no significant relationship between EI

and the number of comments and shares (hypotheses 1b and 1c are not supported). Specifically, it suggests that simply using words with emotional connotations cannot significantly increase all types of engagement on influencers' pages. In particular, influencers in the beauty industry need to not confine themselves to using emotional words in order to evoke followers' feelings. However, they should focus on creating quality, impressive, and informative content that can increase followers' engagement intentions.

On the other hand, Emojis, as an indicator of non-verbal EE, are positively and significantly associated with the number of likes and shares (hypotheses 1d and 1f are supported). However, the presence of emojis in content does not have any significant effect on the number of comments on an influencer's page (hypothesis 1e is not supported).

As shown, unlike the number of likes and shares, EE (either verbally or non-verbally) does not influence the number of comments on the content. The variation of outcomes for different measurements of engagement (likes, comments, and shares) might result from the different levels of effort required to engage on a page. According to Ji et al. (2017), liking, commenting, and sharing behaviours represent different levels of engagement. In addition, a user's engagement level may vary based on different activities on a post (Meng & Leung, 2021). Liking, for instance, requires minimal effort for a user to express agreement or support through a single click. On the other hand, sharing involves more willingness to promote a post than liking. Commenting indicates the highest level of engagement as it requires more physical and emotional effort to express a user's thoughts in text format. Adapting this framework, I argue that EE does not affect commenting behaviours as comments require more thinking and physical effort and are more related to the content itself. Simply expressing emotions in content cannot increase the number of comments, as

social media users need more substantial personal and emotional reasons to leave a comment. Users usually show commenting behaviours when they want to express themselves more elaborately. Therefore, commenting is more related to how impressive the content is and how effectively it can make followers think and attract their attention than the emotions expressed in the video. However, as the results show, expressing emotions can be effective in increasing engagement behaviours that require lower physical and emotional effort, such as liking or sharing content. Based on the findings, both verbal and non-verbal EE have direct impacts on the first level engagement (likes), even with the presence of four control variables, which means that EEs, whether verbal or non-verbal, significantly make viewers engage in the context of short-form video posts. The significant relationship between emojis and the shares implies that directly visible EE (i.e., emojis) works better when making short-form video posts and makes viewers further engage in the content, compared to the EE embedded in the video script.

In terms of inclusive marketing factors (IMF), the analysis shows that IMF does not have a moderating effect on the relationship between Emojis and the DVs (hypotheses 2d, 2e, and 2f are not supported). It can result from the fact that Emojis are multimodal elements that are considered the universal language of the internet (Insights, 2021) and have helped humankind overcome language barriers and achieve effective interlingual communication (Temelkova, 2022). Therefore, their presence in content can facilitate the communication process as they can be interpreted by people from all different cultural backgrounds, sub-groups, ages, etc., thus attenuating the effect of IMF on this relationship. In addition to Emojis, IMF does not also have a moderating effect on the relationship between EI and the number of comments (hypothesis 2b is not supported). However, unlike my expectations

about the positive moderating effect of IMF usage, it negatively moderates the relationship between EI and the number of likes and the relationship between EI and the number of shares (hypotheses 2a and 2c are not supported). EI was positively and significantly associated with the number of likes. However, introducing IMF has a negative moderating effect on this relationship. In other words, the association between EI and the number of likes becomes weaker when TikTok beauty influencers include IMF in their content. In addition, there was no significant relationship between EI and the number of shares. However, the presence of IMF in TikTok beauty influencers' content makes this relationship significantly negative. In other words, using IMF in a short-form video post by an influencer negatively moderates (significantly mitigates) the originally insignificant relationships between EI and the number of likes and the relationship between EI and the number of shares. These results, however, in no way mean that IMF is negatively associated with likes and shares. Based on Table 7, which shows the intercorrelation matrix among variables, the correlations between IMF and three engagement measures are positive, which means that there is a positive association between IMF and three engagement measures. Therefore, it can be interpreted that IMF is a supplementary factor for the two aspects of engagement (likes and shares), rather than complementary. The use of IMF in short-form videos together with emotionally loaded content might not be necessary or even helpful, but the IMF itself could still positively affect the degrees of engagement.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of this study have the following theoretical contributions and practical implications. The opportunities for future research are also mentioned in the following paragraphs.

5.1 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Firstly, this study contributes to the literature on Emotions and Social Media Engagement as, to the best of my knowledge, it is one of the first research studies that investigate the effect of EE on engagement in the short-form, video-based social media platforms (i.e., TikTok). Although there has been extensive research interest in engagement and social media within various academic fields, relatively limited attention has been provided to the effect of emotions on online engagement in new and emerging social media platforms such as TikTok. By measuring two types of EE (the embedded EE in the video and the visible EE) and validating the significant relationship between EE and three types of engagement measures, this study provides evidence of the roles of EE in improving social media engagement in this new platform.

Second, in terms of the post format in prior research, investigating the effect of EE on engagement rate through analyzing videos alone has been done only once in a different context (i.e., live streaming). The mentioned study focuses on a popular live-streaming platform in China, while this study aims to investigate this relationship using short-form videos. Therefore, this research introduces a new way to measure EE in video content on social media as it is focused on analyzing the expressed emotions in short-form video posts

using a tool called SpeakAI. The way emotional intensity is measured and calculated in this study can be used in future research.

Third, this study extends the emotional contagion theory and the theory of social functions of emotion to short-form, video-based social media and shows that emotional contagion could also happen in this new context. Analyzing TikTok as an emerging platform, this study finds that the emotions expressed in the content of beauty influencers can cause emotional arousal in viewers, which would affect their engagement behaviours. Therefore, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on the emotional contagion theory and the theory of social functions of emotion.

Fourth, while diversity and inclusiveness are two of the most important elements that can increase engagement (Downey, van der Werff, Thomas, & Plaut, 2015; Hannon & D'Netto, 2007), little research effort has been made to investigate the effect of inclusive marketing factors (IMFs) on engagement behaviours. Thus, this study can contribute to the literature on Inclusive Marketing by examining how the IMF (e.g., racial, physical, and cultural diversity) would affect the relationship between emotions expressed in content and engagement. Lastly, this study develops insights regarding what is known and what is not known about the effect of emotions on engagement in social media, which can motivate future research and provide opportunities for new knowledge development.

5.2 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study also provides valuable implications for practitioners. The findings particularly shed light on the nature of social media engagement and how analyzing engagement behaviours can be useful in evaluating and interpreting the effectiveness of content creation

strategies. This research helps marketers choose the most suitable way to increase the success of their marketing efforts. It can also help TikTok beauty influencers unearth what factors are important in increasing the degree of engagement and develop strategies that can be more effective in improving engagement on their pages. This study finds the positive effect of EE on engagement behaviours and highlights the importance of using emotional words and expressing verbal emotions in online content to increase the number of likes. In addition, it shows that TikTok influencers in the beauty industry can use emojis (as a form of non-verbal EE) in the captions of their content to increase the number of likes and shares on their pages.

This study also provides insights on whether including IMF in the presence of EE would influence the degree of engagement. Based on the inter-correlation table among variables, IMF itself has positive correlations with the number of likes, comments, and shares, and including it in content could be effective in increasing engagement behaviours. However, IMF can negatively moderate the relationship between EI and the number of likes, and EI and the number of shares. It can be interpreted that IMF is a supplementary factor for the two aspects of engagement (likes and shares), rather than complementary. Therefore, if influencers and business owners in the beauty industry would like to increase engagement on their pages, they should avoid using IMF in short-form video posts together with emotionally loaded content. Brands using TikTok influencers to expand their businesses can apply this knowledge strategically to improve their products, marketing, and overall customer experience.

5.3 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

First, as there is no reference and literature on how to measure IMF in the online video content, this study proposes and develops the IMF measurement for the first time and makes the best effort to incorporate all the diversity variables (introduced on the Government of Canada website) that can be visually analyzed in the content of TikTok beauty influencers. The final IMF grading system is constructed based on the six diversity dimensions that are believed to be the most appropriate for video analysis. The values assigned to each sub-category of each dimension are solely proposed based on the demographics of individuals in the TikTok beauty content and the skin type categories given by the FDA. The grades and values, however, in no way are presented as a value system of humankind. As this is the first time that the IMF measurement in the context of TikTok beauty influencers is proposed, future studies can focus on improving this measurement and developing new ways to gauge diversity in online video content.

Second, this study relies on speech-to-text online software (SpeakAI) to transcribe the text from the sampled videos, followed by the sentiment analysis of the transcribed texts. However, it does not capture the facially-expressed emotions. Future studies should focus on capturing the facially-expressed emotions using human coders (or more advanced video-mining tools) as it can improve the dimensions of emotions and the robustness of the emotions measures while contributing to the literature. In addition, due to the software limitations and its speech-to-text outcomes, this study could not properly compare the real EE shown in the short-form video posts and the results from text-coded emotional intensity from SpeakAI in order to validate the data. Therefore, human rater validation comparing the real EE and the emotional intensity calculated by software could be added in future

research. Moreover, while the IMF measure includes the Language factor (as specified in Table 4), the SpeakAI software considers the emotions in all non-English videos as %100 neutral, which is one of the limitations of measuring emotional expressions using SpeakAI. Therefore, future studies can benefit from using software that can detect and analyze languages other than English.

In addition, detailed criteria regarding measuring the IMF sub-categories were given to the human rater. However, the subjective judgement of the rater should also be considered as the judgement might be biased based on the rater's personal beliefs and opinions of individuals' appearances. Future studies can assess the IMF in video posts using a video-mining tool together with a human coder, contingent on a sophisticated AI-based, video-mining tool being developed in the future.

Moreover, the findings of this study are limited to the beauty influencers on TikTok and their followers. It would be worth analyzing the relationships between expressed emotions, engagement, and IMF in other important industries such as fashion, travelling, and food. Influencers have been gaining popularity in recent years and are being used by companies in various industries in order to stimulate purchases of businesses' products or services. Therefore, studies that analyze what factors would be effective in increasing engagement on influencers' pages in different industries can be necessary.

Finally, in this study, Emotional Intensity (EI), as an indicator of verbally-expressed emotions, is constructed as a combination of positive and negative emotions. In addition, emojis are considered single variables, and their sentiments (happy, sad, love, etc.) are not taken into account. Future studies can focus on analyzing the effect of the three types of

emotions (positive, neutral, and negative) on the degree of engagement separately to check if different categories of emotions would lead to different engagement outcomes. Considering neutral emotions might be helpful in examining the impact of different categories of emotion on the degree of engagement, as feeling indifferent or a loss of interest might also influence engagement behaviours.

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