Article

Using Children to Create Content on Social Media Sites

- An Analytical Study of a Sample of Videos on TikTok –

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Abstract:

This Research Paper examines a Sample of Videos on the Social Networking Site TikTok, in which Children appear Primarily or as Secondary Characters. I shed light on the Content and the Form of these Videos to Understand the Nature of the Videos in which Children appear, and how they contribute to and influence the Formation of their Behaviors and Attitudes. We relied on the Content Analysis Tool, which was applied to a Sample of Videos estimated at (16 Videos), which were intentionally selected.

The Study Concluded, based on the Sample; that Most of the Topic's Children Use on TikTok are Entertainment and Drama. However, the Content trend was positive, in line with the Values and Customs of the Algerian Society. It also showed that Male Children appear more frequently in this Content, with their diverse clothing, hairstyles, and filming locations, all of which play a Pivotal Role in Attracting and Engaging Audiences.

Keywords: Use, Children, Content Creation, TikTok.

Introduction:

Social media has recently opened up unprecedented New Horizons for the Transmission and Dissemination of Media, providing Users with Significant Opportunities to influence and shape the Landscape of Societies. These Platforms are no longer limited to being Tools for Communication, Exchange of Opinions, and Entertainment between Individuals and Communities; they have transcended this to become One of the Most Important Tools for the Interactive Media.

As One of the Most Prominent Social Media Platforms, TikTok has brought about Significant Changes in Societies, transforming many Concepts, including the Term "Decision-Makers", which used to be limited to One or Two Individuals. Nowadays, it includes Activists or Content Creators. TikTok competes with other Platforms like YouTube and Instagram in the Production and Presentation of Video Clips, due to its many Distinct Features, such as its Attractiveness through Images, Musical Sounds, and Movements, and its Ease of Use and Interaction. This has facilitated its Access and Use by all Segments of Society, even Children.

The Issue of Children's Presence and Use in Content provided on TikTok has become a Topic Worthy of Serious Attention and Consideration, especially given the Diversity of Content and the Lack of Restrictions or Standards governing it. With the Increasing Use of this App; Children are becoming Young Stars participating in the Production and sharing of Content, making it more engaging in Both Form and Content, increasing Engagement and Followers, and thus Financial Income.

From this Perspective; Our Study aims to Identify the Nature of the Content Children Use on TikTok, using a group of Videos of Algerian Children as a Sample for Our Study.

We Pose the Following Main Question:

What is the Nature of the Media Content that Algerian Children Use on the TikTok Platform?

1. The Study Questions:

To Understand what was Included in the study Issue; It branched into Several Questions, which are as follows:

- ✓ What are the Content Topics that Algerian Children engage in on TikTok?
- ✓ What are the Characteristics and Features of this Content on TikTok?
- ✓ What is the Trend of Content that Children engage in on TikTok?
- ✓ What are the Most Important Values of Media Content that Children engage in on TikTok?
- ✓ What are the Levels of Language Used in Content that Children engage in on TikTok?
- ✓ What is the Form of Content that Children engage in on TikTok?

2. The Study Objectives:

- ✓ Knowing the Types of Topics that Children are used in Creating Content on TikTok.
- ✓ Detecting the Characteristics and Features of Children in this Content on TikTok.
- ✓ Identify the Trend of Content provided by the Algerian Children on the TikTok Platform.
- ✓ Learn about the Most Important Values of Media Content that Children participate in via the TikTok Platform.

✔ Knowing the Language Levels Used by the Algerian Children in Video Clips.
✔ Identify the Media Content Algerian Children use on TikTok.

3. The Study Importance:

The Importance of this Study lies in its Discussion of Social Media Platforms and how to engage with them in light of the Diversity and Multiplicity of their Content, including the TikTok App. The TikTok App has recently become a Popular App among many Individuals, especially Children, who have become involved in Creating this Content through their Presence in Various Videos, whether Primarily or Secondary, with the aim of Achieving Fame and Making Money, without taking into account the Dangerous Considerations and Dimensions that reflect the Values and Behaviors embedded in this Content.

4. Defining the Study Terms and Concepts:

1) Use:

▪ **Linguistically:** Use - Use (of Someone else), Use him, he is a User and the Other is Used: he took him as a Servant, he asked him to Serve him. A Person Uses the Machine or the Car...etc., he uses it to Serve himself, and the Command comes from Use.

▪ **Technically:** It is the Use of Something, a Tool, a Means, or Several Things, and Exploiting them to meet Specific Needs of Individuals in their Lives.[1]

▪ **Procedural Definition:** In Our Study, we mean by "Use": the Participation and Employment of Children in Creating Media Content via the TikTok Platform.

2) Children:

▪ **Linguistically:** In Arabic, the word "Tifl" meaning "Child" (with a kasra breaking the letter "T" and a Shaddah Emphasis) means a small thing, whether it is an Object or a Young Thing. A Child "Tifl" and a Girl "Tifl" are Young Boys and Girls, and the Plural is "Atfal" Children.

▪ **Technically:** Within the Framework of International Law; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, issued in (1989 CE), is the First International Document to address the Definition of the Child. Article 1 states that: "A child is Every Human being below the Age of Eighteen Years unless, under the Law Applicable to the Child, Majority is attained earlier".[2]

▪ **Procedural Definition:** In Our Study; it is any Person who holds Algerian Nationality and is under the Age of Eighteen, and is used in Creating Content on the TikTok Platform.

3) Media Content Creation:

▪ **The Concept of Content Creation:** The Concept of Content Creation tends to settle on everything related to Content that has been processed, displayed, and dealt with Digitally or via Modern Digital and Technological Media, for economic, educational, or awareness-raising purposes.[3]

▪ **Procedural Definition:** In this Study; we mean Content Creation as the Dissemination and Exchange of Information, Images, Videos, etc., via the TikTok Platform by Individuals who may be Children or who may participate with Children, with the aim of achieving a material or moral purpose.

4) Social Media Sites:

▪ **Social Networking Sites:** These are Sites that are formed through the Internet, allowing Individuals to provide a glimpse into their public lives, providing the opportunity to connect with Registered Users, and expressing the Viewpoints of Individuals or Groups through the Communication Process. The Nature of Communication varies from one site to another.[4]
Or they are Websites where Users can easily participate and contribute to Creating or Adding Pages.[5]

▪ **Procedural Definition:** In Our Study; we mean by Social Media Sites Websites that allow Children to Communicate, Share Photos, and Video Clips. Among these Social Media Sites, we mean TikTok Platform.

5) TikTok:

▪ **TikTok Platform:** A Social Media Platform that allows Users to upload Short Videos that can be created directly within the App or uploaded to the App. Videos range in length from (1-3 Minutes) and contain Creative Content to engage Audiences.[6]

▪ **Procedural Definition:** In Our Study; we mean the TikTok App, through which Short Video Clips are shared using Smartphones, in which Children film and publish these Videos.

5. Type and Method of the Study:

Our Study falls within the Descriptive-Analytical Study, which is defined as aiming to Describe events, people, beliefs, attitudes, values, goals, preferences, interests, and various Behavioral Patterns.[7] Our Study relied on the Survey Method in Media Research, which is defined as One of the Most Prominent Methods used in Media Research to Obtain Data and Information targeting Scientific Phenomena.[8]

6. The Study Tools:

● **Observation:** Defined as a Data Collection Tool, it means Paying Attention and Looking at Something. It is a Scientific Research Tool used to Collect Information that enables the Researcher to Answer Research Questions and Test Hypotheses.[9] It is also used in Exploratory, Descriptive, and Experimental Research.[10] We used Observation as a Tool because we frequently observe this Phenomenon across Several Different Regions and across Various Social Media Platforms, especially Children's Category.

● **Content Analysis:** It is considered a Commonly Used Scientific Research Tool in the Field of Studying Communication Materials. Burleson defines Content Analysis as: "A Scientific Research Method that aims to Objectively, Systematically, and Quantitatively Describe the Apparent Content of a Communication Material".[11]

We used the Content Analysis Yool in Our Study by Analyzing these Videos in terms of their Form and Content.

● **Content Analysis Form:**

❖ **First: Categories:** They are divided into:

✓ **Content Categories:**

1) **Topic Category:** Represents the Theme of the Video.
2) **Trend Category:** The Direction of the Content provided by the Child on TikTok, whether Negative or Positive.
3) **Actor Characteristics:** The Characteristics of the Children appearing in the Videos.
4) **Gender Category:** The Child's Gender (Male or Female).
5) **Age Group Used:** The Child's Age, either Infant or (From 1 to 18 Years Old).
6) **Values Category:** The Foundations and Determinants Conveyed by the Topics in which the Child participates.

✓ **Shape Categories:**

1) **Language Categories Used:** This refers to the Language spoken by the Child (Standard Arabic, Algerian Colloquial, Foreign, or Mixed, i.e., a Mixture of Arabic and Foreign Languages).
2) **Content Format Category.**
3) **Hairstyle Category:** The Hairstyle the Child appears with in the Video, whether Normal or Unusual.
4) **Dress Type:** The Type of Clothing the Child appears with.
5) **Film Location Category:** The Location where the Video was filmed.

❖ **Second: Units:** We relied on the Idea Unit: which is a Set of Keywords around which the Video Content revolves.

7. The Research Community and Sample:

The Research Community refers to all Components of the Phenomenon being studied by the Researcher. The Study Community also refers to all the Elements to be studied.[12] Therefore, for Our Study, the Research Community refers to the Videos Used by the Algerian Children on TikTok Platform.

In Our Study; we relied on a Purposive Sample, considering it the Closest and Most Appropriate Type of Sample, and Suitable for all Information and Data that align with Our Study Objectives. After Conducting a Survey Study, we found a large number

of Videos in which Children participate on the TikTok Platform. Furthermore, their Viewing Rates are High. Therefore, (16 Videos) were selected for Analysis, in which the Algerian Children appear on the TikTok Platform. These videos were chosen Intentionally, as they received High Viewing Rates and Likes. Therefore, we collected these Videos over a period extending From July 2024 CE to March 2025 CE.

Table (No. 01) represents the Study Samples

Video Number	Broadcast Date
Video No. 01	08/12/2024 CE
Video No. 02	16/01/2025 CE
Video No. 03	11/07/2024 CE
Video No. 04	26/02/2025 CE
Video No. 05	15/07/2024 CE
Video No. 06	05/07/2024 CE
Video No. 07	17/02/2025 CE
Video No. 08	28/08/2024 CE
Video No. 09	16/11/2024 CE
Video No. 10	27/09/2024 CE
Video No. 11	29/08/2024 CE
Video No. 12	24/12/2024 CE
Video No. 13	30/09/2024 CE
Video No. 14	23/01/2025 CE
Video No. 15	09/10/2024 CE
Video No. 16	12/08/2024 CE

8. The Study Fields:

The Boundaries of this Study are divided into One Basic Field as an Analytical Study, and this Field is:

Temporal Field: The Study was Conducted Starting in January 2024 CE and Continuing Until March 2025 CE.

9. The Study General Results:

Based on this Study; the Following Results were reached:

1) 1) We found that the Topics in which Children participate Most in Creating Content are Entertainment Topics, at a Rate of (31.25%). These Topics provided an opportunity for them to Connect with their Peers and Share Common Interests. This is because the Nature of Videos presented on TikTok Platform generally includes Songs, Dance, and Entertaining Comedy Scenes. Furthermore, the Entertainment Sector is often the Direction that Children generally turn to.

2) The Study confirmed that the Trend of Media Content Used by the Algerian Children on TikTok Platform was Positive, at (75%). This is due to the Ethical Behaviors and Actions displayed by the Children in Video Clips whose Topics were Religious and Educational, Content Far Removed from Negative Behaviors, Social Traditions, and Islamic Values.

3) The Male Children were More Likely to Use the App than Females, accounting for (68.75%) of the Total. The Age Group that appeared Most Frequently was Children Aged (5 to 8 Years), accounting for (37.5%) of the Total. This is due to the App's Simplicity and Ease of Use, allowing the Young Children to interact with it easily even without adult assistance. This Age Group is also more Dynamic and Engaging to the Public, increasing engagement with them.

4) The Study found that the Most Important Values of the Media Content that Children participate in on TikTok Platform are Entertainment and Enjoyment (31.25%). Children at this Stage seek to Enjoy their Time and Enjoy the Content they Consume, whether it is Recreational Games or Entertainment Programs.

5) The Study Results showed that the Language most Used by the Algerian Child who appears on the TikTok Platform is the Algerian Colloquial Dialect, at a rate of (62.5%), because it is Easy for them to Use and is Compatible with them in their Daily Lives.

6) Most of the Children or Algerians who appear on the TikTok Platform had Normal hairstyles, at a Rate of (81.25%), and this is Evidence of the Child's Spontaneity, as well as Evidence of the Parents' Concern and Responsibility towards their Children, and their Refusal to allow them to adopt Hairstyles that are Alien to Society and Blindly Imitate the West.

7) As for the Type of Clothing; Most of them appeared in Normal Clothes, at a Rate of (56.25%), and this is due to the Child's Comfort, Modesty in Clothing, and not Exaggerating it.

8) The Study Results showed that Most of the Videos were filmed at home (25%), because they Feel Comfortable and Safe in the Home Environment, which makes them prefer to film Videos there without having to go out or move to other places.

Conclusion:

It can be said that TikTok Platform Videos, which are Used by the Children, despite their Distinctive Musical and Dance Entertainment, are One of the Most Important Means of Expressive Communication Used by Individuals, especially Children, on Social Media Sites. This Platform has become a Media Model within Digital Culture, addressing Various Religious, Educational, Social, and Other Topics. The Goal is to Disseminate a Variety of Values Focused on the Children, both Male and Female, with their Unique Personality Traits, for Greater Impact and More Effective Content.

This has led to the Increasing Use of the Children in these Videos. The Social Media Content Creators are keen to Use Attractive Means of Highlighting the Children's Clothing, Hairstyles, and even the Locations where they are filmed. These Elements play a Pivotal Role in Creating the Message Conveyed by the Content of these Videos.

The Most Important Recommendations:

1) Raising Awareness of the Importance of Maintaining Positive Values and Correct Behaviors when Using these Social Media Sites in all their Forms.

2) Calling for the Scientific Research and Organizing Seminars and Events on the Use of Children in Social Media Content.

3) Encouraging Parents to Actively Monitor and Participate in Children's Use of the TikTok Platform.

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