


The Museum on TikTok. An analysis of user-generated audiovisual production¹

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Abstract: This paper analyzes, from a multimodal approach, the audiovisual production (n=110) and the reactions (n=10,444) uploaded to TikTok by personal profiles and with the museums as the protagonist. The objective is to discover the image that users project of the institution. We start from the premise that the dialogue favored by social media is a reflection of the conception that they have of the museum, conveying in their comments the experiences lived and even the functions assigned to it. The data reveals a predisposition of young people towards free, participative proposals that result in them having a good time. Furthermore, we discover the support and suggestions of different influencer profiles and their community of followers for getting to know the museum.

Keywords: TikTok; short video; museum; image; young people

ES El Museo en TikTok. Análisis de la producción audiovisual generada por usuarios

Resumen: Este trabajo analiza, desde un enfoque multimodal, la producción audiovisual (n =110) y los comentarios (n =10.444) publicados en TikTok por perfiles personales y con el museo como protagonista con el objetivo de descubrir la imagen que los usuarios proyectan de la institución. Partimos de la premisa de que el diálogo que favorecen las redes sociales es un reflejo de la concepción que tienen del museo, trasladando en sus comentarios las experiencias vividas e incluso las funciones asignadas a este. Los datos revelan una predisposición de los jóvenes hacia las propuestas gratuitas, participativas y que generen una experiencia agradable. Asimismo, descubrimos el apoyo y recomendación de distintos perfiles de influencers y su comunidad de seguidores por conocer al museo.

Palabras clave: TikTok; vídeo; museo; imagen; jóvenes

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1. Introduction

Short videos have become a common form of expression on social media (Bi & Tang, 2020; Vaterlaus & Winter, 2021). The covid-19 pandemic marked a turning point in TikTok's global penetration, driven by confinements and the cease of all non-essential activity (Agostino et al., 2020; We are social, 2023). The increase in leisure time led many citizens to discover new web applications and/or to start creating content, especially audiovisual content (Martínez-Sanz et al., 2023; Orduña-Malea et al., 2020) while, at an institutional

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level, many organisations, including museums, accelerated the technological processes necessary to continue, with greater or lesser success, their work in the online scenario (Quezada-Tello et al., 2022; Rodríguez Hernández, 2022).

Whilst it is true that great museums have steadily been increasing their visitor numbers, thanks to mass cultural tourism (Su & Teng, 2018), the disaffection of the youth with museums and their activities is also on the increase (Barron & Leask, 2017). Hughes and Moscardo (2019), of the Theory of Social Representations, attribute this to the mismatch between the museums' offer and the personal and social identity of young people. Given this circumstance, it should be considered whether this lack of interest is also reflected on social media where user generated content (UGC), especially if it comes from a peer and is based on an account of an experience, can influence the decisions of the rest of the users. The study of this type of content helps to identify the most valued attributes, expectations, and shortcomings of museums (Waller & Waller, 2019; Manna & Palumbo, 2018).

The main objective of this paper is to analyse the image of the museum as a whole projected through the short video. Said institution is at the service of society and, consequently, in permanent change, although intensely criticised for underestimating the potential of online media to make its identity visible and get closer to the public (Bosello & van den Haak, 2022; Carignani, Iodice & Bifulco, 2023; Martínez-Sanz & Berrocal-Gonzalo, 2017). The research is completed by the incorporation of two specific objectives:

- SO1. To study the profile of tiktokers who upload videos with museums as a protagonist.
- SO2. To identify the reactions provoked in the audience, assessing the degree of adhesion and mobilisation of the videos starring museums and favoured by TikTok.

Although there is considerable research that analyses the use of TikTok as part of the communicative strategy of museums (Huebner, 2022; Martín Sanz, 2022; Sánchez-Amboage et al., 2022), no studies have been found that focus on the spontaneous production of tiktokers with museums as the main theme, nor on the response of the audience to this type of content. Other work closest to the line of research of this paper focusses on analysing the practices of creation and sharing during the visit and always taking the exhibited object as a reference, and preferably on still image applications, such as Snapchat and Instagram (Villaespesa & Wowkowych, 2020; Budge, 2017).

The novelty of this research paper lies in analysing the audiovisual production around museums uploaded to TikTok without being conditioned to a specific space or visit, with the aim of studying the relationship that users, mainly young people –as reflected in the penetration statistics of TikTok– establish with museums. In order to achieve this, the publications suggested by the platform are used, as they are the most exposed to users. A multimodal content analysis is applied to the textual, visual, and sound integration that occurs in each publication.

2. Museums on social media: adaptation, evolution, and transformation in the digital age

Virtually all organisations, whether public or private, have adapted to the dynamics of social media content creation, taking into account that the level of penetration of social media is very pronounced, especially amongst youth (We are social, 2023). Technology has promoted new forms of interaction between organisations and their different audiences, giving rise to a new communication scenario with infinite possibilities and advantages, but in continuous evolution, which requires constant vigilance and adaptation (Cervi et al., 2021; Weimann & Masri, 2020).

The museum as a cultural institution that covers the need for the protection of art and culture has been obliged, like all other institutions, to adapt to the digital revolution (Galarza, Villena & Sosa, 2020). This transformation is not only contingent on survival but, above all, on being able to offer a social service in keeping with the times and the demands of a public that requires interaction and commitment (Quezada-Tello et al., 2022).

The dialogical and relational attitude of museums, motivated by this new way of understanding communication, favours the transformation of the possible prejudices of the public about museums into favourable judgements, which inevitably involves consolidating the relationship between both parties (Belenioti et al., 2019). In this regard, it cannot be ignored that it is the perception and perspective of the subject that shapes the object in the process of creating the image, so that both the subjective aspects –needs and interests– and the objective aspects, imposed by the group to which the subject belongs, –lifestyle, cultural norms, beliefs and customs–, must be taken into account with the utmost rigour (Solano, 2010).

In just a few years, technology has enabled a communicative environment marked by feedback and two-way symmetrical interaction (Villaespesa & Wowkowych, 2020), in coherence with the relevance that museums wish to give their audiences. Through social media, museums not only have a tool at their disposal to serve their audiences but also to enhance their brand value, especially when there is coherence between what they say they are and their actions.

As these are cultural institutions that, in most cases, depend on public administration, their adaptation was not as dynamic as that of private organisations, which react to external changes more quickly. Nevertheless, the volatility and speed of social media –that is, how they have emerged and, especially, the continuous change of users' choices in terms of their consumption– must also be considered (Kaiser-Moro & Sánchez-Mesa, 2023).

The presence of museums on social media has been marked by promotional efforts and the difficulty of implementing effective online participation mechanisms (Camarero, Garrido & San José, 2018; Martínez-Sanz

& Berrocal-Gonzalo, 2017). As Valtysson (2022) points out, there is a significant mismatch between the official discourse that recognizes the commitment of museums to establish a close relationship based on dialogue with the public and the use of social media, detecting deficiencies in both the planning its use and execution.

The adaptation of museums to the dynamics marked by social media is essential to connect and dialogue with each of the audiences in an exclusive way as a consequence of the polyhedral nature of the image; that is to say, that although the image of the organisation is one, it is multiplied by the number of audiences to which it is addressed, as each one has different needs and interests with regard to the same image.

3. Young people as digital natives, the main target for museums

According to the Reuters Institute's Digital News Report 2022, 39% of 18–24-year-olds say they get their news from social media, with TikTok being one of the most used platforms. In this regard, it should be noted that the application was named the Revolution Social Network of 2020 after quadrupling its metrics compared to the year 2019 (Weimann & Masri, 2020).

The success of this application lies in two fundamental aspects: on the one hand, in allowing the creation and sharing of short videos quickly and easily; and on the other hand, in using AI (Artificial Intelligence) technology, through which the algorithm quickly learns the individual's preferences by capturing «likes», comments and viewing time (Taype Rondan, 2020). In short, the tool offers content according to the user's interests and promotes the creation, facilitating editing and access to sound and visual resources, to which effects, filters, and symbols, such as emoticons, can be added.

These qualities mean that the consumption of this type of video requires minimal cognitive effort, which added to the humorous and jovial aspect of most of the content, manages to engage users who demand immediacy and entertainment above all else (Carignani, Iodice & Bifulco, 2023), leaving aside traditional formats characterised by the passivity that marks the asymmetrical bidirectionality of communication.

Research by Rodríguez Hernández (2022) indicates that museums use TikTok with a preferably informative purpose, focusing on aspects related to works of art, authors, and the dynamics of the museum itself. The average number of publications by museums with a TikTok profile is around 1.24 interventions per week, although great museums, such as the Centre Pompidou, the National Gallery in London and the Rijksmuseum publish up to three times per week. What is more, although there are still few museums that have their own profile on TikTok, it is undoubtedly one of the main channels for connecting with youth and integrating them into participatory processes related to cultural consumption (Huebner, 2022; Hughes & Moscardo, 2019).

The attempt of museums to be approachable and open dates back to the first public museums (Vilchez, 2012). In the 21st century, social media offers visibility and, in particular, a new form of content creation where young people feel comfortable, protagonists and can express their creativity.

4. Methodology

This research is based on the interest in getting to know the relationship that young people establish with museums and express through TikTok, the most downloaded application worldwide in 2022 (Hootsuite, 2022). The dynamics of creation on social media –consisting largely of the combination of different modes of communication (video, still image, text, emoticons, etc.)– give rise to multimodal resources, sources of autonomous meaning making (Bosello & van den Haak, 2022). In this sense, it is appropriate to incorporate a multimodal approach to the analysis that helps to explore the possibilities offered by the tool and the cultural and technological intentions and interpretations associated with creative practices (Budge & Burness, 2018).

A multimodal content analysis combining quantitative and qualitative elements is implemented on a non-probabilistic sample of videos suggested by TikTok in response to the search tag “Museo”, using the Spanish language as the only screening filter. The time selection is randomised in order to investigate how the algorithm works and to cover a wide and current period in the analysis of how museums are represented. The sample is collected on 7 November 2022 by accessing the social media without being logged in to prevent the researchers' personal preferences and/or previous search history from affecting the results returned.

The unit of analysis corresponds to the publications available on the platform, including in its consideration both the audiovisual content (video) and textual content (title), in addition to the comments expressed by the audience. Unlike other social media, such as X, old Twitter, or YouTube, TikTok does not provide an official API to automate data collection, which was a task taken on manually by the authors. It was also decided to limit the number of monitored comments per post to 200, as TikTok orders the comments according to their interest, relegating to the bottom positions those that only consist of emoticons or single words.

The first 120 publications prioritised by TikTok were collected, discarding 10 for the following reasons: six had no link with the object of study and four used a language other than Spanish. In short, the sample consisted of 110 units of analysis ($n=110$) which, in turn, were associated with 10,444 comments, which were also analysed. The volume of videos included in the sample is consistent with that examined by previous research that has studied some aspect of TikTok intensively rather than extensively (Cervi et al., 2021; Martínez-Sanz et al., 2023).

The analysis is developed through the application of an *ad hoc* template (Table 1), inspired by the works of Arévalo Salinas (2017) and Bosello and van den Haak (2022), the design of which incorporates three independent dimensions with their own goals.

- The study of the sender (Bi & Tang, 2020; Park et al., 2021), which identifies the defining characteristics of TikTok creators who allude to museums and determines whether their cultural interventions are sporadic or integrated as a regular feature of their content.

- The study of message content (Villaespesa & Wowkoych, 2020), which explores the forms of representation and the discursive resources used for this purpose. It also looks at the purpose and subject matter for which the videos are made, taking into account the specific functions of the museum spaces (Whelan, 2015).
- Reception studies (Dubovi & Tabak, 2021; Gronemann et al., 2015), which monitors the interactions achieved by each publication and their quality by assessing the effects described in the comments.

For the coding of the material, a system of variables (23) is established, which is resolved through predefined categories (54), numerical values (4) and qualitative comments (2). A comprehensive examination of the different parts that make up the published content allows to advance in the study of the role of social media as a transmitter and reflector of the collective imagery linked to museums.

Table 1. Analysis template

Dimension	Indicator	Coding variables and categories	
Sender	1. Identity	1.1 Type of sender: Personal (n=54), Specialised/thematic (n=33), Corporate (n=10)	
		1.2 Gender of the creator: Male (n=29), Female (n=52), Unidentified (n=16)	
	2. Situation	2.1 Community: Over one million followers (n=8), Between 100k and 1M followers (n=28), Between 10k and 100k followers (n=39), Less than 10k followers (n=22)	
		2.2 Repeater: Yes (n=56), No (n=41)	
Message	3. Qualities	3.1 Priority order on TikTok: Number from 1 to 110	
		3.2 Age of publication: Between 1 and 3 months (n=76), Between 4 and 6 months (n=19), Between 7 and 9 months (n=8), Between 10 and 12 months (n=5), Over 1 year (n=2)	
	4. Museum representation	4.1 Type of museum: Specific (n=106), Generic concept (n=4)	
		4.2 What museum: Name	
		4.3 Location: Country and city	
		4.4 Assigned role: Exhibit (n=36), Conservation/protection (n=4), Dissemination (n=29), Research (n=0), Entertainment (n=31), Historical re-enactment (n=3), Others (n=7)	
		4.5 Presence of the narrator: Yes (n=55), No (n=33), Not applicable (n=22)	
	5. Theme	5.1 Keywords: Terms	
	6. Discourse features	6.1 Discourse strategy: Comments on the expressive resources used	
		6.2 Purpose ² : Inform (n=9), Entertain (n=5), Enhance the visit (n=46), Impress (n=43), Transmit knowledge (n=11), Experience (n=26), Encourage reflection (n=13)	
	7. Technical aspects	7.1 Visual, sound and editing resources: Commentary on visual effects, music, location, and shots	
	Reception	8. Interaction	8.1 Like: Number
			8.2 Times shared: Number
8.3 Comments: Number			
9. Audience reaction in the comments		9.1 Questions about the museum are asked: Yes (n=73), No (n=35), Not applicable (n=2)	
		9.2 An intention to visit is expressed: Yes (n=63), No (n=45), Not applicable (n=2)	
		9.3 Positive experiences are reported: Yes (n=53), No (n=55), Not applicable (n=2)	
		9.4 Criticism towards it are expressed: Yes (n=16), No (n=92), Not applicable (n=2)	
		9.5 A cognitive contribution related to the museum is made: Yes (n=34), No (n=74), Not applicable (n=2)	

5. Results

5.1. The profile of the museum influencer

The videos prioritised by this social media with museums as protagonists are the work of personal (55.7%), thematic (34%) and, to a lesser extent, corporate (10.3%) profiles. Regarding the capacity to influence, the content was published mainly by micro influencers (48.5%), macro influencers (21.6%) and celebrity influencers (7.2%), according to Park's et al. (2021) classification. In general terms, the community of followers of these profiles is large; on average, more than 350,000 users, which represents a very high projection and justifies, even more so, the interest in knowing what image of museums is being conveyed to the audience.

² Non-excludable variable, which means that the sum of the 7 categories (response options) does not coincide with the total number of units of analysis.

The allusion to museums or historical-artistic spaces by these creators is not accidental, as 57.7% of them repeat such content; that is to say, among the 60 previous publications there is at least one other video with a cultural theme, from which we can infer that the subject is of interest to these creators. The specialised profiles (33), according to the description of their bio, deal with the following topics: travel (27.2%), leisure plans (21.2%), particularities of a specific country or city (Italy, Buenos Aires, and Mexico) (21.2%), culture and history (21.2%), fantasy and anime (9%), gastronomy (6%), curiosities (6%), mystery (6%) and nature (3%). These themes have, in most cases, a natural connection with the museum, which explains the high rate of repetition of this type of content on these accounts (Table 2).

Table 2. Repeated theme according to type of profile

Type of profile	Repeater	Non repeater
Personal	22 (40.7%)	32 (59.3%)
Thematic	26 (78.8%)	7 (21.2%)
Corporate	8 (80%)	2 (20%)
\bar{x}	57.7%	42.3%

TikTok's algorithm suggested content published preferably in the last three months (69.1%), which shows that there is a pool of content on social media that is current and linked to museums, made by and for youth. In addition, it is noted that this audiovisual offer is supported by the audience. Table 3 quantifies the reactions obtained broken down by type of profile. On average, the specialised accounts show much higher interaction figures than the rest, probably due, as aforementioned, to the continuity of the topics dealt with and their practical nature. Particularly noteworthy is the number of times the posts were shared –5,067 on average, almost twice as many as the corporate and personal profiles. On the other hand, the number of comments received was very similar, with an average, for the whole sample, of 1,061 replies.

Table 3. Interaction achieved by videos featuring museums

	Shared	Like	Comments
Personal	2,852	212,961	956
Specialised	5,067	256,443	1,206
Corporate	2,142	89,737	1,022
\bar{x}	3,354	186,380	1,061

5.2. The museum on TikTok, a place that generates an experience

In terms of content, all but three of the tiktoks referred to specific spaces that could be visited by the public. Similarly, the majority (96.3%) were identified by name, either in writing or verbally. When, exceptionally, the museum was not named by the author (3.7%), the question was immediately raised on the comments wall and resolved either by the author per se or by the community of users. In total, 60 different museums were mentioned, located in up to 17 countries. Mexico and Spain are the territories with the highest number of references (37.7% and 21.4%, respectively), followed by Peru and France. The most popular museums were the wax museums (10.7%), with four different locations (Madrid, Barcelona, Mexico City and Guadalajara), and the mummy museums of Jalisco and Guanajuato in Mexico and Zaragoza in Spain (7.8%), followed by the Museo de Arte de Lima (Peru) and the Louvre Museum (France), with 6 videos each (5.8%).

The few tiktoks (2.7%) where no specific institution is mentioned, the term “museum” is used as a mechanism to lend prestige and value to a private space (trophy collection), event (Easter) and immersive exhibition.

Tiktokers attribute exhibition as the main function of museums (32.7%). The images, mostly in movement, show museum-like spaces, with works of great artistic or aesthetic value that can be contemplated or interacted with on a tour. The didactic function of museums (26.4%) is expressed in terms of the resources available (guided tours, posters, explanatory panels, interactive panels, screens, etc.) which bring visitors closer to the meaning and value of what is in front of them. Although residual in TikTok (3.6%), conservation –understood as protection from physical or environmental aggressions– acquires a very current character by referring mainly to the protests that different climate activists developed in October and November 2022 by sticking themselves to emblematic works of the Van Gogh and the Prado Museum, respectively.

Entertainment is the second most frequently mentioned function attributed to museums (28.2%). Creators emphasise two mechanisms of disinhibition and recreation: participation, which consists of active involvement achieving a pleasurable effect, for example, through a game, a physical test, or an experiment; and the exploitation of the sensory through the contrast of lights, sounds and textures. Tiktokers bring to their videos an atmosphere of relaxation and escape that is highly appreciated by visitors. To a lesser extent, museums were seen as spaces that recreate atmospheres from the past (2.7%) or that acquire other uses (6.4%), such as promoting culture or being an authoritative source of information.

The study of the most repeated keywords results in a reflection of what users expect from museums: a free visit that does not leave them indifferent either because it provides the visitor with a fun experience or

because it conveys a curious or unknown knowledge. All in all, it is hoped that the time spent in the museum will prove to be a good alternative leisure activity. In this sense, the tiktokers from the sample adopt the role of endorsers, generating a frequently repeated audiovisual typology that consists of showing that they have visited x place, generally by appearing on camera or showing photographs of the moment, and then reviewing the tour and/or providing practical advice, ranging from indicating which days the access is without charge, which spaces or pieces are more interesting, or when there are fewer visitors.

These recommendations give a sense of what the most valued attributes by the audience are when visiting a museum, highlighting: having a good time, free admission, and capturing “spectacular photos”. Museums are places to visit during leisure time, as reflected in the video introductions: “four free alternatives if you are in Barcelona this weekend” or “a plan with friends this weekend”. In addition, although only one person –the author of the publication– appears in most of these videos, the idea of leisure and fun is intensified when accompanied by friends (Figure 1). The protagonist frequently looks at the camera and addresses the receiver directly with messages promoting the visit (30.1%): “you can’t miss it” or “fun here is guaranteed”.

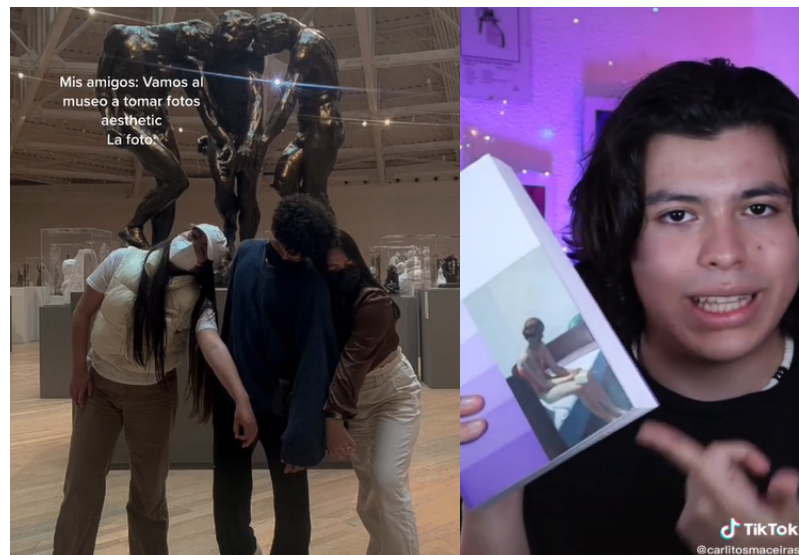


Figure 1. Museum as a place of entertainment and as an object of reflection

Source: @gemmisrs and @carlitosmaceiras profiles on TikTok

A second type of audiovisual material is that which invites the user to reflect on a specific aspect of importance both for the museum and for society in general (Figure 1). These are more intimate publications, mostly created by personal profiles (69.2%), in which issues arise, such as what art is, how cultural mediation is exercised, the protection of pieces in museums or the scourge of gender violence. There is parity in the authorship, and from the technical point of view, there is a predominance of close-ups and interior environments, which favour a close atmosphere.

Despite the recreational nature of TikTok, only 3.3% of the audiovisual material intended to entertain. Although it is true that the concept of entertainment is very present throughout the sample, as it conveys the idea that there are many museums where you can have a good time and that it is the creators (mainly micro and macro influencers) who are responsible for pointing out which ones these are these places, the videos have a higher purpose: to enhance the visit and to impress, fundamentally.

To impress the audience (28.1%), influencers resort either to the story of a unique and very satisfying experience, sometimes showing off a good economic position, or they show pieces of extreme rarity or singularity, such as foetuses, mummies or figures of great realism that do not leave anyone indifferent. This distinctive characteristic is not only enhanced by images but also by expressions, such as “you will see things that cannot be shown here”, emphasising even more the importance of experiencing it in person. Although there are also videos in which the quality of different classical works of art is praised, the authors’ reflections lack depth and context –knowledge of art history– and are therefore limited to highlighting the beauty and personal impression that the pieces produce in them. Particularly symptomatic is the revelation of @obedgm who admits that he likes to go to the wax museum to see, but not to read, alluding to the explanatory signs and posters in front of the figures.

The appearance on stage of the author of the video is a constant (62.5%), especially in the videos of personal profiles. The most frequently repeated scene is that of enjoying a free visit to the museum, focusing on what is most astonishing and taking pleasure in the anecdotal (a hidden door, a closed room, or an item with multiple meanings). Regarding gender, there is a predominance of women (64.4%) as opposed to men (35.6%) when it comes to making tiktoks with museums as the protagonist.

It can also be seen that the content is made by and for young people, both in the youthful and carefree appearance of the actors involved, and in the expressions used, such as “holi”, “bestie” (to refer to best friend) or “bro”, typical of this sector of the population, which tends to shorten and appropriate English-language terms (Candale, 2017). This is what Mari Sáez (2006) names “language of links”.

5.3. Audience participation

Tiktoks featuring museums received an average of 1,061 comments. Only two of them had this function disabled, so the interest in knowing the audience's impressions prevails amongst the influencers. A very active participation of the followers is observed, mainly through questions and expressions of support for the influencers' theses. To a lesser extent, there were relevant cognitive contributions and criticisms, including unwelcome or offensive comments, discussed below.

Questions were asked in 67.6% of the cases and were mainly of a practical nature, referring to aspects, such as where the museum is located, how to get there, confirmation of whether it is free or not, opening hours, etc. These questions are rarely answered by the author of the video, probably due to the large number of interventions received, but it is the users themselves, with the best of intentions, who respond and contribute their knowledge on the subject. Another predominant category of commentary is the personal account, of a positive sign, which endorses the discourse of the author (49.1%). Users describe situations experienced in museums that not only reinforce the specific recommendation of the influencer but also their work as an endorser (Figure 2).

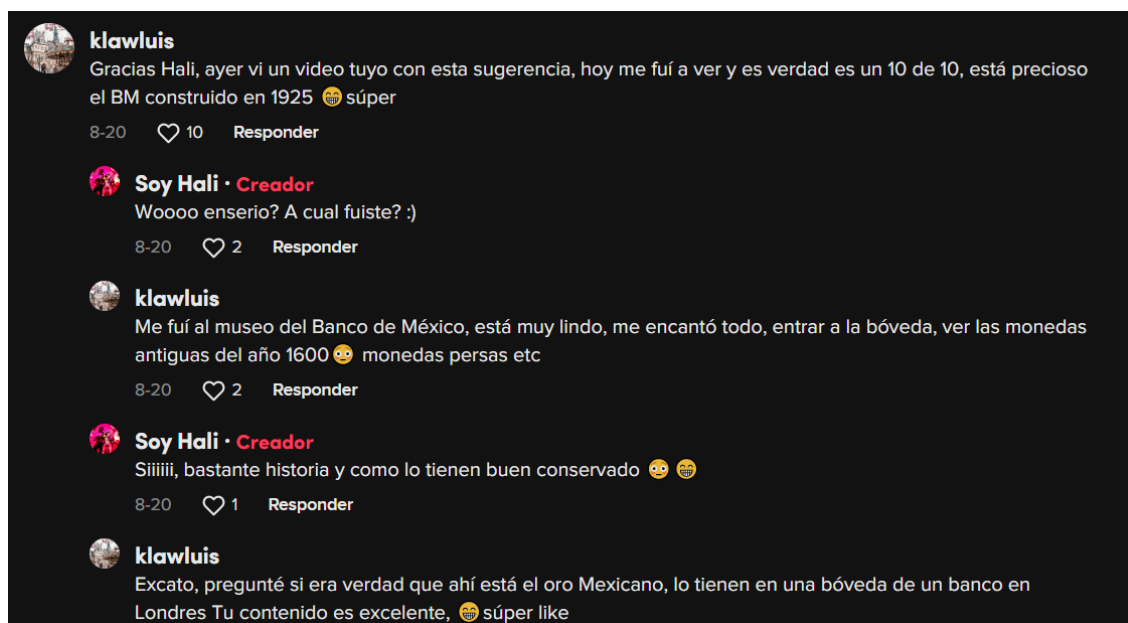


Figure 2. Conversation³ that reinforces the author's work

Source: @soyhali's profile on TikTok

Cognitive contributions by users occurred in 31.5% of the videos and consisted of the incorporation of new data: "his name is Brozo and he is very popular in Mexico; he is a very witty political critic", and of recommendations and allusions to local realities linked mainly to popular culture: "In Chile there is also a similar story and they use it for the same thing jsjd (to scare children), here we call him *the old man in the sack*".

Reasoned assumptions are also found: "after death [hair] no longer grows, it is because the skin as it dries gives that illusion as well as the nails"; as well as clarifications and corrections to other users. In all cases, the commentaries complement the explanations in the original video by extending knowledge on a particular subject. For instance, regarding the works plundered and exhibited in the British Museum, many users allude to specific pieces: "I'm not sure, but I think they also have the Moai that was taken from Chile". In relation to the latter, it is observed that tiktoks with a reflective purpose received the highest proportion of cognitive comments.

Videos that generated negative reviews were in the minority. They only occurred on 14.8% of occasions and were aimed at pointing out behaviour that endangered the safety of the works and decisions that, in the visitor's eyes, were wrong. For example, referring to the British Museum "and the information panels are not translated so you either read in English or not at all and it is a museum with an international reputation". That aura of a place of the muses, of respect and silence that pervaded the museum for centuries (Whelan, 2015), survives and is evident in comments such as this: "Don't go if you expect to find a museum. If what you are looking for is an attraction for foreigners to take photos for Instagram, then yes".

³ -Klawluis: Thank you Hali. yesterday I saw a video of yours with this suggestion, today I went to see it and it's true it's a 10 out of 10, the BM built in 1925 is beautiful super
 -Soy Hali: Wooooo really? Which one did you go to?
 -Klawluis: I went to the museum of the Bank of Mexico, it's very beautiful, I loved everything entering the vault, see the old coins of the year 1600, Persian coins etc
 -Soy Hali: Yes, quite a lot of history and as it's well preserved
 -Klawluis: exactly, I asked if it was true that the Mexican gold is there, they have it in a vault in a bank in London Your content is excellent, super like

It can be seen in the conversations that there is a “pull effect” that materialises in the firm intention to visit the museum that the influencer and the rest of the community are talking about (58.3%). This immediate purpose of action is usually accompanied either by a question addressed to the network of friends, “Anyone available to go this weekend?” or by directly quoting a specific profile to propose a plan “@name see if we have to pay or something and we go?” or “@name we have to go!!!”. It is striking that many users admit that they have no one to go with and search the net for someone in a similar situation who is willing to join the offer: “Who, to not go alone [sad face emoticon]”.

Finally, it is worth mentioning, not so much for their quantity but for the damage they cause, the sexist comments alluding to the physical appearance of the authors, which are only found on women’s profiles. The conversation reproduced serves as a clear example: “I already have 2 reasons to go [in allusion to her breasts]”; to which another user responds “[mocking face emoticon] you have good taste gentleman”; while another asks about her Instagram account: “ig of the *minita*⁴”. As Piñeiro-Otero and Martínez-Rolán (2021) point out, this type of manifestation undermines the expressive capacity of women and denotes an air of superiority on the part of those who utter it, making it a clearly sexist expression.

6. Discussion and conclusions

The change in audiovisual consumption and content production routines forces institutions to adapt to the new forms of communication and entertainment of their audiences (Beleniotti et al., 2019; Carignani, Iodice & Bifulco, 2023). This paper investigates the characteristics of the videos uploaded to TikTok with museums as protagonists, as it is the social media that has experienced the greatest growth since 2020 and whose penetration is especially marked among young people (Hootsuite, 2022). The audiovisual offer found on TikTok under the tag “Museum” is abundant, and it comes from potentially influential profiles; that is, with a consolidated community of followers. This content is attractive, as corroborated by the interaction figures achieved.

These results suggest the opening of museums to influence marketing –an activity strongly exploited in consumer goods, but with hardly any reference in the cultural field. This could help reconnect museums with the young population sector, increasingly apathetic and disconnected from the museums’ face-to-face activities (Barron & Leask, 2017; Martín Sanz, 2022). The recommendations of the creator profiles on TikTok were found to be based on free access and the achievement of a unique experience as the main claims. Comments from users, mainly in the form of questions, requests, or expressions of interest, are valuable feedback for museums, especially for those seeking to evolve at the same pace as their audiences (Waller & Waller, 2019). Consequently, the tasks of monitoring and, primarily, active listening, insofar as it implies a predisposition to incorporate improvements from the social audience, become key activities for decision making (Hughes & Moscardo, 2019).

In the videos analysed, the concept of museum is associated with that of a space for contemplation in which some, precisely the most praised, incorporate the active participation of users. The characters, mainly young people, are eager to touch, to be involved and to be surprised, especially on a sensorial level. As Sánchez-Amboage et al. (2022) state, museums are presented as consumer resources that rely on interpretation, interaction, and entertainment to capture the attention of the public. This explains the scarce presence in the tiktoks of classic museum functions, such as conservation or research of the pieces. For Su and Teng (2018) “museum touristification” and the shift in priorities, from being centred on the object –the collection– to focusing on obtaining an experience –the services provided, would justify the aforementioned absences. Therefore, museums would try to provide a type of experience, cognitive or aesthetic, depending on their condition: science or art museum, very recognisable in the tiktoks analysed. Content creators are also calling for museums to take a stand on social issues such as gender-based violence and climate change, highlighting those that do so.

Despite the playful and banal nature that characterises TikTok, the audiovisual content presented a markedly practical intentionality, based on the recommendation and narration of experiences, coinciding with the results of Bi and Tang’s study (2020) on the behaviour of short video creators whose practices are motivated by the communication of information, economic benefit, emotional control and self-expression. The comments expressed by the audience maintained this practical tone, being friendly and dynamic in that the rest of the users tried to respond or contribute to the doubts or questions of others, which contrasts with the hostile character already prevailing in applications such as Twitter or Facebook. However, traces of male chauvinism, albeit occasional, can be found (Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán, 2021).

Consequently, and in line with what has been suggested by authors such as Su and Teng (2018) or Manna and Palumbo (2018), the decision of youth to participate in the approach of museums, compared to the other cultural and leisure options available to them, will be linked to their capacity to transmit, to have an impact –at all levels: visual, social, cognitive–, and to adapt to the group’s personal and social expectations. The comments analysed revealed the desire of many users to go with friends; that is, to share the museum experience with their peers, so the great challenge for these institutions lies in attracting the group and offering them an alternative of interest (Hughes & Moscardo, 2019). The analysis of the online communication of relevant museums (Huebner, 2022; Kaiser-Moro & Sánchez-Mesa, 2023; Sánchez-Amboage et al., 2022) already reflects the efforts of many to engage in dialogic practices and integrate youth participation.

⁴ Diminutive of “mina”, a term used in Argentina to refer to a woman or female prostitute according to the Dictionary of Americanisms.

7. References

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