

**AI-ENHANCED COMMUNICATION IN TIKTOK APPAREL  
VIDEOS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF VISUAL AND  
INTERACTIVE STRATEGIES**



**THESIS**

Prepared and Submitted to the Graduate School  
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Demikian nota dinas ini disampaikan. Atas perhatian bapak, kami ucapkan terima kasih.

*Wassalamu'alaikum wr. wb.*

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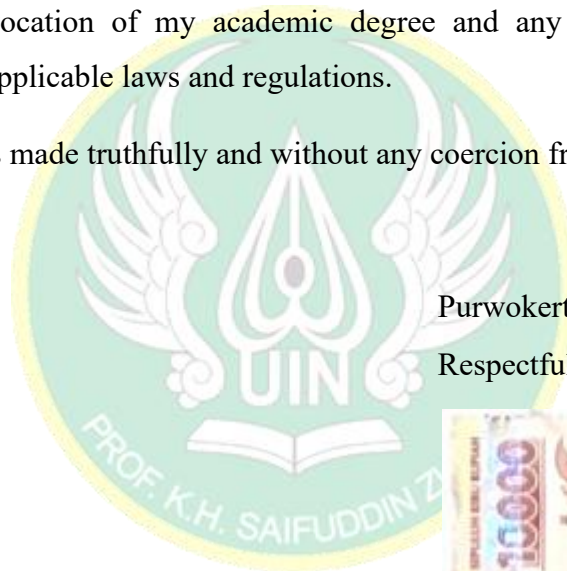
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Any sections of the thesis that are derived or quoted from the works of others have been properly acknowledged and cited in accordance with academic norms, rules, and ethical standards of scholarly writing.

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This declaration is made truthfully and without any coercion from any party.



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Respectfully,



Iqbal Hussain Alamyar

# AI-ENHANCED COMMUNICATION IN TIKTOK APPAREL VIDEOS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF VISUAL AND INTERACTIVE STRATEGIES

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates how AI-enhanced communication strategies are employed in TikTok apparel videos, with a focus on the official account @alluna.official, a modest fashion brand specializing in prayerwear. Using a quantitative descriptive content analysis, one hundred purposively selected posted videos were examined as the unit of analysis. Each video was systematically coded for AI-enhanced visual strategies, AR filters/lenses, text overlays/auto-captions, green screen/background replacement, emojis/stickers/graphics, and visual composition/layout, and for interactive strategies including text-to-speech, polls/quizzes, duet and stitch, hashtags/mentions, and calls-to-action. Binary coding (0 = absent, 1 = present) was applied, and intra-coder reliability was established through Cohen's Kappa with a threshold of  $\kappa \geq 0.70$ .

The findings show that universal visual strategies, particularly AR filters, emojis, and typography/layout, are present across all videos, ensuring a consistent semiotic baseline. Selective strategies such as text overlays and green screen effects are deployed situationally to clarify meaning or provide narrative context. On the interactive side, hashtags and calls-to-action form the communicative backbone, appearing in nearly all videos, while other features such as text-to-speech, mentions, polls, and duet/stitch are applied sparingly and contextually. Cross-tabulation analysis further reveals that these strategies are not randomly combined but orchestrated in ways that balance standardization with flexibility, allowing the brand to maintain coherence while adapting to situational demands.

Interpreted through Media Richness Theory, the use of multimodal cues reduces ambiguity and increases communicative clarity, while Uses and Gratifications Theory explains how interactive features satisfy audience needs for information, orientation, and participation. Together, these frameworks demonstrate that AI-enhanced tools in TikTok apparel videos are not ornamental but strategically functional, enabling brands to communicate clarity, creativity, and community in a highly competitive digital environment.

**Keywords:** AI-Enhanced Communication; TikTok; apparel videos; Content Analysis; Media Richness Theory; Uses and Gratifications Theory; Visual Strategies; Interactive Strategies

**PENINGKATAN KOMUNIKASI MELALUI KECERDASAN BUATAN (AI)  
DALAM VIDEO BUSANA DI TIKTOK: ANALISIS ISI STRATEGI  
VISUAL DAN INTERAKTIF**

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**ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana strategi komunikasi yang ditingkatkan dengan kecerdasan buatan (AI) diterapkan dalam video busana di TikTok, dengan fokus pada akun resmi @alluna.official, sebuah brand busana muslimah yang mengkhususkan diri pada mukena. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode analisis isi kuantitatif deskriptif terhadap seratus video yang dipilih secara purposif sebagai unit analisis. Setiap video dikodekan secara sistematis berdasarkan kategori strategi visual berbasis AI, filter/lensa AR, teks overlay/auto-caption, green screen/pengganti latar, emoji/stiker/grafis, serta komposisi/tipografi, dan strategi interaktif seperti text-to-speech, polling/kuis, duet dan stitch, hashtag/mention, serta ajakan bertindak (calls-to-action). Proses pengkodean dilakukan dengan sistem biner (0 = tidak ada, 1 = ada), dan reliabilitas intra-coder diuji melalui Cohen's Kappa dengan ambang batas  $\kappa \geq 0,70$ .

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi visual universal, khususnya filter AR, emoji, serta tipografi/komposisi, hadir pada seluruh video dan membentuk fondasi semiotik yang konsisten. Strategi selektif seperti teks overlay dan green screen digunakan secara situasional untuk memperjelas makna atau memberikan konteks naratif. Pada aspek interaktif, hashtag dan ajakan bertindak menjadi tulang punggung komunikasi karena muncul hampir di seluruh video, sedangkan fitur lain seperti text-to-speech, mention, polling, serta duet/stitch digunakan secara terbatas sesuai konteks. Analisis tabulasi silang menunjukkan bahwa strategi-strategi tersebut tidak diterapkan secara acak, melainkan diorkestrasi secara seimbang antara standarisasi dan fleksibilitas, sehingga memungkinkan brand menjaga koherensi sekaligus menyesuaikan diri dengan kebutuhan situasional.

Ditinjau melalui Media Richness Theory, penggunaan kode multimodal berperan dalam mengurangi ambiguitas dan meningkatkan kejelasan komunikasi. Sementara itu, Uses and Gratifications Theory menjelaskan bagaimana fitur interaktif mampu memenuhi kebutuhan audiens akan informasi, orientasi, dan partisipasi. Secara keseluruhan, kedua kerangka teori ini menunjukkan bahwa alat berbasis AI dalam video busana TikTok bukan sekadar ornamen, melainkan berfungsi strategis untuk menghadirkan komunikasi yang jelas, kreatif, dan berbasis komunitas dalam ekosistem digital yang kompetitif.

**Kata Kunci:** Komunikasi berbasis AI; TikTok; Video Busana; Analisis Isi; Media Richness Theory; Uses and Gratifications Theory; Strategi Visual; Strategi Interaktif

## MOTTO

وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

Transliteration: Wa qul rabbi zidnī ‘ilmā

“And say, ‘My Lord, increase me in knowledge.’” (Qur’an, Surah Ṭāhā [20]:114)



## DEDICATION

### **Pantun (Bahasa Indonesia):**

Rantau jauh membawa harapan,  
Ilmu dicari setulus jiwa.  
UIN Saizu jadi sandaran,  
Indonesia terpatri selamanya.

With deepest respect and gratitude, I dedicate this thesis to my beloved alma mater, Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto, a place that has nurtured my growth and guided me toward maturity in knowledge and character.

To my dear parents, whose prayers, sacrifices, and unconditional love have been my greatest source of strength, this accomplishment belongs to you as much as it does to me.

To my esteemed professors and lecturers, I am indebted to your wisdom, patience, and encouragement. To my supervisors, I am profoundly grateful for your guidance and trust throughout this journey.

To the entire university community, from the administrative staff to the kind members of the International Office, thank you for your tireless assistance, your kindness, and your warmth that made me feel at home, even far from my homeland.

And to Indonesia, a land that welcomed me with generosity and kindness, I will forever treasure your culture, your people, and the experiences you have given me. My years here have been not only a period of learning, but also of contributing to the university and community in ways that I hope will leave a lasting trace. I carry this as both an honor and a responsibility, one that I will continue to uphold with sincerity in the years ahead.

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This work marks the fulfillment of the requirements for obtaining a Master’s Degree in the Graduate School, Islamic Communication and Broadcasting Study Program, at the State Islamic University (UIN) Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto.

Shalawat and salām I send upon the noble Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the best of examples, whose teachings illuminate the path of knowledge and faith.

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Finally, I pray that Allah accepts this humble work as a form of devotion to knowledge, and may it bring benefit to myself, my family, my university, and the wider ummah.

Purwokerto, 10 Sept 2025



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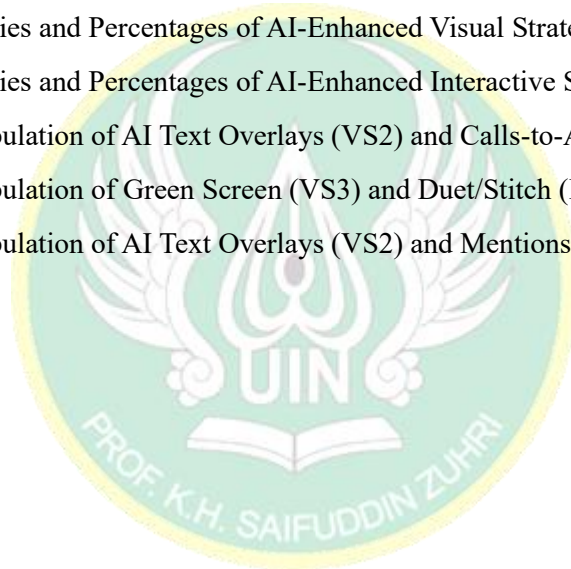
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background

Over the past decade, digital media has become one of the most powerful arenas of human communication, transforming the way individuals, brands, and communities interact. Among the various formats, short-form video platforms have emerged as dominant channels for communication and cultural expression. TikTok, in particular, has established itself as one of the most influential platforms globally, with more than 1.5 billion active users as of 2024, many of whom are members of Generation Z and Millennials, demographics widely associated with trend adoption and fashion consumption.<sup>1</sup> Unlike earlier platforms such as YouTube or Facebook, TikTok's strength lies in its ability to combine brevity, entertainment, and interactivity into a seamless form of communication; a combination whose communicative implications, especially in AI-enhanced apparel contexts, remain under-examined in scholarly literature.<sup>2</sup>

In parallel with the rise of short-form videos, artificial intelligence (AI) has rapidly become embedded in digital communication practices. AI is no longer limited to back-end functions such as recommendation algorithms, but is increasingly visible to users through front-facing tools. These include a variety of tools such as AR filters, auto-generated captions, green screen effects, and synthetic voice options. Importantly, such features are not neutral; they actively shape how messages are constructed, perceived, and circulated within

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<sup>1</sup> Bojana Radovanović, "TikTok and Sound: Changing the Ways of Creating, Promoting, Distributing and Listening to Music," *INSAM Journal of Contemporary Music, Art and Technology*, no. 9 (December 15, 2022): 51–73, <https://doi.org/10.51191/ISSN.2637-1898.2022.5.9.51>.

<sup>2</sup> Abderahman Rejeb et al., "Mapping the Scholarly Landscape of TikTok (Douyin): A Bibliometric Exploration of Research Topics and Trends," *Digital Business* 4, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.digbus.2024.100075>.

digital spaces.<sup>3</sup> The integration of AI into video platforms demonstrates how technology is not merely a technical aid but a communication enhancer, altering visual presentation, interactive possibilities, and audience perception.<sup>4</sup>

The significance of AI in digital communication is also tied to its accelerating adoption across industries. According to the World Economic Forum (2023), the use of AI-driven tools in communication and marketing has grown by over 60% since 2020, with particular emphasis on industries reliant on visual storytelling, such as fashion and beauty.<sup>5</sup> This shift indicates a broader cultural and communicative transformation: audiences increasingly expect digitally enhanced, immersive, and participatory experiences; a shift that positions AI-enhanced short-form video as a critical site for academic inquiry, rather than solely a marketing trend.<sup>6</sup>

From a communication perspective, this trend is not merely technological but also theoretical. To examine these practices, the research adopts a quantitative descriptive content analysis approach, which is well-suited for systematically mapping the presence and patterns of communication strategies within a defined sample of videos. Classic communication theories emphasize the role of media richness (Daft & Lengel, 1986) and audience gratifications (Katz et al., 1973) in shaping effective communication.<sup>7</sup> More recent studies extend these frameworks to digital and social media contexts, showing that AI-driven and short-form video features enhance message richness

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<sup>3</sup> Yang Yang, "TikTok/Douyin Use and Its Influencer Video Use: A Cross-Cultural Comparison between Chinese and US Users," *Online Media and Global Communication* 1, no. 2 (June 1, 2022): 339–68, <https://doi.org/10.1515/OMGC-2022-0016/PDF>.

<sup>4</sup> L Lanneskog, "The Impact of AI Integration on Audience: A Qualitative Study of Young Adults' Perspectives and Attitudes towards the Integration of AI on Tikok.," *Journals.Sagepub.Com* 8, no. 1 (2023): 1–66, <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1782242/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Wojciech Kułaga, "Revolutionizing Visual Communication and Digital Creative Engagement: The Game-Changing Impact of TikTok," *Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej* 20, no. 3 (2024): 212–35.

<sup>6</sup> Feng Wenting et al., "Is Flattering AI More Popular? The Influence of Communication Strategy of AI Customer Service on Consumers' Attitudes," *SSRN*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.2139/SSRN.4363638>.

<sup>7</sup> Praventyasari Mutiara, Kinkin Yuliaty, and Subarsa Putri, "The Study of Uses and Gratification Theory of TikTok as A Shopping Platform Seen from Buyers' View," *Journal of Digital Marketing and Communication* 4, no. 1 (May 20, 2024): 7–18, <https://doi.org/10.53623/JDMC.V4I1.429>.

and fulfill audience gratifications in contemporary platforms such as TikTok.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the integration of AI into short-form video platforms can be viewed as a direct evolution of communication practices, reinforcing the relevance of established communication theories in contemporary contexts.<sup>9</sup> However, despite TikTok's rapid growth and its reliance on AI-enhanced features, there remains a lack of systematic research on how these visual and interactive features function as deliberate communication strategies in apparel-focused videos.

The global context shows that the convergence of digital media and AI technologies has redefined communication in both everyday and professional spheres. Platforms like TikTok exemplify this convergence, offering a space where AI-enhanced communication strategies are not optional but fundamental to attracting and maintaining audience attention. This sets the stage for examining how specific industries, such as fashion and apparel, adopt and adapt these strategies to construct meaning and engage audiences through video communication.<sup>10</sup>

The rapid rise of TikTok demonstrates its evolution from a platform of entertainment into a significant communication hub, particularly for fashion and lifestyle industries.<sup>11</sup> Unlike static image platforms such as Instagram, TikTok's algorithm-driven feed and highly participatory culture encourage continuous content circulation and discovery. This has positioned TikTok as a unique site

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<sup>8</sup> Rejeb et al., "Mapping the Scholarly Landscape of TikTok (Douyin): A Bibliometric Exploration of Research Topics and Trends," 2024.

<sup>9</sup> Aparajita Bhandari and Sara Bimo, "Why's Everyone on TikTok Now? The Algorithmized Self and the Future of Self-Making on Social Media," *Social Media and Society* 8, no. 1 (March 1, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221086241>

<sup>10</sup> Yang Feng and Quan Xie, "Optimizing Branded Content for Beauty and Fashion Influencers from a Media Richness Perspective: How Post Topic and Visual Type Intertwine to Boost Consumer Engagement," *Journal of Advertising Research* 65, no. 1 (2025): 95–110, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00218499.2025.2464287>.

<sup>11</sup> Bhandari and Bimo, "Why's Everyone on TikTok Now? The Algorithmized Self and the Future of Self-Making on Social Media."

where fashion brands, independent designers, and everyday users co-create trends, often blurring the line between consumer and producer.<sup>12</sup>

Fashion, by its very nature, relies heavily on visual storytelling and cultural trend-making. The communicative strength of TikTok lies in its ability to combine visual spectacle with social interaction, thereby aligning perfectly with the demands of fashion communication.<sup>13</sup> Leading fashion brands have increasingly invested in TikTok to reach global audiences, using short videos to showcase outfits, seasonal collections, and even behind-the-scenes content. These videos often employ not only aesthetic presentation but also interactive prompts, inviting users to duet, stitch, or participate in hashtag challenges.<sup>14</sup>

Beyond corporate brands, fashion influencers and micro-influencers also thrive on TikTok. They often communicate apparel trends through “outfit of the day” (OOTD) clips, fashion hauls, and styling tutorials, making use of AI-enhanced filters, editing effects, and captions to create a polished presentation. These practices demonstrate how digital communication strategies are embedded into fashion promotion, where the goal is not only to display clothing but also to build a sense of authenticity, relatability, and engagement.<sup>15</sup>

The platform’s effectiveness in fashion communication is also linked to its algorithmic design, which pushes content to users who may not follow a brand but are algorithmically identified as having fashion-related interests.<sup>16</sup> This design enhances visibility and enables small apparel accounts to potentially “go viral” alongside established fashion houses. From a

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<sup>12</sup> D. Bondy Valdovinos Kaye, Xu Chen, and Jing Zeng, “The Co-Evolution of Two Chinese Mobile Short Video Apps: Parallel Platformization of Douyin and TikTok,” *Mobile Media & Communication* 9, no. 2 (May 1, 2020): 229–53, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2050157920952120>.

<sup>13</sup> Riezky Ramadhan, Eka Aprilia Khoeruh Umanah, and Khaerudin Imawan, “Digital Marketing Strategy for Fashion Products on Tiktok,” *Jurnal Syntax Admiration* 6, no. 7 (July 29, 2025): 1606–25, <https://doi.org/10.46799/JSA.V6I7.2443>.

<sup>14</sup> Jing Zeng, Chrystal Abidin, and Mike S. Schäfer, “Research Perspectives on TikTok and Its Legacy Apps: Introduction,” *International Journal of Communication*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.5167/UZH-205427>.

<sup>15</sup> Fandi Omeish et al., “Between Human and AI Influencers: Parasocial Relationships, Credibility, and Social Capital Formation in a Collectivist Market: A Study of TikTok Users in the Middle East,” *Discover Sustainability* 6, no. 1 (2025): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.1007/S43621-025-00891-W/TABLES/13>.

<sup>16</sup> Susan B. Kaiser and Denise Nicole Green, “Fashion and Cultural Studies,” *Fashion and Cultural Studies*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350104716>.

communication standpoint, this indicates that TikTok's ecosystem fosters two-way communication: brands communicate through visually appealing content, while audiences respond through likes, comments, shares, and recreations.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, TikTok's emphasis on music, trends, and challenges makes it particularly powerful in setting fashion aesthetics and cultural discourses. For example, a trending audio clip combined with AR filters can instantly define the aesthetic appeal of an apparel-related video, influencing not just consumer behavior but also broader cultural narratives of style, beauty, and identity.<sup>18</sup>

In essence, TikTok's role in fashion and apparel communication highlights how creators employ short-form videos to market clothing and shape visual culture.<sup>19</sup> The use of AI-enhanced features such as augmented reality filters, auto-captions, and background replacements extends the communicative potential of these videos by enabling greater symbolic layering and audience engagement. These tools are not supplementary but integral to the way messages are constructed and interpreted on the platform.<sup>20</sup> For example, a simple outfit video can become more engaging through AR try-ons or playful stickers, while AI-generated captions improve accessibility. In this sense, AI-enhanced tools serve as both aesthetic devices and communicative strategies, directly shaping how apparel content is presented and experienced.<sup>21</sup>

One of TikTok's defining characteristics as a communication platform is its seamless integration of AI-enhanced tools that shape how messages are created, displayed, and interpreted. These tools are not neutral design elements;

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<sup>17</sup> Ramadhan, Umanah, and Imawan, "Digital Marketing Strategy for Fashion Products on Tiktok."

<sup>18</sup> Kaye, Chen, and Zeng, "The Co-Evolution of Two Chinese Mobile Short Video Apps: Parallel Platformization of Douyin and TikTok."

<sup>19</sup> Geofakta Razali and Latifa Ramonita, "Visual Communication Psychology in the Age of AI: An Audience Perception Analysis of Face Filters on TikTok Media," *RIGGS: Journal of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Business* 4, no. 2 (May 7, 2025): 117–21, <https://doi.org/10.31004/riggs.v4i2.465>.

<sup>20</sup> Charlotte Söderström et al., "Augmented Reality (AR) Marketing and Consumer Responses: A Study of Cue-Utilization and Habituation," *Journal of Business Research* 182 (September 1, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.JBUSRES.2024.114813>.

<sup>21</sup> Soniya Chaniya et al., "AI in Social Media and Entertainment," *International Journal on Advanced Computer Engineering and Communication Technology* 14, no. 1 (May 29, 2025): 425–30, <https://journals.mriindia.com/index.php/ijacect/article/view/468>.

they are strategic communication devices that affect both meaning construction and audience reception. For the fashion and apparel sector, where visual appeal and engagement are critical, such tools play a central role in how clothing and style are communicated to audiences.<sup>22</sup>

**Visual Strategies.** TikTok provides a range of AI-driven visual effects that allow creators to manipulate how apparel is presented. Augmented reality (AR) filters and background replacement features enable users to simulate different environments or alter physical appearances, creating highly polished representations of fashion items. Auto-generated captions and text overlays enhance accessibility and reinforce key promotional messages, while emojis, stickers, and stylized typography introduce symbolic cues that shape the tone and emphasis of communication.<sup>23</sup> These tools transform a simple video of clothing into a multi-layered communicative artifact, where meaning is conveyed not only through the garments themselves but also through the digital enhancements layered onto them.<sup>24</sup>

**Interactive Strategies.** Beyond visuals, TikTok emphasizes interactivity through AI-assisted features that invite audience participation. The text-to-speech (TTS) function allows creators to narrate their videos using synthetic voices, enabling playful or dramatic communication styles that can make content more engaging. Duet and stitch functions foster dialogic communication, as audiences are encouraged to respond to or remix original videos, creating a sense of conversation around apparel content. Additionally, polls, quizzes, hashtags, mentions, and calls to action are tools that stimulate participation and expand message reach. Hashtag challenges, for instance, not only organize content but also generate collective involvement, creating trends

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<sup>22</sup> Andi Indra Sulaiman, "The Effect of Viral Marketing through the TikTok Platform on Generation Z Consumer Purchasing Decisions in Luwu," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, February 5, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5125575>.

<sup>23</sup> Carlos Flavián, Sergio Ibáñez-Sánchez, and Carlos Orús, "User Responses Towards Augmented Reality Face Filters: Implications for Social Media and Brands," *Rogress in IS. Springer, Cham*, 2021, 29–42, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-68086-2\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-68086-2_3).

<sup>24</sup> Razali and Ramonita, "Visual Communication Psychology in the Age of AI: An Audience Perception Analysis of Face Filters on TikTok Media."

that can significantly amplify the communicative power of fashion-related campaigns.<sup>25</sup>

From a communication perspective, these visual and interactive features collectively increase the richness of the medium. They layer multiple channels of meaning, visual, textual, auditory, and participatory, thereby aligning with what Media Richness Theory defines as a rich medium capable of conveying nuanced messages.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, these strategies are intentionally aligned with audience gratifications: entertainment, self-expression, identity formation, and social connection, as highlighted by Uses and Gratifications studies on TikTok.<sup>27</sup>

In the context of apparel communication, this means that TikTok videos do more than display products. They employ AI-enhanced tools to communicate lifestyle, identity, and cultural belonging, positioning clothing within broader symbolic and social frameworks. This illustrates why AI-enhanced strategies are central to contemporary digital communication: they shape not only how messages are delivered but also how they are interpreted, shared, and re-contextualized by audiences.<sup>28</sup>

To frame the significance of AI-enhanced strategies in TikTok apparel videos, it is necessary to recognize the relevance of established communication theories that help explain why such strategies matter. Two theoretical perspectives, Media Richness Theory (MRT) and Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), provide a strong conceptual foundation for the study.

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<sup>25</sup> Minghao Qu, “The Study on Tik Tok Interactive Modes and Future Interactive Video Strategy Development,” *Proceedings of the 2022 8th International Conference on Humanities and Social Science Research (ICHSSR 2022)* 664 (June 1, 2022): 1746–50, <https://doi.org/10.2991/ASSEHR.K.220504.316>.

<sup>26</sup> Xuanzheng Xiong, “Research on Exploding Video Creation Strategy Based on Visual Communication,” *Highlights in Science, Engineering and Technology* 24 (December 27, 2022): 252–56, <https://doi.org/10.54097/HSET.V24I.3930>.

<sup>27</sup> Gideon Gyimah, “Uses and Gratification Theory: A Study of Social Media Usage, Tiktok among the Youth.,” *International Journal of Latest Technology in Engineering, Management & Applied Science* XIII, no. III (2024): 53–57, <https://doi.org/10.51583/IJLTEMAS.2024.130307>.

<sup>28</sup> Olga Shabalina and Michelle R. Nelson, “Reconsidering Ad Design Practices and Visual Aesthetics in Social Media Interactive Spaces: Toward a Conceptual Framework,” *Journal of Interactive Advertising* 25, no. 2 (2025): 139–56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2025.2467064>.

Media Richness Theory (MRT), first introduced by Daft and Lengel in 1986, explains why richer media, those combining multiple cues such as visuals, sound, and interactivity, are more effective for communication. In TikTok apparel videos, the presence of AR filters, green screen effects, and text overlays can be seen as strategies that increase media richness and enhance communicative impact. Thus, MRT highlights why the use of AI-driven visual and interactive strategies is not superficial but central to effective communication in apparel videos.<sup>29</sup>

Uses and Gratifications Theory. UGT, developed by Katz et al. in 1973, emphasizes the active role of audiences in choosing and interpreting media based on the gratifications they seek. On TikTok, users engage with content to satisfy needs such as entertainment, social interaction, self-expression, and identity formation.<sup>30</sup> For apparel communication, AI-enhanced strategies align directly with these motivations. For example, duet and stitch features fulfill social interaction needs, while filters and visual effects enhance self-expression and aesthetic gratification. By embedding these strategies into videos, content creators and fashion brands increase the likelihood that audiences will not only view the content but also participate, remix, and share it.<sup>31</sup>

Together, these theories underscore the communicative value of AI-enhanced strategies. MRT explains how such strategies increase the richness of message delivery, while UGT explains why they are effective in capturing and sustaining audience interest. Although detailed theoretical discussions will be presented in Chapter II, their mention here clarifies that this study is grounded

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<sup>29</sup> Win Lae and Moe Khine, "The Impact of Media Richness, Celebrity Endorsement and Consumers' Engagement of Tik Tok Marketing on Their Intention to Visit Restaurants in Thailand.," *Http://Dspace.Bu.Ac.Th/Jspui/Handle/123456789/5735*, 2024, <http://dspace.bu.ac.th/handle/123456789/5735>.

<sup>30</sup> Gyimah, "Uses and Gratification Theory: A Study of Social Media Usage, Tiktok among the Youth."

<sup>31</sup> Grace Falgoust et al., "Applying the Uses and Gratifications Theory to Identify Motivational Factors behind Young Adult's Participation in Viral Social Media Challenges on TikTok," *Human Factors in Healthcare* 2 (December 1, 2022): 100014, <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.HFH.2022.100014>.

in established communication frameworks, ensuring both academic rigor and conceptual relevance.

A central feature of this research is its focused scope, which deliberately limits the unit of analysis to a single TikTok account, referred to here as @alluna.official. This account has been selected because it consistently produces apparel-related content and demonstrates the regular use of AI-enhanced strategies, making it an appropriate case for systematic examination. By narrowing the study to one account, the research avoids the heterogeneity that would arise from analyzing multiple accounts with vastly different content styles, audiences, and objectives. Instead, it allows for contextual depth and consistency, strengthening the reliability of the analysis.

The scope of the study is further limited to posted videos only, excluding livestreams and ephemeral content. This decision is important for both methodological and theoretical reasons. Methodologically, posted videos are archival and accessible, making them feasible for repeated coding and reliability testing. Theoretically, posted videos often reflect deliberate communication strategies, whereas livestreams may prioritize spontaneity and interaction over structured messaging. By focusing on posted apparel videos, this study ensures that the analysis captures intentional uses of AI-enhanced communication strategies.

A total of 100 videos have been purposively selected from the account for coding and analysis. The purposive sampling technique is justified because not all videos within the account may be relevant to the focus of this study; only those that meet the criteria of apparel-related communication will be included. This sample size strikes a balance between feasibility and representativeness. While smaller samples risk oversimplification, excessively large samples may compromise the researcher's ability to maintain consistent coding. A selection of 100 videos provides sufficient data for meaningful descriptive analysis while remaining manageable for a single coder. Random sampling was not employed because not all videos in the account met the inclusion criteria; purposive sampling ensured relevance and feature presence.

By explicitly delimiting the scope in this way, the study positions itself as a focused case analysis rather than a broad generalization of TikTok as a whole. This design aligns with the goals of descriptive content analysis, which aims to map and describe communication strategies within a defined context rather than establish universal causal relationships. The selection of @alluna.official as the single case study is deliberate: it provides a focused and analyzable example of how AI-enhanced strategies operate within a consistent apparel communication context on TikTok.

Although TikTok has been the subject of increasing scholarly attention in recent years, much of the existing research has concentrated on marketing effectiveness, influencer branding, and consumer engagement metrics. For example, Siying Liu et al. examined how Zara used TikTok to enhance brand engagement.<sup>32</sup> While Asep Koswara focused on the role of hashtag trends in shaping consumer decisions in the beauty sector.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, Ramadhan et al. investigated digital marketing strategies for fashion products, emphasizing influencer collaborations and content styles. These studies demonstrate that TikTok is recognized as a powerful platform for digital promotion and branding.<sup>34</sup>

However, there is a notable gap in research concerning the communication strategies themselves, particularly those that are AI-enhanced. While existing literature acknowledges the use of filters, hashtags, and duets, these elements are often treated as background tools within broader marketing discussions, rather than as strategic communicative practices worthy of systematic analysis. Very few studies have attempted to map the presence and

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<sup>32</sup> Siying Liu, Yingshun Huang, and Qianhui Pan, "Analyzing the Strategic Impact of Zara's Branding Strategies on Consumer Engagement and Market Position," *SHS Web of Conferences* 185 (2024): 03018, <https://doi.org/10.1051/SHSCONF/202418503018>.

<sup>33</sup> Asep Koswara, "TikTok and the Future of Digital Business: Exploring the Platform's Role in Shaping Global Trends," *Organization, and Information System*, 2025, <https://journalnetworth.com/index.php/aois/article/view/1>.

<sup>34</sup> Ramadhan, Umanah, and Imawan, "Digital Marketing Strategy for Fashion Products on Tiktok."

patterns of such strategies within a specific communication context, such as apparel-related content.

The novelty of this study lies in its descriptive, communication-centered focus. While previous research has examined TikTok in relation to marketing outcomes, influencer branding, or consumer behavior, to the researcher's knowledge, no prior study has systematically applied a quantitative descriptive content analysis to map AI-enhanced visual and interactive strategies in TikTok apparel videos. By coding and categorizing these strategies, the present study introduces a structured account of communication practices that have so far been addressed only in fragmented ways. This originality is reflected in both the title of the study and the methodological approach, which firmly situate the research within the discipline of communication and broadcasting, thereby distinguishing it from business- or marketing-oriented investigations.

Additionally, this study's focus on a single TikTok account as a case provides a depth of analysis rarely found in broader surveys. Previous research has often generalized across platforms or large datasets without considering the contextual coherence of a single creator or brand. By focusing on a selected TikTok account, it delivers a granular and contextually consistent analysis, highlighting how one account strategically employs AI tools to communicate apparel-related messages.

While existing scholarship has highlighted the importance of TikTok for brand engagement and marketing outcomes, there remains a lack of structured, communication-driven analyses of AI-enhanced strategies in apparel videos. This study fills that gap by offering a novel quantitative descriptive content analysis, guided by Media Richness Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory, that systematically maps the use of visual and interactive communication strategies in a focused TikTok context. The need for this study arises from both academic and practical considerations, each underscoring why a descriptive content analysis of AI-enhanced communication strategies in TikTok apparel videos is timely and relevant.

From an academic perspective, the study extends communication research into an underexplored domain where AI tools and digital media intersect. While Media Richness Theory (MRT) and Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) have been applied in prior studies of online communication, they have rarely been used together to analyze AI-enhanced features in short-form video contexts. By examining how TikTok apparel videos utilize visual and interactive strategies, this research demonstrates how classic theories remain relevant in the age of algorithm-driven, AI-augmented media. Furthermore, the systematic coding of these strategies provides empirical evidence that strengthens communication scholarship, moving beyond anecdotal accounts or purely marketing-focused studies.<sup>35</sup>

From a practical perspective, the study responds to the growing demand among content creators, fashion brands, and marketers for insights into how TikTok can be effectively used for apparel communication. The fashion industry is highly visual, trend-driven, and reliant on audience participation. Understanding which AI-enhanced strategies are commonly employed and how they function communicatively can help practitioners refine their approaches to digital storytelling and audience engagement. For example, recognizing the communicative impact of AR filters or duet functions allows creators to craft content that is not only visually appealing but also participatory, aligning with audience expectations on the platform.

Finally, from a social perspective, the study is relevant because TikTok has become a cultural space where meanings of fashion, identity, and self-presentation are negotiated. Apparel videos are not just commercial messages but also cultural artifacts that shape how people perceive style, beauty, and social belonging. By analyzing AI-enhanced strategies, this research sheds light on the communicative processes that influence how trends are circulated and identities are performed in digital environments.

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<sup>35</sup> Sergio Ibáñez-Sánchez, Carlos Orús, and Carlos Flavián, “Augmented Reality Filters on Social Media. Analyzing the Drivers of Playability Based on Uses and Gratifications Theory,” *Psychology and Marketing* 39, no. 3 (March 1, 2022): 559–78, <https://doi.org/10.1002/MAR.21639>.

Taken together, these considerations affirm the significance of this study. Academically, it fills a research gap and expands theoretical application. Practically, it offers guidance to fashion communicators navigating an AI-driven media landscape. Socially, it contributes to understanding how communication practices shape culture in the digital era. For these reasons, this research is not only necessary but also meaningful within both scholarly and applied contexts.

## **B. Problem Statement**

As outlined in the background, despite TikTok's rapid rise as a global communication platform and its widespread adoption by fashion and apparel brands, there remains a lack of systematic academic attention to the specific communication strategies that make content effective on the platform. Most existing studies have emphasized marketing outcomes, influencer branding, or consumer behavior, while the communicative mechanisms, particularly those involving AI-enhanced tools, have not been subjected to systematic, theory-driven examination that maps their communicative functions within apparel-focused TikTok content.

The central problem is that visual and interactive strategies, though integral to TikTok's communication environment, are often overlooked. They are commonly treated as incidental features rather than deliberate communication practices that shape how meaning is constructed and conveyed. This neglect has resulted in an absence of structured, communication-focused analysis of AI-enhanced strategies in TikTok apparel videos.

Features such as AR filters, text-to-speech, duets, and hashtag challenges are not merely technical add-ons. They are strategic communication devices that influence how apparel is represented, interpreted, and shared. To date, there has been no systematic academic effort to map and categorize these AI-enhanced strategies within the context of apparel communication on TikTok.

Without such research, communication scholarship risks leaving an analytical gap between traditional theories of media richness and audience

gratifications and the emerging realities of AI-driven short-form video communication. Similarly, practitioners in the apparel industry lack academic insights into how these strategies function communicatively, beyond their immediate marketing effects. Therefore, the central problem addressed in this study is the absence of a structured, communication-focused analysis of AI-enhanced visual and interactive strategies in TikTok apparel videos.

### **C. Problem Limitation**

To ensure focus, clarity, and feasibility, this study is bounded by several deliberate limitations. These boundaries are essential in defining the scope of the research and distinguishing what is included from what is excluded.

#### **1. Platform and Account Limitation**

The study is limited to a single TikTok account, chosen for its consistent focus on apparel promotion, frequent use of AI-enhanced features, and consistent production of apparel-related content. This combined limitation ensures analytical depth, stylistic coherence, and contextual consistency while avoiding the dilution that could occur from analyzing multiple accounts with varying practices, audiences, or content styles.

#### **2. Content Limitation**

The analysis is restricted to posted apparel-related videos, while livestreams and non-apparel content are excluded. Posted videos were deliberately chosen because they are stable, crafted content suitable for systematic coding, whereas livestreams are ephemeral and less consistent for analysis.

#### **3. Sample Limitation**

A total of 100 videos have been purposively selected for analysis, providing a manageable yet representative sample. The sample size is chosen to balance representativeness with feasibility, allowing for meaningful descriptive analysis while remaining manageable for a single coder.

#### 4. Feature Limitation

This study is limited to AI-enhanced communication strategies, categorized into visual strategies (e.g., AR filters, text overlays, emojis, typography) and interactive strategies (e.g., text-to-speech, duet/stitch, hashtags, polls, calls to action). Other elements of communication, such as music choice, lighting, or production quality, are not included unless they overlap with the defined indicators.

By establishing these limitations, this study ensures that the analysis remains focused, systematic, and aligned with the research objectives. The delimitations also make clear what this study does not attempt to do: it does not measure consumer attitudes, sales outcomes, or algorithmic processes, nor does it generalize across all fashion accounts. Instead, it provides a descriptive mapping of communication strategies within a carefully defined context.

#### **D. Problem Formulation**

Based on the background, problem statement, and delimitations described earlier, the study is directed by the following research questions:

1. How are AI-enhanced visual strategies employed in TikTok apparel videos?

This question addresses the use of augmented reality (AR) filters, text overlays, green screen effects, emojis, stickers, and typography as deliberate communication practices in apparel-related content.

2. How are AI-enhanced interactive strategies employed in TikTok apparel videos?

This question examines the use of text-to-speech (TTS), polls, duet and stitch functions, hashtags, mentions, and calls to action as interactive tools that shape communication within the platform.

These two questions are designed to guide the descriptive content analysis by focusing on the presence and patterns of AI-enhanced communication strategies in apparel videos. They deliberately avoid measuring

outcomes such as sales or engagement levels, aligning the research firmly with its communication-focused objective.

### **E. Research Objectives**

In line with the problem formulation, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To analyze the use of AI-enhanced visual strategies in TikTok apparel videos.

This involves identifying and categorizing how creators employ features such as augmented reality filters, text overlays, green screen effects, emojis, stickers, and typography to enhance the visual communication of apparel content.

2. To analyze the use of AI-enhanced interactive strategies in TikTok apparel videos.

This involves examining the application of interactive tools such as text-to-speech (TTS), polls, duet and stitch functions, hashtags, mentions, and calls to action in shaping communication practices on the platform.

These objectives ensure that the study remains descriptive and communication-centered. By focusing on both visual and interactive strategies, the research provides a comprehensive account of how AI-enhanced tools are strategically integrated into TikTok apparel videos.

### **F. Research Significance**

This study holds significance on multiple levels, reflecting its contributions to academic scholarship, professional practice, methodological, and broader social understanding.

1. Academic Significance

From an academic perspective, this research expands the field of communication studies in digital media environments by focusing on AI-enhanced strategies within short-form video platforms. While much of the existing literature addresses marketing outcomes, branding, or consumer

psychology, this study offers a communication-centered analysis that systematically maps how visual and interactive tools are applied in apparel videos. By explicitly grounding the analysis in Media Richness Theory (MRT) and Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) from the outset of the thesis, this research demonstrates the continuing relevance of these classic frameworks while extending them into the AI-mediated, short-form video environment of TikTok. The findings will provide empirical evidence that contributes to the growing body of work on digital communication, AI integration, and fashion media studies.

## 2. Practical Significance

On a practical level, this research offers insights for content creators, apparel brands, and digital marketers seeking to optimize their communication strategies on TikTok. By identifying the specific visual and interactive tools most frequently used in apparel videos, this study can inform practitioners about which AI-enhanced features function as effective communication devices. This knowledge can guide the production of videos that are not only visually appealing but also participatory, aligning with audience expectations in the platform's highly interactive ecosystem. For smaller apparel creators, the findings may serve as a reference for enhancing visibility and engagement within TikTok's saturated content environment.

## 3. Methodological Significance

This research is also significant from a methodological perspective. While much of the existing TikTok research relies on surveys, interviews, or marketing analytics, methodologically, this study employs a quantitative descriptive content analysis, a method rarely applied to short-form video platforms such as TikTok. By doing so, it generates empirical data on communication strategies and provides a model for future research on AI-mediated communication in digital media. By systematically coding and categorizing visual and interactive strategies, the research not only generates empirical findings but also demonstrates the usefulness of content analysis for examining short-form video communication. This

methodological contribution may serve as a reference for future scholars who seek to analyze digital communication phenomena with similar approaches.

#### 4. Social and Cultural Significance

Finally, this research has significance at a social and cultural level. TikTok is not only a commercial platform but also a cultural space where meanings of fashion, beauty, and identity are produced and circulated. Apparel videos contribute to shaping cultural discourses about style, self-presentation, and social belonging. By analyzing how AI-enhanced tools are embedded into such communication, socially and culturally, this research highlights how digital technologies mediate cultural values and practices, particularly in the representation of fashion and identity. AI-enhanced features such as filters or background effects not only shape aesthetic presentation but also contribute to broader debates around beauty standards, authenticity, and cultural expression in digital spaces. Understanding these dynamics is important for scholars and practitioners who wish to critically examine the role of AI in everyday communication and cultural production.

#### **G. Systematics of Writing**

This thesis is systematically organized into five chapters, each addressing a specific aspect of the research process. The structure follows a logical sequence designed to ensure theoretical coherence, methodological rigor, and analytical clarity. The chapters are outlined as follows:

Chapter I: Introduction. This chapter establishes the foundation of the study by situating TikTok within the broader landscape of digital communication and fashion media. It begins with a comprehensive background that traces the rise of short-form video platforms and the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into user-facing features such as AR filters, captions, and duet functions. The chapter then articulates the research problem: the lack of systematic, theory-driven analysis of AI-enhanced communication strategies in TikTok apparel videos. It outlines the scope and limitations of the study,

formulates the central research questions, and defines the objectives. The significance of the research is discussed across academic, practical, methodological, and cultural dimensions, positioning the study as a novel contribution to communication and broadcasting scholarship.

Chapter II: Theoretical Framework. This chapter provides the conceptual and theoretical grounding for the study. It begins by clarifying key terms, including TikTok apparel videos and AI-enhanced communication, and distinguishes between front-end and back-end AI features. The chapter then introduces the dual theoretical lenses guiding the research: Media Richness Theory (MRT) and Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). MRT is used to analyze how AI-enhanced features increase the richness of message delivery through multimodal cues, while UGT explains why audiences engage with these features to satisfy cognitive, affective, social, and identity-related needs. The chapter also presents a detailed conceptual framework that categorizes AI-enhanced strategies into visual and interactive dimensions, linking each indicator to both MRT and UGT. This framework serves as the analytical bridge between theory and empirical coding.

Chapter III: Research Methodology. This chapter outlines the methodological design of the study, which employs a positivist-quantitative paradigm and a descriptive content analysis approach. It defines the research setting (TikTok) and the selected TikTok account, justifying the purposive sampling of 100 apparel-focused videos that employ at least one AI-enhanced feature. The unit of analysis is the individual TikTok video, treated as a bounded communicative artifact. The chapter details the categories and indicators of analysis, structured into visual and interactive strategies, and explains the binary coding scheme (0 = absent, 1 = present). Research instruments, including the codebook and coding sheet, are described in depth, along with the intra-coder reliability testing procedure using Cohen's Kappa. The data collection process is documented step-by-step, and the analytical workflow is presented, including frequency distributions, percentage calculations, and cross-tabulations. Ethical considerations are addressed through adherence to AoIR and BSA guidelines,

ensuring that the study remains methodologically sound and ethically responsible.

**Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion:** This chapter presents the results of the descriptive content analysis of one hundred purposively selected TikTok apparel videos from the account @alluna.official, as outlined in the methodology. The findings are organized according to the research questions, beginning with the frequency and distribution of each visual and interactive strategy identified in the coding process. These results are displayed in tables and figures for clarity, accompanied by reliability statistics to confirm the stability of the coding. The chapter then examines patterns of co-occurrence between strategies, highlighting combinations that appear most frequently in the sample. Each set of findings is followed by a discussion that interprets the results in light of Media Richness Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory, as established in the theoretical framework. The discussion also considers the communicative implications of the strategies used, the prominence or absence of certain features, and how these patterns relate to the account's content objectives. Methodological notes, such as the implications of binary coding and the rationale for single-coder reliability testing, are addressed where relevant to support the interpretation of results. This integrated approach ensures that the empirical data and theoretical perspectives are connected, providing a comprehensive answer to the research questions.

**Chapter V: Conclusion:** This chapter brings together the main outcomes of the study in direct relation to the research objectives and questions. The conclusion section synthesizes the key findings from the analysis of one hundred TikTok apparel videos, summarizing the patterns of visual and interactive strategies identified and linking them back to the theoretical framework of Media Richness Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory. The implications section follows, outlining the practical significance of these findings for content creators, marketers, and other stakeholders, as well as their theoretical contributions to the study of digital communication and short-form video platforms. The limitations section acknowledges the boundaries of the

research, including the scope of the sample, the descriptive nature of the analysis, and methodological constraints such as the single-coder design, while clarifying how these factors shape the interpretation of results. The chapter concludes with recommendations, offering actionable guidance for practitioners aiming to optimize TikTok content strategy and methodological suggestions for future researchers who wish to expand or refine this line of inquiry. Together, these sections provide a concise yet comprehensive closure to the thesis, highlighting its contributions, practical relevance, and avenues for further study.



## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### A. Definition of Key Terms

This section defines the central terms used throughout the thesis to ensure conceptual clarity and analytical precision. TikTok is defined as a short-form video-sharing platform launched in 2016 (globally in 2018) that enables users to create and circulate 15-60 second videos enriched with music, filters, and effects.<sup>36</sup> For this study, “TikTok apparel videos” refer to brand-produced TikTok videos in which the central communicative focus is the display, styling, or promotion of clothing. These may include formats such as outfit-of-the-day (OOTD) clips, styling tutorials, and promotional showcases.<sup>37</sup>

The central concept of AI-enhanced communication is defined here as the strategic use of algorithmically driven features, such as AR filters, text-to-speech, automated captions, stickers, duets, or hashtags that augment the visual, textual, or interactive dimensions of a video. These features are not incidental add-ons but deliberate tools that shape how fashion messages are encoded and decoded within the platform (cf. Gunkel, 2020; Sundar, 2020). This operational definition distinguishes AI-enhanced communication from TikTok’s back-end recommendation algorithm, focusing instead on front-end, user-facing features that directly participate in meaning-making.

This study is anchored in two primary communication frameworks: Media Richness Theory (MRT) and Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which together provide a dual lens for analyzing AI-enhanced TikTok apparel videos. While ancillary perspectives such as multimodality or social presence are acknowledged to contextualize critiques, the analytic weight rests squarely

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<sup>36</sup> Brienna N. Rutherford et al., “Changes in Viewer Engagement and Accessibility of Popular Vaping Videos on TikTok: A 12-Month Prospective Study,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 3 (February 1, 2022): 1141, <https://doi.org/10.3390/IJERPH19031141/S1>.

<sup>37</sup> Maximilian Boeker and Aleksandra Urman, “An Empirical Investigation of Personalization Factors on TikTok,” *WWW 2022 - Proceedings of the ACM Web Conference 2022*, April 25, 2022, 2298–2309, <https://doi.org/10.1145/3485447.3512102>.

on MRT and UGT, ensuring theoretical coherence from problem formulation through to findings.

### 1. TikTok Apparel Videos

TikTok has rapidly emerged as one of the most influential social media platforms in the contemporary digital landscape. Since its international launch in 2018, the platform has achieved exponential growth, reaching over one billion active users worldwide by 2021, and consolidating its position as the dominant short-form video application. Unlike earlier social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram, TikTok's defining characteristic lies in its unique format: short, vertical, algorithmically curated videos that integrate music, text, and visual effects into highly compressed narratives. This format reflects broader cultural shifts toward immediacy, visuality, and multimodality in digital communication.<sup>38</sup>

The platform's recommendation engine, known as the For You Page (FYP), plays a central role in shaping user experience. Unlike platforms that privilege social networks or follower counts, TikTok prioritizes algorithmic relevance, allowing any video, regardless of the creator's prior visibility, to achieve viral reach. This distribution model fosters a participatory culture in which ordinary users can rapidly gain prominence, and where cultural trends circulate at unprecedented speed. In communication terms, TikTok is not only a medium of entertainment but also a site of identity construction, discourse negotiation, and cultural production.<sup>39</sup>

Importantly, TikTok integrates multiple semiotic modes into a single communicative artifact. Videos often combine visual images, movement, sound, speech, text overlays, and graphic symbols within a few seconds. This multimodal density transforms each TikTok video into a layered communicative act in which meaning is constructed simultaneously

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<sup>38</sup> Fajriah Khairunnisaa et al., "The Role of Tiktok as a Media Strategy in Marketing Communication for the Young Generation," *Interaction Communication Studies Journal* 2, no. 2 (July 8, 2025): 9–9, <https://doi.org/10.47134/INTERACTION.V2I2.4522>.

<sup>39</sup> Abdel Aziz Ahmad Sharabati et al., "The Impact of TikTok User Satisfaction on Continuous Intention to Use the Application," *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity* 8, no. 3 (July 16, 2022): 125, <https://doi.org/10.3390/joitmc8030125>.

across channels. For scholars of communication, this multimodality positions TikTok as an exemplary site for examining how messages are encoded, how they engage audiences, and how platform affordances influence communication strategies.<sup>40</sup>

Fashion has long been recognized as a form of non-verbal communication. Clothing communicates identity, social status, gender roles, and cultural affiliation, functioning as a semiotic system through which individuals and groups construct meaning. Theorists of fashion communication argue that apparel is not merely utilitarian but symbolic: garments are encoded with aesthetic, cultural, and ideological significance that is decoded by viewers within specific contexts. In this sense, fashion operates as a language, one in which design elements, styling choices, and sartorial combinations communicate messages about taste, belonging, or differentiation.<sup>41</sup>

In the digital era, fashion communication has shifted from elite-controlled domains such as runway shows and glossy magazines toward participatory, user-driven spaces. Social media platforms enable broader publics to not only consume but also produce fashion discourse. On TikTok, this shift is particularly pronounced: users from diverse backgrounds create and disseminate apparel videos that influence fashion trends, challenge traditional beauty standards, and democratize fashion communication. Unlike static images on Instagram, TikTok's short-form video format allows for dynamic presentation of apparel in motion, offering audiences a more embodied and experiential sense of clothing.<sup>42</sup>

For apparel videos, this communicative potential is amplified by TikTok's technical affordances, including filters, soundtracks, editing

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<sup>40</sup> D Zulli and D Zulli, "Visibility Labor: The TikTok Algorithm and the Social Logic of Viral Content," *New Media & Society* 24, no. 6 (2022): 1201–19.

<sup>41</sup> Juhyung Sun, Sun Kyong Lee, and Norman Wong, "Technology Acceptance Model in Video-Sharing Platforms: Comparisons between Tiktok and Youtube," *SSRN*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.2139/SSRN.4731783>.

<sup>42</sup> Koswara, "TikTok and the Future of Digital Business: Exploring the Platform's Role in Shaping Global Trends."

templates, and interactive functions. These affordances transform clothing from an object of display into a medium of performance. Fashion is no longer merely shown but actively performed, narrated, and co-constructed with audiences. Thus, apparel videos on TikTok embody the convergence of fashion as symbolic communication and digital participatory culture, creating hybrid meaning-making practices that warrant systematic, theory-driven scholarly attention.<sup>43</sup>

Within the TikTok ecosystem, apparel videos constitute a distinct genre characterized by specific conventions, functions, and communicative strategies. Common formats include “outfit of the day” (OOTD) clips, transformation or transition videos where clothing changes mid-sequence, fashion hauls showcasing recent purchases, tutorials demonstrating how to style specific items, and brand promotions highlighting new collections. Each of these formats conveys apparel not only as material objects but also as symbolic resources embedded in cultural narratives.<sup>44</sup>

The distinguishing feature of TikTok apparel videos lies in their hybrid nature: they operate simultaneously as entertainment, personal expression, and marketing. A single video may function as self-expression for the creator, as inspiration for viewers, and as indirect promotion for brands. This hybridity challenges traditional boundaries between advertising and everyday communication, positioning apparel videos as a unique communicative genre where commercial and cultural discourses intersect.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Jing Zeng and Crystal Abidin, “#OkBoomer, Time to Meet the Zoomers’: Studying the Memefication of Intergenerational Politics on TikTok,” *Information, Communication & Society* 24, no. 16 (2021): 2459–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2021.1961007>.

<sup>44</sup> Louna Bouillon, Dion Schouten, and Fabio Campos, “Designing the User Experience to Achieve Better Engagement and Feedback on TikTok Accounts,” *Lecture Notes in Computer Science (Including Subseries Lecture Notes in Artificial Intelligence and Lecture Notes in Bioinformatics)* 14030 LNCS (2023): 503–15, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-35699-5\\_36](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-35699-5_36).

<sup>45</sup> Jian Shi, Mohammad Ali, and Fiona Chew, “Understanding Gratifications for Engaging with Short-Video: A Comparison of TikTok Use in the USA and China,” *International Journal of Mobile Communications* 23, no. 2 (2024): 175–200, <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJMC.2024.136627>.

Furthermore, TikTok apparel videos are inherently dialogic. Through hashtags, duets, stitches, and comment interactions, they invite audiences to not merely consume but also to respond, replicate, and reinterpret. This dialogic structure creates what the researcher Baym terms a “relational labor” in digital culture, where creators must continuously engage with audiences to maintain relevance. In the context of apparel videos, this engagement transforms fashion into a shared communicative practice, rather than a top-down transmission from brand to consumer.<sup>46</sup>

For this thesis, the analysis of TikTok apparel videos is limited to the content produced by a single selected TikTok account, which has been selected based on relevance, activity, and consistent use of AI-enhanced features. This delimitation ensures that the analysis remains contextually grounded while still capturing a representative sample of contemporary apparel communication practices on TikTok. The focus on one account enables depth of analysis, as patterns of communication strategies can be traced systematically across multiple videos within a coherent stylistic and thematic framework.

Only posted videos, not livestreams, are included in the sample. This boundary is methodologically necessary, as posted videos constitute stable, replicable artifacts that can be systematically coded, whereas livestreams are ephemeral, inconsistent in structure, and often lack accessible archival forms. Additionally, only videos in which apparel is the primary communicative focus are included. Videos where clothing appears incidentally, without being central to the message, are excluded.

This delimitation positions TikTok apparel videos not simply as entertainment products but as communicative artifacts. They are treated as texts that encode meaning through a combination of visual and interactive strategies. By establishing this conceptual clarity, the study ensures that its

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<sup>46</sup> Michael Baym, N. K. Wayne, “Personal Connections in the Digital Age,” *The Communication Review* 14, no. 2 (April 2011): 149–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2011.573442>.

analysis remains theoretically rigorous, methodologically precise, and directly relevant to the field of communication and broadcasting.

## 2. AI-Enhanced Communication

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in communication refers to the integration of machine-driven processes that mimic, extend, or augment human expressive and interactive capacities. In media studies, AI is often understood as a set of tools that generate, alter, or support the production of communicative symbols, whether text, sound, images, or gestures that carry social meaning.<sup>47</sup> Within TikTok, AI operates at two distinct levels:

- a. Back-end algorithms, such as the recommendation system that determines distribution and visibility.
- b. Front-end creative tools, such as AR filters, text-to-speech (TTS) voices, automated captions, interactive stickers, and algorithmically suggested soundtracks.

While the former has been widely examined in algorithmic culture research, this thesis focuses on the latter. Front-end AI tools intervene directly at the message-construction stage, shaping how meaning is encoded and experienced.

These features are not incidental decorative effects; they reconfigure the communicative act by dramatizing, enriching, and stylizing how messages are presented. For instance, an AR filter can situate a clothing display within an imagined luxury boutique, creating an aspirational frame. A TTS voice might add neutrality, authority, or irony to a narration, while automated captions add a textual layer that interacts with visuals and sounds, enhancing accessibility and engagement. Collectively, these features expand multimodality, offering audiences multiple cues for interpretation.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Lanneskog, "The Impact of AI Integration on Audience: A Qualitative Study of Young Adults' Perspectives and Attitudes towards the Integration of AI on Tikok."

<sup>48</sup> Caiyan Liu and Zifan Zhang, "Can Artificial Intelligence (AI)-Driven Personalization Influence Customer Experiences?: A Quantitative Study on TikTok Integration with Artificial Intelligence," 2024, <https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-532575>.

For this study, AI-enhanced communication is defined as the strategic use of AI-driven, user-facing tools that augment the visual, textual, or interactive dimensions of TikTok apparel videos. These tools function as semiotic collaborators, co-producing meaning with human creators and audiences. They democratize content creation by allowing non-professional users to achieve stylistic effects previously limited to experts. In doing so, they transform apparel videos from static showcases into dynamic, performative artifacts that invite interaction and cultural interpretation.<sup>49</sup>

This conceptualization provides the basis for analyzing how such tools contribute to message richness and to the gratifications audiences derive from engagement, connections that will be examined further through Media Richness Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory in the next sections.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has increasingly entered scholarly conversations not only as a technical advancement but also as a communicative phenomenon. In communication studies, AI can be broadly defined as computational systems capable of performing tasks that mimic, augment, or automate human cognitive and expressive functions. Within media contexts, AI often manifests as tools that generate, process, or alter symbols, texts, images, and sounds. The defining characteristic of AI-enhanced communication, therefore, is not merely automation but augmentation: the ability to add new semiotic layers, styles, or modalities that reshape how a message is perceived.<sup>50</sup>

In TikTok's environment, AI-enhanced communication refers specifically to creator-facing tools that directly alter the content of the message. Unlike back-end recommendation systems, which determine distribution, these tools intervene at the message-construction stage. They

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<sup>49</sup> Vidi Sukmayadi et al., "Zillennials, Social Media and Artificial Intelligence: A Survey on West Java's Digital Natives," *Jurnal Komunikasi Ikatan Sarjana Komunikasi Indonesia* 9, no. 1 (June 9, 2024): 82–91, <https://doi.org/10.25008/JKISKI.V9I1.958>.

<sup>50</sup> Hyunjin Kang and Chen Lou, "AI Agency vs. Human Agency: Understanding Human–AI Interactions on TikTok and Their Implications for User Engagement," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 27, no. 5 (August 18, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1093/JCMC/ZMAC014>.

allow creators to modify appearances, overlay automated captions, synthesize voices, or embed interactive features. By doing so, they fundamentally reconfigure the communicative act, making the message richer, more playful, and often more persuasive.<sup>51</sup>

Thus, AI-enhanced communication can be defined in this thesis as the strategic use of algorithmically driven tools that augment the visual, textual, or interactive dimensions of TikTok apparel videos. This definition emphasizes both the technological and the communicative dimensions: AI is not merely a technical feature but a rhetorical resource for meaning-making.<sup>52</sup>

A critical conceptual distinction must be made between front-end and back-end AI. Back-end AI refers to the algorithmic recommendation systems that curate content flows, personalize user feeds, and optimize engagement metrics. While vital to TikTok's overall ecology, back-end AI functions outside the communicative frame of the message itself; it governs circulation rather than composition.<sup>53</sup>

Front-end AI, by contrast, consists of visible, user-facing tools that directly shape how a video looks, sounds, and invites interaction. Examples include AR filters that overlay effects onto clothing, green-screen backgrounds that situate apparel in new contexts, text-to-speech features that provide narration, and auto-captioning systems that generate accessible subtitles.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Camille G. Endacott, "Enacting Machine Agency When AI Makes One's Day: Understanding How Users Relate to AI Communication Technologies for Scheduling," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 29, no. 4 (July 1, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1093/JCMC/ZMAE011>.

<sup>52</sup> Crystal Abidin, "Mapping Internet Celebrity on TikTok: Exploring Attention Economies and Visibility Labours," *Cultural Science Journal* 12, no. 1 (January 19, 2020): 77–103, <https://doi.org/10.5334/CSCI.140>.

<sup>53</sup> Elena Maris, Robyn Caplan, and Hibby Thach, "Taking Back and Giving Back on TikTok: Algorithmic Mutual Aid in the Platform Economy," *New Media & Society* 27, no. 7 (July 1, 2025): 4071–89, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448241238396>.

<sup>54</sup> André Eriksson and Otto Eriksson Heile, "Analyzing the Potential of a TikTok-Based Front-End Flow for PlayPilot: An Evaluation of Potential Benefits and Challenges for Content Discovery," 2024, <https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:kth:diva-352388>.

These features are central to the present study, as they transform the video into a multimodal communicative artifact in which AI is part of the message rather than merely part of the infrastructure. This boundary is not only methodological but also theoretical. By focusing on front-end AI, the study highlights how technology becomes integrated into symbolic practices of communication. Rather than treating AI as invisible infrastructure, it is examined here as a semiotic agent that codes meaning alongside human creators.<sup>55</sup>

From a theoretical perspective, AI-enhanced communication on TikTok introduces a new communicative layer that extends beyond traditional multimodal elements. While conventional resources such as text, image, sound, and gesture form the basis of user-generated content, AI-driven features like algorithmic filters, auto-captioning, and generative effects add a dynamic richness that cannot be achieved through human expression alone. These elements increase immediacy, personalization, and symbolic density, allowing users to construct messages that are more emotionally resonant and contextually adaptive. In this way, AI functions as a communicative resource that elevates the richness of the medium and reduces interpretive ambiguity.<sup>56</sup>

For instance, an AR filter that simulates a luxury boutique background does not simply provide aesthetic decoration; it encodes meaning by situating the apparel within an aspirational context, thereby communicating associations of prestige, exclusivity, or elegance. Similarly, a text-to-speech voiceover delivers narration in a standardized, machine-generated tone that may connote neutrality, efficiency, or even irony,

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<sup>55</sup> Brandon Carkner, "The Rhythm of The Algorithm: Behavioural Influences and TikTok Users," *Emerging Library & Information Perspectives* 6, no. 1 (September 19, 2024): 7–23, <https://doi.org/10.5206/ELIP.V6I1.16753>.

<sup>56</sup> Ming Fu, "A Study of Corporate Strategic Communication Empowered by Chinese Culture with AI: Taking ByteDance as an Example," *International Communication of Chinese Culture* 2025 12:2 12, no. 2 (February 1, 2025): 259–75, <https://doi.org/10.1007/S40636-025-00321-6>.

depending on usage. These features are inherently communicative because they shape interpretation, affect perception, and signal genre conventions.<sup>57</sup>

In this sense, AI can be conceptualized as a semiotic actor that participates in the construction of meaning. It co-produces communication by offering expressive resources that extend beyond human capacity, thereby transforming fashion communication into a hybrid form where human creativity and machine intelligence intersect.

The communicative implications of AI-enhanced tools are particularly pronounced in the domain of apparel videos. Clothing is already a semiotic system, and when combined with AI features, its communicative potential expands. An AR filter may dramatize the texture of fabric by altering light and color, auto-captions may reinforce branding slogans, and interactive stickers may invite audiences to vote on preferred styles. These interventions do not simply embellish content; they direct how clothing is interpreted and engaged with.<sup>58</sup>

Moreover, the accessibility of AI features democratizes fashion communication. Previously, professional editing, graphic design, or costly production were required to create visually striking campaigns. On TikTok, even novice creators can deploy AI-enhanced features to achieve effects similar to those of professional marketers. This levels the communicative playing field, enabling diverse voices to participate in shaping fashion discourse.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, AI-enhanced communication transforms apparel videos from static showcases into dynamic performances. The garment is not merely displayed but contextualized, stylized, and interactive. This shift reinforces the argument that TikTok apparel videos must be studied as

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<sup>57</sup> Carkner, "The Rhythm of The Algorithm: Behavioural Influences and TikTok Users."

<sup>58</sup> Koswara, "TikTok and the Future of Digital Business: Exploring the Platform's Role in Shaping Global Trends."

<sup>59</sup> George D.H. Pearson et al., "Beyond the Margin of Error: A Systematic and Replicable Audit of the TikTok Research API," *Information, Communication & Society* 28, no. 3 (February 17, 2025): 452–70, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2024.2420032>.

complex communication artifacts rather than as simple product advertisements.

### 3. Visual Strategies

#### a. Augmented Reality (AR) Filters and Lenses

Augmented Reality (AR) filters, sometimes referred to as lenses, are digital overlays that algorithmically alter or enhance the visual presentation of subjects within a video. On TikTok, AR filters can reshape facial features, change lighting conditions, simulate makeup effects, or even create the illusion of wearing garments that are not physically present.<sup>60</sup> They operate in real time, mapping algorithmic modifications onto the human body or background. Within the context of apparel communication, AR filters are not simply playful additions; they are strategic tools that modify how clothing is framed, contextualized, and evaluated by audiences.<sup>61</sup>

From a communication perspective, AR filters function as rhetorical devices that enhance media richness by adding layered visual cues, reducing ambiguity, and deepening interpretive clarity.<sup>62</sup> By altering color tones, smoothing textures, or enhancing aesthetic appeal, they dramatize the qualities of clothing in ways that may not be possible in offline reality. For example, a beauty filter that softens skin tones simultaneously enhances the perceived elegance of an outfit, embedding the garment within a broader aesthetic ideal. Similarly, filters that simulate specific lighting environments (e.g., warm sunset tones) contextualize clothing

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<sup>60</sup> Federico Biggio, “Augmented Facets: A Semiotics Analysis of Augmented Reality Facial Effects,” *Sign Systems Studies* 49, no. 3 (December 31, 2021): 509–26, <https://doi.org/10.12697/SSS.2021.49.3-4.13>.

<sup>61</sup> Jolie Bonner et al., “When Filters Escape the Smartphone: Exploring Acceptance and Concerns Regarding Augmented Expression of Social Identity for Everyday AR,” *Proceedings of the ACM Symposium on Virtual Reality Software and Technology, VRST*, October 9, 2023, [https://doi.org/10.1145/3611659.3615707/SUPPL\\_FILE/VRST23A-SUB7715-CAM-I7.MP4](https://doi.org/10.1145/3611659.3615707/SUPPL_FILE/VRST23A-SUB7715-CAM-I7.MP4).

<sup>62</sup> Anupama Ambika et al., “The Road to Learning ‘Who Am I’ Is Digitized: A Study on Consumer Self-Discovery through Augmented Reality Tools,” *Journal of Consumer Behaviour* 22, no. 5 (September 1, 2023): 1112–27, <https://doi.org/10.1002/CB.2185>.

within aspirational lifestyles, such as leisure, travel, or luxury. Within the lens of Uses and Gratifications Theory, such filters also fulfill audiences' affective and identity needs, offering visually pleasing, aspirational representations that invite self-projection and engagement. Thus, AR filters encode not only what the garment looks like but also what it signifies, while strategically aligning with both message-richness and audience-gratification objectives.<sup>63</sup>

Through the lens of Media Richness Theory, AR filters increase the richness of communication by adding visual cues that heighten immediacy, personalization, and symbolic depth. A filter that animates sparkling effects onto a dress conveys vibrancy and festivity, creating an enriched communicative environment where multiple layers of meaning converge. These filters not only enhance the technical richness of the medium but also embed apparel within culturally resonant visual contexts, associating clothing with ideas of beauty, desirability, or trendiness. By layering such cues, AR filters reduce ambiguity and amplify interpretive clarity, making them powerful tools for message design in TikTok apparel videos.<sup>64</sup>

Despite their communicative potential, AR filters are not without controversy. Scholars argue that filters perpetuate unrealistic beauty standards by altering bodies and faces to conform to idealized norms. In the context of apparel, this raises critical questions about authenticity and transparency. If clothing is consistently presented under digitally manipulated conditions, audiences may misinterpret its real-life qualities. At the same time, however, the ubiquity of filters on TikTok has normalized such alterations, meaning that audiences often interpret them as part of

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<sup>63</sup> Pitch Sinlapanuntakul and Mark Zachry, "Augmenting Self-Presentation: Augmented Reality (AR) Filters Use Among Young Adults," *Lecture Notes in Computer Science (Including Subseries Lecture Notes in Artificial Intelligence and Lecture Notes in Bioinformatics)* 14706 LNCS (2024): 93–105, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-61041-7\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-61041-7_7).

<sup>64</sup> Lae and Khine, "The Impact of Media Richness, Celebrity Endorsement and Consumers' Engagement of Tik Tok Marketing on Their Intention to Visit Restaurants in Thailand."

the communicative style of the platform rather than as deceptive tactics. For this study, AR filters are therefore understood as culturally embedded communication devices that shape perception even when users recognize their artificiality.<sup>65</sup>

In coding TikTok apparel videos, AR filters are considered a key indicator of visual strategy. Their presence signals that the creator is deliberately enhancing or reframing how clothing is seen. By systematically recording AR filter use across the sample, this study maps patterns of stylistic enhancement as a communicative strategy, allowing links to be drawn between aesthetic modification, media richness, and audience gratification outcomes.

b. Green Screen and Background Replacement

The green screen, also known as chroma key technology, is a digital tool that allows creators to replace the actual background of a video with any chosen image or video layer. On TikTok, this feature is integrated into the editing interface, enabling users to situate themselves or the subject matter within virtually any environment. While the technique has long existed in film and television production, TikTok democratizes its use, making it accessible to amateur creators and professional marketers alike. In the context of apparel videos, green screen technology enables creators to showcase clothing not only in real-life locations but also in curated or imagined spaces, from luxury runways to editorial backdrops.<sup>66</sup>

The communicative power of background replacement lies in its ability to contextualize clothing within a specific semiotic frame. For example, placing a model against a Parisian Street scene

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<sup>65</sup> Ibáñez-Sánchez, Orús, and Flavián, “Augmented Reality Filters on Social Media. Analyzing the Drivers of Playability Based on Uses and Gratifications Theory.”

<sup>66</sup> Mackenzie Quick and Jessica Maddox, “Us, Them, Right, Wrong: How TikTok’s Green Screen, Duet, and Stitch Help Shape Political Discourse,” *First Monday* 29, no. 3 (March 9, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.5210/FM.V29I3.13360>.

imbues the garment with associations of cosmopolitan elegance, while situating the same garment against a pastel backdrop suggests playful informality. In this way, green screen use shifts the interpretive environment: the garment is not merely displayed as an object but is embedded in a narrative of place, lifestyle, or cultural identity. For apparel brands, this technique functions as a low-cost but powerful storytelling device, signaling that clothing is inseparable from the contexts in which it is imagined to be worn.<sup>67</sup>

From the perspective of Media Richness Theory, green screen technology enhances communicative richness by increasing environmental cues. A blank studio background conveys limited contextual information, whereas a digitally substituted setting provides audiences with a richer interpretive environment, enabling them to infer lifestyle, status, or intended occasions for apparel use. This aligns with broader understandings of framing in communication, where background cues signal how an event or, in this case, a garment should be interpreted. By altering visual frames, green screen technology shifts the meaning of apparel from ordinary to aspirational, casual to formal, or everyday to performative.<sup>68</sup>

While background replacement enhances creative possibilities, it is not without limitations. Critics argue that overreliance on digital backgrounds risks detaching clothing from its material reality, presenting idealized contexts that may not align with lived experience. For audiences, this raises questions of authenticity: does the garment truly carry the meanings suggested by its digitally constructed environment? Additionally, frequent use of fantastical or unrealistic settings may create a sense of

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<sup>67</sup> Kulaga, "Revolutionizing Visual Communication and Digital Creative Engagement: The Game-Changing Impact of TikTok."

<sup>68</sup> David Chidiac and Jana Bowden, "When Media Matters: The Role of Media Richness and Naturalness on Purchase Intentions within Influencer Marketing," *Journal of Strategic Marketing* 31, no. 6 (August 18, 2023): 1178–98, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2022.2062037>; CTYPE:STRING:JOURNAL.

detachment, where fashion becomes a spectacle rather than a wearable reality. However, in the participatory culture of TikTok, these practices are often interpreted not as deception but as stylistic conventions that reflect the platform's playful and creative ethos.<sup>69</sup>

In this thesis, green screen and background replacement are coded as indicators of visual strategy. Their presence signals that creators are deliberately situating apparel within constructed contexts to shape interpretation. By documenting the frequency and forms of background substitution, the study contributes to understanding how context is strategically used in TikTok apparel videos as a communicative resource. This aligns with the broader aim of systematically mapping AI-enhanced communication strategies and highlights the role of environmental framing in contemporary fashion discourse.

c. Text Overlays, Captions, and Typography

Text overlays, captions, and typography refer to the addition of written language and stylized text directly onto video content. On TikTok, these features can include automatically generated captions, manually written annotations, bold typographic titles, kinetic text animations, and creative layout templates. Text appears either as part of the visual layer of the video itself or within the caption area beneath the video frame. Unlike traditional subtitles, which are primarily functional aids for comprehension, TikTok's text overlays serve broader communicative purposes, including narration, emphasis, branding, humor, and aesthetic design. In apparel videos, they often indicate product details, styling tips, or thematic framing of the clothing presented.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ivy Ziyi Yang, "Understanding the Role of TikTok's Media Affordances in Promoting Sustainable Branding Strategies," *Business and Management Research* 287 (June 21, 2024): 94–102, [https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-441-9\\_10](https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-441-9_10).

<sup>70</sup> Hanafi Wibowo and Melly Anggoro Ningtyas, "Abbreviation as a Language Phenomenon in Self-Made Captions Used by Teenagers on TikTok Social Media," *Tamaddun* 23, no. 2 (December 6, 2024): 364–86, <https://doi.org/10.33096/TAMADDUN.V23I2.779>.

Text overlays play several vital roles in fashion communication. First, they provide explicit verbal anchors for what is otherwise primarily a visual message. For instance, a video showing a model wearing a blazer may include the overlay “Capsule Wardrobe Essential,” thereby directing the audience to interpret the garment as a timeless, versatile piece rather than simply a stylish item. Second, captions are often used to present technical details such as price, size, or fabric composition, which would otherwise be difficult to communicate in a 15-second clip. Third, stylized typography functions as a design element in its own right. Fonts, colors, and text placement carry semiotic weight: bold block letters suggest authority or emphasis, cursive fonts evoke elegance, and playful emoji-text combinations communicate informality.<sup>71</sup>

Moreover, captions can carry metacommunicative functions. For instance, humorous commentary (“don’t judge my messy closet”) or trend signals (“#dupe alert”) situate the video within broader cultural discourses, positioning apparel within specific social conversations. Thus, overlays and captions are not merely informative; they are constitutive of meaning-making in apparel communication.<sup>72</sup>

Text overlays in TikTok apparel videos serve as interpretive cues that anchor visual content within specific communicative contexts. While images are often open to multiple interpretations, text narrows these possibilities by explicitly guiding the viewer toward a preferred meaning. For example, an overlay that reads

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<sup>71</sup> Julie A. Vera, David W. McDonald, and Mark Zachry, “How-To in Short-Form: A Framework for Analyzing Short-Format Instructional Content on TikTok,” *Technical Communication* 71, no. 2 (May 1, 2024): 5–25, <https://doi.org/10.55177/TC152088>.

<sup>72</sup> Emma J. McDonnell et al., “Caption It in an Accessible Way That Is Also Enjoyable”: Characterizing User-Driven Captioning Practices on TikTok,” *Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems - Proceedings*, May 11, 2024, [https://doi.org/10.1145/3613904.3642177/SUPPL\\_FILE/PN3455-SUPPLEMENTAL-MATERIAL-4.XLSX](https://doi.org/10.1145/3613904.3642177/SUPPL_FILE/PN3455-SUPPLEMENTAL-MATERIAL-4.XLSX).

“Back-to-School Outfit” frames the clothing within the discourse of student life, whereas the same garment labeled “Corporate Chic” situates it within a professional setting. Within the scope of Media Richness Theory, such overlays enhance message clarity by reducing ambiguity and increasing the precision of interpretation.<sup>73</sup>

Text overlays also enhance multimodality by combining linguistic and visual codes. Multimodal texts are more powerful when their visual and textual elements are orchestrated toward a cohesive communicative purpose, aligning with Media Richness Theory’s emphasis on multiple cues. On TikTok, the fusion of clothing imagery with stylized textual commentary produces richer meaning than visuals alone. This aligns with Media Richness Theory, which suggests that richer communication channels, with multiple simultaneous cues, are more effective in reducing ambiguity and enhancing message clarity.<sup>74</sup>

Text overlays are also a key mechanism by which TikTok creators engage with participatory culture. Trending phrases, inside jokes, or meme-like captions often circulate across videos, situating apparel within broader cultural scripts. For example, the overlay “that girl aesthetic” has become shorthand for a particular lifestyle trend involving minimalist fashion, wellness, and productivity. By adopting such overlays, creators link their apparel choices to collective discourses, thereby inviting viewers to identify with or challenge these trends.

Additionally, TikTok’s auto-captioning feature improves accessibility for deaf and hard-of-hearing audiences. In the context of apparel videos, this inclusivity is not merely functional but also

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<sup>73</sup> Sorrel Salb, “#NewsOnTikTok A Content Analysis of the Use of Text Elements by Legacy News Media on TikTok,” 2021, <https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:mau:diva-47120>.

<sup>74</sup> Feng and Xie, “Optimizing Branded Content for Beauty and Fashion Influencers from a Media Richness Perspective: How Post Topic and Visual Type Intertwine to Boost Consumer Engagement,” 2025.

communicative, as it signals the creator's orientation toward diverse audiences. Accessibility features, therefore, carry symbolic value, communicating inclusivity and awareness of audience needs.<sup>75</sup>

Despite their communicative benefits, text overlays are not neutral. They can reinforce consumerist framing by constantly associating apparel with calls to purchase (“Buy Now,” “Link in Bio”). They may also trivialize complex cultural signifiers by reducing them to hashtags or meme phrases. Moreover, overuse of text clutter can overwhelm the visual focus on apparel, reducing clarity rather than enhancing it. From an ethical perspective, creators must also navigate the line between informative and manipulative communication; for example, overlays suggesting affordability or exclusivity may not always align with reality.<sup>76</sup>

In this thesis, text overlays, captions, and typography are coded as core visual strategies. Their presence reflects intentional efforts to anchor and direct audience interpretation of apparel. By systematically mapping these strategies, the study identifies how creators use textual elements to supplement visual communication, how typography functions as a semiotic device, and how captions embed apparel videos within broader discursive trends. This analysis contributes to understanding the layered communicative nature of TikTok apparel videos, where written language operates not as an accessory but as a central dimension of meaning-making.

#### d. Emojis, Stickers, and Graphic Elements

Emojis, stickers, and graphic elements are among the most distinctive visual markers of TikTok communication. These elements include animated icons, static symbols, GIF-like graphics,

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<sup>75</sup> Camelia Cușnir, “TikTok Design and Experience: A Semiotic Technology Approach,” *Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations* 27, no. 1 (July 25, 2025): 7–23, <https://doi.org/10.21018/RJCPR.2025.1.683>.

<sup>76</sup> Kinga Duraj and Agnieszka Szarkowska, “Beyond Traditional Subtitles: How Emojis and Non-Standard Typography in Subtitles Boost Engagement on TikTok,” *Journal of Audiovisual Translation* 8, no. 1 (April 11, 2025): 1–28–1–28, <https://doi.org/10.47476/JAT.V8I1.2025.339>.

and interactive visual cues layered over video content. Unlike traditional editing tools, these symbols are embedded within the TikTok app and can be applied with minimal technical expertise. In the context of apparel videos, emojis and stickers can highlight specific garments, emphasize emotions, or align content with broader cultural trends. Their presence transforms the visual frame from a neutral space into a communicative surface saturated with semiotic cues.<sup>77</sup>

These elements perform multiple communicative functions. Emojis often serve as shorthand for emotions or evaluations that would otherwise require lengthy verbal explanation. For instance, placing a “Fire” emoji over an outfit signals approval and trendiness, while a “Diamond” sticker suggests luxury or elegance. Stickers may also act as directional cues: arrows can draw attention to a particular clothing detail, while animated sparkles highlight accessories or textures. In this sense, emojis and stickers are not decorative add-ons but rhetorical devices that guide audience attention and shape interpretation.<sup>78</sup>

Furthermore, graphic elements situate apparel videos within shared cultural scripts. For example, seasonal stickers (e.g., pumpkins for Halloween, snowflakes for winter) contextualize clothing within temporal cycles, signaling when or how garments should be worn. This creates an alignment between fashion communication and cultural rhythms, reinforcing apparel’s role as a marker of identity embedded within time and occasion.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Wu Jiajing, Muhamad Fairus Kamaruzaman\*, and Dai Jundi, “The Representation of Traditional Chinese Culture in Emojis and Sticker Design,” *International Journal of Art and Design* 8, no. 1/SI-1 (March 19, 2024): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.24191/IJAD.V8I1/SI-1.2509>.

<sup>78</sup> Justyna Częstochowska et al., “On the Context-Free Ambiguity of Emoji,” *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media* 16 (May 31, 2022): 1388–92, <https://doi.org/10.1609/ICWSM.V16I1.19393>.

<sup>79</sup> Eyal Arviv and Oren Tsur, “How to Do Things without Words: Modeling Semantic Drift of Emoji,” *Findings of the Association for Computational Linguistics: EMNLP 2022*, 2022, 4235–40, <https://doi.org/10.18653/v1/2022.findings-emnlp.107>.

Emojis and stickers in TikTok apparel videos function as interpretive cues that condense meaning into instantly recognizable visual elements. Their use increases the number of communicative signals within a message, thereby reducing ambiguity and enhancing immediacy, key dimensions of Media Richness Theory. These elements can convey tone, evaluation, and context in ways that plain imagery cannot. For instance, without a laughing emoji, a quirky styling choice may be misinterpreted as serious; with it, the humorous intent becomes clear. Emojis and stickers thus operate as meta-communicative markers that clarify or intensify the intended message, contributing to a richer and more effective viewer experience.<sup>80</sup>

Emojis and stickers are deeply embedded in participatory culture. Their meanings are not fixed but negotiated within online communities. For example, the “Shoes” emoji may be used literally to refer to sneakers, but within TikTok fashion discourse, it may also connote sneaker culture, athletic style, or even social status linked to footwear trends. Stickers often emerge from platform-wide trends, such as filters or templates tied to viral challenges. When apparel creators adopt these stickers, they embed their content within broader cultural flows, inviting audiences to recognize, replicate, and remix communicative patterns.<sup>81</sup>

The participatory dimension also highlights the playful ethos of TikTok. Unlike traditional fashion advertising, which is highly polished and serious, TikTok apparel videos often embrace humor, parody, and self-irony. Emojis and stickers facilitate this tonal flexibility, allowing creators to oscillate between sincerity and

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<sup>80</sup> Prisca Godspower Ochulor, Yusufu Kaptani Atiu, and Mary Adebayo, “A Pragmatic Analysis of Digital Media Stickers, Emojis and Gifs Towards Vocabulary Development,” *English Language, Literature & Culture*, October 14, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.11648/J.ELLC.20230804.11>.

<sup>81</sup> Michele Zappavigna and Lorenzo Logi, “How Emoji Make Meaning and Enact Ambient Affiliation: A Social Semiotic Account of Emoji-Text Relations in TikTok Comments,” *Social Semiotics*, August 8, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2024.2389520>.

playfulness. This adaptability resonates with younger audiences who value authenticity and relatability over perfection.<sup>82</sup>

Despite their popularity, emojis and stickers raise critical questions. Their overuse can result in visual clutter, overwhelming the garment itself and detracting from its fashion's material qualities. Furthermore, reliance on standardized symbols risks reducing complex cultural signifiers into simplistic icons, flattening nuanced meanings into homogenized shorthand. From an ethical perspective, stickers that mimic endorsements (e.g., “#1 Best Seller”) or create artificial urgency (e.g., “Hurry! Limited Stock!”) blur the boundary between communication and manipulation, raising concerns about transparency in digital marketing practices.

In this thesis, emojis, stickers, and graphic elements are treated as key visual strategies that expand the semiotic richness of TikTok apparel videos. Their presence reflects intentional communicative choices aimed at guiding interpretation, signaling cultural participation, or enhancing aesthetic appeal. By systematically coding these features, the study seeks to map how symbolic shorthand operates within apparel communication, highlighting the ways in which visual embellishments contribute to meaning-making in digital fashion discourse.

e. Visual Composition and Layout Styles

Visual composition and layout styles refer to the deliberate arrangement of visual elements within a TikTok video frame, including text placement, split-screen templates, color schemes, framing choices, and spatial organization. On TikTok, many of these layouts are available as built-in templates that allow creators to combine multiple shots, overlay product images, or segment the screen into different zones. In apparel videos, layout styles are

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<sup>82</sup> Cuşnir, “TikTok Design and Experience: A Semiotic Technology Approach.”

crucial because they determine how garments are displayed, emphasized, and juxtaposed against other elements. Unlike AR filters or stickers, which add embellishments, composition and layout styles structure the overall communicative field, shaping the viewer's attention and interpretive process.<sup>83</sup>

The arrangement of visual elements is far from arbitrary; it encodes rhetorical strategies. Split-screen layouts, for example, enable direct comparison between different outfits, allowing creators to highlight contrasts in style, affordability, or trendiness. Picture-in-picture templates often show the clothing item alongside user reactions or commentary, combining product display with personal expression. Similarly, minimalist layouts with centered framing signal professionalism and highlight the garment as the focal point, while crowded, collage-like arrangements communicate vibrancy and abundance, often associated with fast-fashion aesthetics.<sup>84</sup>

Typography and spatial placement of text also function rhetorically in ways that align with Media Richness Theory's focus on reducing ambiguity through structured multi-cue design, and with Uses and Gratifications Theory's account of how audiences derive cognitive and affective satisfaction from visually organized information.

Layout styles in TikTok apparel videos determine how visual elements interact within a single communicative space. Choices of size, position, color, and alignment affect salience and meaning. For instance, when a creator positions an outfit centrally and enlarges its scale relative to other elements, the garment is framed as the primary

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<sup>83</sup> Jandy Luik, Dwi Setiawan, and Ronald H. Sitindjak, "Presentation Sequences and Styles of Educational Bite-Sized Content by The Indonesian TikTokers," *The Asian Conference on Media, Communication & Film 2023: Official Conference Proceedings*, October 13, 2023, 311–17, <https://doi.org/10.22492/issn.2186-5906.2023.26>.

<sup>84</sup> Shabalina and Nelson, "Reconsidering Ad Design Practices and Visual Aesthetics in Social Media Interactive Spaces: Toward a Conceptual Framework."

message. Conversely, when clothing is placed alongside lifestyle imagery (e.g., travel or fitness scenes), meaning is dispersed across multiple visual cues, embedding fashion within broader identity narratives. These compositional choices enhance message richness by providing interpretive cues that reduce ambiguity and guide viewer attention, a key dimension of Media Richness Theory.<sup>85</sup>

Furthermore, in TikTok's competitive content environment, effective layout styles are essential for quickly capturing and holding audience attention. TikTok operates within an environment of information overload, where creators must capture and retain attention in seconds. Dynamic layouts, jump cuts, and bold typography serve as attention-directing devices, ensuring that the viewer focuses on key apparel features rather than scrolling past. In this sense, layout strategies are both communicative and tactical responses to the competitive attention economy of digital media.<sup>86</sup>

Layout styles also carry cultural and aesthetic significance. Minimalist templates, often associated with luxury branding, communicate exclusivity and refinement. In contrast, colorful, animated, and collage-like designs resonate with youth culture, streetwear, and fast-fashion aesthetics, emphasizing accessibility and trendiness. Cultural cues embedded in layout choices thus reinforce brand identity and signal the intended audience.<sup>87</sup>

Moreover, layouts can situate apparel videos within global or local stylistic traditions. For instance, symmetrical, grid-like

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<sup>85</sup> Kułaga, "Revolutionizing Visual Communication and Digital Creative Engagement: The Game-Changing Impact of TikTok."

<sup>86</sup> Bahiyah Omar and Wang Dequan, "Watch, Share or Create: The Influence of Personality Traits and User Motivation on TikTok Mobile Video Usage," *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies (IJIM)* 14, no. 04 (March 12, 2020): 121–37, <https://doi.org/10.3991/IJIM.V14I04.12429>.

<sup>87</sup> Maciej Grzenkiewicz and Janina Wildfeuer, "Addressing TikTok's Multimodal Complexity: A Multi-Level Annotation Scheme for the Audio-Visual Design of Short Video Content," *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, June 18, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1093/LLC/FQAF047>.

templates echo Instagram's polished aesthetic, while chaotic, meme-inspired collages reflect TikTok's participatory and playful ethos. In both cases, the chosen layout style situates clothing within broader communicative genres, linking fashion to cultural discourses of order, play, or experimentation.

While layout strategies enhance communicative clarity and aesthetic appeal, their overuse can lead to visual saturation. Videos cluttered with too many text boxes, images, and moving parts risk obscuring the garment itself, undermining the communicative purpose of fashion display. Critics also warn of homogenization, as reliance on TikTok's built-in templates may limit creative diversity, producing standardized visual formats that constrain expression. From an ethical perspective, layout design may also conceal or exaggerate apparel qualities, raising questions about authenticity in fashion communication.<sup>88</sup>

In this thesis, visual composition and layout styles are treated as essential visual strategies in TikTok apparel videos. Their presence indicates deliberate structuring of the communicative environment, guiding audience attention, framing meaning, and embedding fashion within aesthetic and cultural contexts. By systematically coding layout features, the study contributes to understanding how visual organization operates as a rhetorical resource in AI-enhanced communication, complementing filters, stickers, and textual overlays.

#### 4. Interactive Strategies

##### a. Text-to-Speech (TTS)

Text-to-Speech (TTS) is a feature in TikTok that converts written text into synthesized audio narration, allowing creators to add spoken commentary without recording their own voices. The

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<sup>88</sup> Ramadhan, Umanah, and Imawan, "Digital Marketing Strategy for Fashion Products on Tiktok."

system uses AI-driven speech synthesis to generate natural-sounding narration, with different tonal options available depending on regional settings. On TikTok, TTS is applied by typing captions or annotations and selecting the TTS function, after which the platform overlays a machine-generated voice onto the video.<sup>89</sup>

This feature is particularly relevant in apparel communication because it provides an additional auditory channel through which information about clothing can be conveyed. Instead of relying solely on visuals or written text, creators can use TTS to guide the audience through outfit details, emphasize specific features, or narrate styling processes.<sup>90</sup>

The communicative role of TTS in apparel content is multifaceted. First, it provides accessibility: creators who are uncomfortable using their own voice, or who face language barriers, can still produce narrated content. Second, it ensures consistency of tone; unlike human voices, which vary in pitch, emotion, and delivery, TTS offers a standardized narration style that can be easily recognized across videos.<sup>91</sup>

TTS also provides pacing and emphasis. A creator can display multiple outfits in rapid succession while the AI narration briefly describes each look (“summer casual,” “office chic,” “night out”). This efficiency is especially valuable within TikTok’s short-

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<sup>89</sup> Ruth Guest, “TikTok & The Self: The Relationship Between Self-Concept Clarity and Self-Presentation in Adult TikTok Creators,” *Institute of Art, Design & Technology*, April 17, 2024, /articles/thesis/TikTok\_the\_self\_The\_relationship\_between\_self-concept\_clarity\_and\_self-presentation\_in\_adult\_TikTok\_creators/25218359/2.

<sup>90</sup> Stephen Brade et al., “SpeakEasy: Enhancing Text-to-Speech Interactions for Expressive Content Creation,” *Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems - Proceedings*, April 26, 2025, [https://doi.org/10.1145/3706598.3714263/SUPPL\\_FILE/PN4836.ZIP](https://doi.org/10.1145/3706598.3714263/SUPPL_FILE/PN4836.ZIP).

<sup>91</sup> Xiaoke Zhang, “How Does Ai-Generated Voice Affect Online Video Creation? Evidence From Tiktok,” *The University of British Columbia* 87, no. 1,2 (2023): 149–200, <https://doi.org/10.14288/1.0431316>.

form format, where time constraints require concise yet informative communication.<sup>92</sup>

Moreover, the artificiality of the TTS voice has itself become part of TikTok's communicative culture. Audiences often interpret the monotone narration as humorous, ironic, or intentionally "neutral," creating a layer of metacommunication. In apparel videos, this neutrality can highlight the clothing itself rather than the personality of the creator, shifting the communicative focus from individual expression to product-centered display.<sup>93</sup>

TTS can be analyzed through Media Richness Theory as an enhancer of communicative richness. Adding an auditory dimension to visual and textual cues creates a multimodal communicative environment that reduces ambiguity and enhances clarity. For instance, while text overlays may inform viewers of clothing details, TTS ensures the message is also processed through auditory channels, reinforcing retention.<sup>94</sup>

From the perspective of Uses and Gratifications Theory, TTS fulfills several audiences' needs. It satisfies information-seeking by providing verbal explanations of outfits, entertainment through humorous or ironic delivery, and accessibility by making videos easier to follow for those who prefer listening over reading. Thus, TTS functions not merely as a technical feature but as a

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<sup>92</sup> Ido Ramati, "Algorithmic Ventriloquism: The Contested State of Voice in AI Speech Generators," *Social Media and Society* 10, no. 1 (January 1, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231224401>; WEBSITE: WEBSITE: SAGE; JOURNAL: JOURNAL: SMSA; WGROUP: STRING: PUBLICATION.

<sup>93</sup> Tira Nur Fitria, "Utilizing Text-to-Speech Technology: Natural Reader in Teaching Pronunciation," *JETLEE: Journal of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature* 2, no. 2 (August 10, 2022): 70–78, <https://doi.org/10.47766/JETLEE.V2I2.312>.

<sup>94</sup> Maha M El-Shinnawy, M Lynne Markus, and M Lynne, "MEDIA RICHNESS THEORY AND NEW ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION MEDIA: A STUDY OF VOICE MAIL AND ELECTRONIC MAIL," *ICIS 1992 Proceedings* 36 (January 1, 1992), <https://aisel.aisnet.org/icis1992/36>.

response to audience expectations within the participatory culture of TikTok.<sup>95</sup>

Within TikTok's participatory culture, TTS has acquired distinct cultural significance. The robotic quality of the AI voice has been appropriated into memes, parody formats, and comedic skits, embedding it in the collective vernacular of the platform. Apparel creators often exploit this familiarity to position their content within broader platform trends. For example, using TTS for sarcastic commentary about fashion mishaps or exaggerated outfit descriptions aligns apparel content with humorous subcultures on TikTok.<sup>96</sup>

At the same time, TTS provides inclusivity by enabling creators who may lack confidence in public speaking, who are non-native speakers, or who wish to maintain anonymity. This democratizes apparel communication, ensuring broader participation beyond those with strong presentation skills.

Despite its advantages, TTS faces limitations. Its lack of emotional nuance can restrict expressive possibilities; garments associated with elegance or sensuality may not be fully conveyed through monotone narration. Furthermore, the overuse of TTS can lead to audience fatigue, as the repetitive synthetic voice may reduce engagement over time. Critics also warn of homogenization: when too many creators rely on the same TTS voice, content risks blending, diminishing distinctiveness in a competitive platform ecosystem.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Jing Wang and Jay In Oh, "Factors Influencing Consumers' Continuous Purchase Intentions on TikTok: An Examination from the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) Theory Perspective," *Sustainability* 2023, Vol. 15, Page 10028 15, no. 13 (June 25, 2023): 10028, <https://doi.org/10.3390/SU151310028>.

<sup>96</sup> Silvan Mertes et al., "VoiceX: A Text-To-Speech Framework for Custom Voices," *Arxiv.Org*, August 22, 2024, <http://arxiv.org/abs/2408.12170>.

<sup>97</sup> Xihuai Wang et al., "Audio Turing Test: Benchmarking the Human-Likeness of Large Language Model-Based Text-to-Speech Systems in Chinese," *Arxiv.Org*, May 16, 2025, <http://arxiv.org/abs/2505.11200>.

In this thesis, TTS is coded as an indicator of interactive strategy because it functions as an AI-mediated layer that invites audience interpretation through auditory narration. It transforms apparel videos from silent or text-based displays into multimodal messages that combine visuals, text, and synthetic voice. By systematically analyzing the frequency and context of TTS use, this study contributes to understanding how synthetic narration operates as a communicative resource in digital fashion discourse.

b. Polls and Quizzes Stickers

Polls and quizzes are interactive stickers provided by TikTok that allow creators to embed clickable questions within their videos. Viewers can vote between two or more options (in the case of polls) or select an answer to a question (in the case of quizzes), with immediate feedback on results. These tools transform the viewing experience from passive consumption to active participation. Within apparel-related content, polls and quizzes often invite audiences to evaluate outfit choices, express preferences for colors or styles, or test knowledge of fashion trends.<sup>98</sup>

Polls and quizzes serve as mechanisms of co-construction, allowing audiences to become collaborators in the meaning-making process. For example, a creator may post a video with two outfits under the caption “Which look is better for date night?” followed by a poll. The audience’s responses not only influence engagement metrics but also shape the perceived value of each outfit. In this sense, polls operate as rhetorical devices that redistribute communicative agency from the creator to the audience.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Dominique S. Wirz and Florin Zai, “Infotainment on Social Media: How News Companies Combine Information and Entertainment in News Stories on Instagram and TikTok,” *Digital Journalism*, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2025.2464062>; JOURNAL: JOURNAL: RDIJ20; WGROU: STRING: PUBLICATION.

<sup>99</sup> Susan Vermeer and Linda van den Heijkant, “Break a Story: Examining the Effects of Instagram Stories from News Accounts on Adolescents’ Political Learning,” *Journalism Studies* 25,

Quizzes, meanwhile, often serve playful or educational functions. A creator may post a quiz asking, “Which decade inspired this outfit?” with multiple-choice answers. Such interactions simultaneously entertain and inform, embedding apparel content within broader discourses of fashion history, culture, or styling practices. Both polls and quizzes invite cognitive and affective investment, thereby deepening audience involvement with apparel communication.<sup>100</sup>

From the perspective of Media Richness Theory, polls and quizzes increase communication richness by incorporating immediate feedback loops. They provide cues about audience preferences, enabling two-way interaction that extends beyond one-directional message delivery. The feedback mechanism enhances immediacy, reducing ambiguity by clarifying which styles or interpretations resonate most with viewers.<sup>101</sup>

Uses & Gratifications Theory provides additional insights. Polls and quizzes fulfill the audience’s need for participation and social interaction. By voting or responding, users affirm their identity as part of a community, contributing to collective fashion judgments. At the same time, quizzes fulfill cognitive needs by offering knowledge-based interactions and entertainment needs by gamifying the consumption of fashion content. Thus, these stickers function not only as technical tools but as gratification-oriented strategies embedded within participatory media culture.<sup>102</sup>

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no. 9 (July 3, 2024): 1029–52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2023.2246067>;CSUBTYPE:STRING:SPECIAL;PAGE:STRING:ARTICLE/CHAPTER.

<sup>100</sup> Erica Napuli, “Beyond the Label Campaign: An Integrated Marketing and Communications Campaign to Educate and Empower Low-Income Communities in the Southern United States,” *Honors Program: Theses*, May 1, 2025, <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/honorstheses/751>.

<sup>101</sup> Lae and Khine, “The Impact of Media Richness, Celebrity Endorsement and Consumers’ Engagement of Tik Tok Marketing on Their Intention to Visit Restaurants in Thailand.”

<sup>102</sup> Praventyasari Mutiara, Kinkin Yuliaty, and Subarsa Putri, “Uses and Gratification Theory in TikTok as Social Media Marketing Platform: Seen from Market Player View,” *Journal of*

Polls and quizzes reflect TikTok's participatory ethos, where audiences expect to play an active role in content creation. In fashion discourse, these features democratize style judgments: rather than being dictated by designers, marketers, or influencers alone, interpretations of apparel are co-produced by collective audience responses. This echoes Jenkins' concept of participatory culture, where media consumption is also a form of production.<sup>103</sup>

Culturally, polls and quizzes reinforce the communal aspects of fashion. Clothing is not merely an individual expression but a shared discourse shaped by social consensus. By embedding polls such as "Which color fits best for Eid?" or "Is this outfit more Y2K or retro?", creators position fashion as a conversation that traverses cultural traditions, generational styles, and subcultural aesthetics.<sup>104</sup>

Despite their benefits, interactive stickers raise concerns. First, polls may oversimplify complex fashion interpretations into binary choices, flattening nuanced discourses into reductive comparisons. Second, they risk privileging popularity over authenticity: outfits validated by majority votes may overshadow unique or experimental styles. Third, quizzes can sometimes serve as disguised marketing strategies, guiding users toward preferred outcomes that align with promotional goals. Ethically, creators must navigate the fine line between fostering genuine participation and manipulating audiences for engagement metrics.<sup>105</sup>

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*Digital Marketing and Communication* 3, no. 1 (March 30, 2023): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.53623/JDMC.V3I1.164>.

<sup>103</sup> Elizabeth Zimmermann and Samuel Tomczyk, "The Ways of Using Social Media for Health Promotion Among Adolescents: Qualitative Interview and Focus Group Study," *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 27, no. 1 (June 9, 2025): e71510, <https://doi.org/10.2196/71510>.

<sup>104</sup> Jad Abi-Rafeh et al., "Artificial Intelligence–Generated Social Media Content Creation and Management Strategies for Plastic Surgeons," *Aesthetic Surgery Journal* 44, no. 7 (June 14, 2024): 769–78, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ASJ/SJAE036>.

<sup>105</sup> Anne Corcos and Levana Hodara, "How Social Media Are Collecting More of Users' Data: A Behavioral Model of Platform Retention Strategies," *SN Business and Economics* 3, no. 7 (July 1, 2023): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.1007/S43546-023-00501-9/METRICS>.

In this thesis, polls and quizzes are coded as indicators of interactive strategies, as they transform apparel videos from unidirectional displays into dialogic encounters. Their presence signals deliberate efforts to involve audiences in fashion meaning-making, reinforcing the role of interactivity in digital communication. By systematically mapping their usage across apparel videos, the study captures how creators employ gamified and participatory features to enhance viewer engagement and co-construct fashion discourse.

c. Duet and Stitch Features

The Duet and Stitch features are two of TikTok's most distinctive tools for fostering interactivity and participatory media creation. The Duet function allows a user to record a video alongside an existing TikTok video, displaying both clips in a split-screen format. The Stitch function, by contrast, enables users to incorporate a selected segment (up to five seconds) of another creator's video into their own, appending new content to the original. Both features rely on TikTok's AI-driven video-editing architecture, which integrates multiple clips seamlessly within the platform.<sup>106</sup>

Within apparel communication, Duet and Stitch allow users to directly engage with fashion-related content by responding to, remixing, or contextualizing clothing displays. A creator can duet a runway-style apparel video to provide reactions, alternative styling suggestions, or even critiques. Similarly, stitching allows a user to reframe an outfit demonstration within a new narrative context, such as comparing it with their own wardrobe or linking it to cultural references.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Than Bjelland Brown, "#Duet Me: TikTok as a Virtual Traditional Music Community Environment," *Memorial University of Newfoundland*, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.48336/KFMN-7R77>.

<sup>107</sup> Reni Nabella, "Utilizing TikTok's Stitch Feature to Improve Students' Speaking Skills (A Quasi-Experimental Design in the Eighth Grade at One of Junior High Schools in Tangerang

The communicative functions of Duet and Stitch extend beyond mere content-sharing; they create dialogic relationships between creators and audiences. For example, when a fashion influencer posts an outfit video, others may duet it to showcase “budget-friendly alternatives” or “hacks to recreate the look.” This not only comments on the original but expands its communicative life, embedding apparel within broader conversations on affordability, authenticity, or creativity.

Stitching, meanwhile, enables users to appropriate parts of fashion discourse and repurpose them for alternative narratives. For instance, an apparel showcase stitched with a user’s sarcastic commentary can reframe the original as an example of extravagance, humor, or critique. Thus, these tools transform apparel videos from isolated communicative events into nodes within a wider network of intertextuality and dialogue.<sup>108</sup>

Duet and Stitch exemplify dialogic interaction, where meaning develops through the interplay of multiple creators’ contributions. Apparel videos on TikTok do not stand alone; they are continuously reinterpreted, contested, and remixed through interactive features. This aligns with Media Richness Theory as well: Duet and Stitch add additional layers of communicative richness by incorporating multiple perspectives within a single message. By juxtaposing two videos side by side or linking segments across creators, the features enrich the communicative environment with contrasting cues, tones, and contexts.<sup>109</sup>

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Selatan),” *FITK UIN Jakarta*, July 17, 2024, <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/79549>.

<sup>108</sup> Bojana S. Radovanović, “TikTok and Sound: Changing the Ways of Creating, Promoting, Distributing and Listening to Music,” *INSAM Journal of Contemporary Music, Art and Technology*, no. 9 (2022): 51–73.

<sup>109</sup> Katherine O’Toole, “Collaborative Creativity in TikTok Music Duets,” *Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems - Proceedings*, April 19, 2023, [https://doi.org/10.1145/3544548.3581380/SUPPL\\_FILE/3544548.3581380-TALK-VIDEO.MP4](https://doi.org/10.1145/3544548.3581380/SUPPL_FILE/3544548.3581380-TALK-VIDEO.MP4).

From the Uses and Gratifications perspective, these tools satisfy audiences' interactive needs by allowing them to not only consume but also participate in and reshape fashion narratives. They enable self-expression, social critique, and playful creativity, embedding apparel within a dynamic cycle of cultural production.<sup>110</sup>

Duet and Stitch are emblematic of TikTok's participatory culture. They operationalize the principle of co-creation, where audiences are not passive recipients but active contributors to meaning-making. In apparel communication, this participatory ethos democratizes fashion discourse: trends can be challenged, reinterpreted, or celebrated by diverse voices, regardless of their professional affiliation with the fashion industry.<sup>111</sup>

Culturally, Duet and Stitch foster intertextual communities around fashion. Users participate in challenges such as "rate my outfit," "style swap," or "who wore it better," where fashion meaning is collectively negotiated. These practices also foreground the relational identity of fashion: clothing is not only what an individual wears but also what others perceive, compare, and contest in digital spaces.<sup>112</sup>

Despite their participatory potential, Duet and Stitch raise certain limitations. First, they may foster negative or hostile commentary, as apparel content is vulnerable to parody or criticism when opened for remix. Second, issues of authorship and credit emerge: while TikTok automatically attributes the original video, creators may feel that their work is being appropriated without

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<sup>110</sup> Orhan Korhan and Metin Ersoy, "Usability and Functionality Factors of the Social Network Site Application Users from the Perspective of Uses and Gratification Theory," *Quality and Quantity* 50, no. 4 (July 1, 2016): 1799–1816, <https://doi.org/10.1007/S11135-015-0236-7/METRICS>.

<sup>111</sup> Laura M Herman, "For Who Page? TikTok Creators' Algorithmic Dependencies," *IASDR Conference Series*, October 5, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.21606/IASDR.2023.576>.

<sup>112</sup> Dr D Bondy and Valdovinos Kaye, "Please Duet This," *Networking Knowledge: Journal of the MeCCSA Postgraduate Network* 15, no. 1 (February 9, 2022), <https://ojs.meccsa.org.uk/index.php/netknow/article/view/654>.

proper contextual recognition. Third, the performative nature of duets (e.g., mocking or ridiculing outfits) risks reinforcing fashion hierarchies and exclusionary discourses.<sup>113</sup>

Ethically, Duet and Stitch also raise questions about consent and control. Although TikTok provides creators with the option to disable these features, many leave them enabled to maximize visibility, potentially exposing their content to unintended reinterpretations. In the context of apparel communication, this may mean that brand or creator intentions are subverted by audience-driven remixes.

For the present thesis, Duet and Stitch are coded as central interactive strategies that exemplify dialogic engagement within TikTok apparel content. Their presence reflects intentional openness to interactivity and signifies that fashion discourse on TikTok is inherently collective, contested, and participatory. By analyzing the prevalence and uses of Duet and Stitch, the study captures how interactive remix culture shapes the communicative life of apparel videos, distinguishing them from one-directional forms of digital fashion marketing.

#### d. Hashtags

Hashtags are metadata tags created by prefixing a word or phrase with the symbol “#,” enabling categorization and discoverability of content on TikTok. They function as clickable links that group videos under the same theme, trend, or discourse. On TikTok, hashtags play a dual role: they serve as indexing mechanisms for the algorithm and as symbolic signifiers within communication. Apparel creators often employ hashtags such as

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<sup>113</sup> Mads Høgenhaug et al., “TikTok StitchGraph: Characterizing Communication Patterns on TikTok through a Collection of Interaction Networks,” *Arxiv.Org*, February 25, 2025, <http://arxiv.org/abs/2502.18661>.

#OOTD (Outfit of the Day), #Streetwear, or #LuxuryFashion to situate their content within fashion-related streams of visibility.<sup>114</sup>

In apparel videos, hashtags perform several communicative functions. First, they act as framing devices, signaling how the content should be interpreted. For example, the same outfit posted with #SustainableFashion frames the garment within discourses of ethics and ecology, while #FastFashion signals affordability and mass-market appeal. Second, hashtags function as participation cues, inviting audiences to join viral challenges such as #ThriftFlip or #GetReadyWithMe (GRWM). These hashtags transform apparel display into collective practices, situating individual videos within broader social phenomena.

Additionally, hashtags serve as community markers, aligning creators with specific subcultures. For instance, #HijabFashion highlights modest wear communities, while #KPopFashion ties clothing styles to fandom cultures. In this sense, hashtags operate as linguistic shorthand for cultural belonging, guiding viewers toward interpretive communities where apparel is understood within shared frameworks.<sup>115</sup>

Hashtags connect individual videos into wider communities and conversations through shared tagging, linking, and aggregating practices. In this view, hashtags transform TikTok apparel videos into nodes within larger discursive networks, enabling visibility and connectivity across otherwise fragmented audiences.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Elena Pilipets, "Hashtagging, Duetting, Sound-Linking: TikTok Gestures and Methods of (In)Distinction," *The Journal of Media Art Study and Theory*, April 25, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.59547/26911566.4.1.07>.

<sup>115</sup> Corey H Basch et al., "Videos With the Hashtag #vaping on TikTok and Implications for Informed Decision-Making by Adolescents: Descriptive Study.," *JMIR Pediatrics and Parenting* 4, no. 4 (October 25, 2021): e30681, <https://doi.org/10.2196/30681>.

<sup>116</sup> Martina Toni and Giovanni Mattia, "Tik Tok Hashtag Challenge: A New Digital Strategy for Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) Tik Tok Hashtag Challenge: A New Digital Strategy for Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) Tik Tok Hashtag Challenge: A New Digital Strategy for Consumer Brand Engagement (CB)," 2021.

From the lens of Media Richness Theory, hashtags do not increase sensory cues but enhance interpretive richness by providing semantic anchors that shape how content is categorized and understood. From a Uses and Gratifications perspective, hashtags satisfy users' social integrative needs by linking them to communities and cognitive needs by organizing information in searchable categories.<sup>117</sup>

Culturally, hashtags are dynamic markers of trend circulation. They often emerge from grassroots participation, gain viral momentum, and shape global conversations on fashion. For example, the hashtag #Cottagecore mobilized an aesthetic movement centered on rural, vintage-inspired apparel, while #Y2KFashion revived early 2000s styles for a new generation. These discourses exemplify how hashtags not only index content but also generate cultural categories that influence consumer perception and fashion cycles.<sup>118</sup>

Participatory dimensions are equally important. By posting under shared hashtags, creators engage in collective authorship, contributing to a co-produced discourse. Viewers navigating these hashtags experience fashion not as isolated posts but as part of a living, evolving conversation. This intertextuality embeds apparel communication within a broader ecology of meanings, highlighting the inherently social character of fashion on TikTok.<sup>119</sup>

While hashtags enhance visibility, they also raise challenges. Overuse of trending hashtags may dilute specificity, as creators

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<sup>117</sup> Chidiac and Bowden, "When Media Matters: The Role of Media Richness and Naturalness on Purchase Intentions within Influencer Marketing," August 18, 2023.

<sup>118</sup> Lindsey Wright, "The Sound of Identity: Audios and Hashtags as Nexuses of Practice on TikTok," *Honors Undergraduate Theses*, January 1, 2021, <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/honorstheses/1086>.

<sup>119</sup> Natalya Izotova, Mariia Polishchuk, and Kateryna Taranik-Tkachuk, "Discourse Analysis and Digital Technologies: (TikTok, Hashtags, Instagram, YouTube): Universal and Specific Aspects in International Practice," *Amazonia Investiga* 10, no. 44 (September 29, 2021): 198–206, <https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2021.44.08.19>.

indiscriminately attach popular tags for exposure, reducing semantic clarity. Hashtags can also foster superficial engagement, where users follow trends for visibility rather than authentic communication. Moreover, algorithmic prioritization of popular hashtags risks amplifying dominant cultural aesthetics at the expense of marginalized or niche fashion communities, thereby reinforcing inequalities in digital visibility.<sup>120</sup>

Ethically, branded hashtags used in influencer marketing (e.g., #Ad, #Sponsored) raise questions of transparency. Although disclosure is required, the blending of organic and promotional hashtags can obscure distinctions between authentic user content and commercial communication.<sup>121</sup>

In this thesis, hashtags are coded as indicators of interactive strategies, as they function both as communicative devices and as participation mechanisms. Their presence reflects how creators embed apparel videos within cultural conversations, situate clothing within interpretive frameworks, and mobilize audience involvement through collective tagging practices. By analyzing the systematic use of hashtags, the study contributes to understanding how fashion discourse circulates across TikTok's algorithmic and cultural networks.

e. Mentions (Tagging Other Users or Brands)

Mentions, commonly implemented through the “@username” tag, are interactive features that allow TikTok creators to directly reference other users or brands in their videos,

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<sup>120</sup> Moa Eriksson Krutrök, “Algorithmic Closeness in Mourning: Vernaculars of the Hashtag #grief on TikTok,” *Social Media and Society* 7, no. 3 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051211042396>; WEBSITE:WEBSITE:SAGE; JOURNAL:JOURNAL:SMSA; WGROUP:STRING:PUBLICATION.

<sup>121</sup> Toni and Mattia, “Tik Tok Hashtag Challenge: A New Digital Strategy for Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) Tik Tok Hashtag Challenge: A New Digital Strategy for Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) Tik Tok Hashtag Challenge: A New Digital Strategy for Consumer Brand Engagement (CB).”

captions, or comments. When a mention is added, it becomes a clickable link, notifying the tagged user and connecting viewers to their profile. Within apparel communication, mentions serve as tools for attribution, collaboration, cross-promotion, and dialogic engagement.<sup>122</sup>

Mentions perform several communicative functions in apparel videos. They often serve as attribution markers, giving credit to designers, brands, or other creators whose styles or products are featured. For instance, an influencer styling a Zara blazer may tag @ZaraOfficial in the caption to identify the brand explicitly. Mentions also operate as collaborative signals: tagging another user invites reciprocal engagement, whether through duets, stitches, or comments, fostering interactive exchanges within fashion communities.

Additionally, mentions function as network-building devices. Emerging creators frequently tag established influencers in hopes of being noticed, while brands may tag popular content creators to leverage their visibility. In apparel content, this relational tagging situates fashion within networks of influence, where meaning is co-constructed by multiple actors.<sup>123</sup>

Mentions exemplify the principles of networked communication, where meaning circulates through interconnected nodes rather than isolated channels. By tagging others, creators transform apparel videos into points of relational dialogue, expanding their communicative scope beyond individual expression.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Basch et al., “Videos With the Hashtag #vaping on TikTok and Implications for Informed Decision-Making by Adolescents: Descriptive Study.”

<sup>123</sup> Yujue Wang et al., “The Features of TikTok Viral Video Advertising: A Systematic Review,” *2023 International Conference on Informatics, Multimedia, Cyber and Information Systems, ICIMCIS 2023*, 2023, 267–72, <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICIMCIS60089.2023.10349038>.

<sup>124</sup> Yingdan Lu and Cuihua Shen, “Unpacking Multimodal Fact-Checking: Features and Engagement of Fact-Checking Videos on Chinese TikTok (Douyin),” *Social Media and Society* 9,

From a Media Richness Theory perspective, mentions enhance richness not by adding sensory cues but by embedding relational cues. They explicitly signal connections, affiliations, or conversations between communicators. In this sense, mentions act as meta-communicative markers, situating apparel within a relational web that influences interpretation.<sup>125</sup>

Uses and Gratifications Theory also offers insight: mentions fulfill audiences' social integrative needs by creating visible affiliations between creators, brands, and communities. They provide recognition, reinforce group belonging, and satisfy users' desire to feel connected to broader fashion networks.<sup>126</sup>

Mentions contribute to participatory culture by encouraging interaction across creators and audiences. They create dialogic chains: one apparel video may tag another, prompting a duet, response, or new styling challenge. These dynamic fosters a sense of community where fashion discourse unfolds as an interconnected dialogue rather than isolated self-presentation.<sup>127</sup>

Culturally, mentions also reflect power relations within fashion communication. When creators tag luxury brands, they symbolically align themselves with prestige and aspiration, even if the brand does not respond. Conversely, tagging smaller or local designers signals support for grassroots fashion cultures. In both cases, mentions serve as cultural signifiers of affiliation, aspiration, or solidarity.<sup>128</sup>

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no. 1 (January 1, 2023), [https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221150406/SUPPL\\_FILE/SJ-DOCX-1-SMS-10.1177\\_20563051221150406.DOCX](https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221150406/SUPPL_FILE/SJ-DOCX-1-SMS-10.1177_20563051221150406.DOCX).

<sup>125</sup> Feng and Xie, "Optimizing Branded Content for Beauty and Fashion Influencers from a Media Richness Perspective: How Post Topic and Visual Type Intertwine to Boost Consumer Engagement," 2025.

<sup>126</sup> Korhan and Ersoy, "Usability and Functionality Factors of the Social Network Site Application Users from the Perspective of Uses and Gratification Theory."

<sup>127</sup> Lu and Shen, "Unpacking Multimodal Fact-Checking: Features and Engagement of Fact-Checking Videos on Chinese TikTok (Douyin)."

<sup>128</sup> Radovanović, "TikTok and Sound: Changing the Ways of Creating, Promoting, Distributing and Listening to Music," December 15, 2022.

Despite their connective potential, mentions raise limitations. They can reinforce hierarchical structures, privileging those who are frequently tagged while marginalizing lesser-known voices. In some cases, mentions may be used instrumentally, with creators tagging brands purely to gain visibility, thereby diluting authenticity. Furthermore, mentions risk fostering performative associations, where connections are suggested but not substantively maintained.

From an ethical perspective, tagging users without consent may expose them to unwanted attention or harassment. In apparel content, this risk is heightened when individuals or smaller designers are tagged in viral posts without their preparedness to handle mass exposure.<sup>129</sup>

In this thesis, mentions are coded as indicators of interactive strategies, as they function not only as technical tags but as communicative practices that construct networks of fashion meaning. Their presence reflects deliberate efforts to situate apparel videos within relational and participatory contexts, embedding fashion communication within wider networks of creators, brands, and communities. By analyzing how and when mentions are used, this study highlights the relational dimensions of AI-enhanced apparel communication on TikTok.

f. Calls to Action (CTAs)

Calls to Action (CTAs) are explicit prompts embedded within TikTok videos or captions that encourage viewers to take a specific action beyond passive viewing. These actions range from digital engagement (“like,” “comment,” “share”) to community participation (“join this challenge,” “duet this look”) and

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<sup>129</sup> Kati Koivunen, Milka Aino Annikki Haanpää, and Saira Saraniemi, “The Emergence of Cause-Oriented Influencers – Conceptualizing de-Influencing on TikTok,” *Journal of Business Research* 197 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2025.115463>.

commercial activity (“buy now,” “link in bio”). CTAs are typically delivered through verbal statements, on-screen text, or graphic overlays. Within apparel content, CTAs often invite audiences to evaluate outfits, follow the creator for more fashion inspiration, or purchase featured garments.<sup>130</sup>

CTAs function as rhetorical devices that transform viewing into participation. For instance, when a creator ends a fashion video with the phrase, “Follow for more outfit ideas,” the communicative intent shifts from mere display to community-building. Similarly, a caption reading “Which dress is your favorite? Comment below!” directs the audience toward evaluative participation.<sup>131</sup>

Commercial CTAs expand apparel videos into consumer pathways. Phrases like “Shop the look via link in bio” or “Use my discount code” integrate fashion communication with e-commerce infrastructures. In this sense, CTAs blur the line between expressive self-presentation and commercial persuasion, situating TikTok apparel content within hybrid communicative contexts.<sup>132</sup>

From a communication perspective, Calls-to-Action (CTAs) function as persuasive prompts that guide audience attention toward specific behaviors, leveraging TikTok’s interactive affordances to maximize response. When viewed through Media Richness Theory, CTAs add interpretive cues that clarify intended actions, reduce ambiguity, and strengthen message effectiveness; under Uses and

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<sup>130</sup> Toni and Mattia, “Tik Tok Hashtag Challenge: A New Digital Strategy for Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) Tik Tok Hashtag Challenge: A New Digital Strategy for Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) Tik Tok Hashtag Challenge: A New Digital Strategy for Consumer Brand Engagement (CB).”

<sup>131</sup> Rama Anandra Putra, Sri Narti, and Martha Heriniawzi Dianthi, “Aisas Marketing Model In Promoting Repaint Services Through Tiktok Social Media (A Study On Tiktok Account @As\_Carbon),” *Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 1, no. 4 (July 19, 2025): 203–8, <https://doi.org/10.70963/JMR.V1I4.297>.

<sup>132</sup> Yutong Guo et al., “Can Social Technologies Drive Purchases in E-Commerce Live Streaming? An Empirical Study of Broadcasters’ Cognitive and Affective Social Call-to-Actions,” *Production and Operations Management*, 2024, [https://doi.org/10.1177/10591478241276131/SUPPL\\_FILE/SJ-PDF-1-PAO-10.1177\\_10591478241276131.PDF](https://doi.org/10.1177/10591478241276131/SUPPL_FILE/SJ-PDF-1-PAO-10.1177_10591478241276131.PDF).

Gratifications Theory, they fulfill interactive and utility needs by creating explicit opportunities for participation and providing actionable guidance.<sup>133</sup>

Uses and Gratifications Theory also illuminates their role. CTAs fulfill audiences' interactive needs by providing explicit opportunities for engagement, whether through social affirmation (likes, comments) or participatory practices (duets, stitches). They also satisfy utility gratifications by offering practical instructions, such as where to buy an outfit or how to replicate a style.

Culturally, CTAs reflect the platform logic of TikTok, where algorithmic visibility is tied to engagement metrics. Encouraging viewers to like, comment, or share becomes not merely promotional but existential, as visibility in the algorithm is contingent upon active participation. Apparel creators integrate CTAs strategically to secure algorithmic traction while simultaneously fostering a sense of community.<sup>134</sup>

Participatory culture is also central. CTAs such as “Show me your version of this look” or “Try this styling hack and tag me” expand apparel discourse into collaborative practices. Here, CTAs become catalysts for trend circulation, encouraging replication, adaptation, and reinterpretation by audiences. This iterative cycle situates fashion communication within communal rather than purely individual expression.

Despite their effectiveness, CTAs face critiques. Overuse can lead to engagement fatigue, where audiences perceive prompts as formulaic or manipulative. Moreover, commercial CTAs raise ethical concerns regarding transparency, especially when sponsored

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<sup>133</sup> Hatice Dindar, “The Influence on Consumer Purchase Intention of Call-to-Action in Promotional Messages on Instagram Channel /,” 2024.

<sup>134</sup> Sha Zhang, Aihui Ding, and Mengchen Xu, “Call-to-Action or Inaction? Call-to-Action Buttons Hurt in-Feed Social Advertising,” *International Journal of Advertising*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2024.2433885>; REQUESTEDJOURNAL:JOURNAL:RINA20; WGROUP:STRING:PUBLICATION.

promotions are not clearly disclosed. Critics argue that excessive emphasis on CTAs risks instrumentalizing audiences, reducing authentic communication into transactional exchanges driven by algorithmic or commercial imperatives.<sup>135</sup>

From a broader perspective, CTAs may also privilege creators adept at persuasive techniques, reinforcing inequalities in visibility and influence within TikTok's fashion ecosystem.<sup>136</sup>

In this thesis, CTAs are coded as essential interactive strategies because they explicitly orient audience behavior. Their presence signifies deliberate efforts to activate participation, whether for engagement, community-building, or commerce. By systematically mapping CTAs in apparel content, the study sheds light on how creators blend expressive, participatory, and persuasive functions in TikTok's communication ecology.

## **B. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework provides the foundation that guides this study's analysis of TikTok apparel videos. It anchors the research within established communication theories, ensuring that the descriptive findings of the content analysis are interpreted through recognized conceptual lenses. For this purpose, two primary theories are employed: Media Richness Theory (MRT) and Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT).

Media Richness Theory (MRT) conceptualizes the communicative value of a medium in terms of its capacity to deliver multiple concurrent cues, enable feedback, convey natural language, and personalize message delivery

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<sup>135</sup> Toni and Mattia, "Tik Tok Hashtag Challenge: A New Digital Strategy for Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) Tik Tok Hashtag Challenge: A New Digital Strategy for Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) Tik Tok Hashtag Challenge: A New Digital Strategy for Consumer Brand Engagement (CB)."

<sup>136</sup> Herman, "For Who Page? TikTok Creators' Algorithmic Dependencies."

criteria directly applicable to AI-enhanced TikTok apparel videos.<sup>137</sup> UGT, on the other hand, emphasizes the motivations and gratifications that drive audiences to engage with such content, addressing the demand side of communication by highlighting user needs for entertainment, identity expression, and interaction.<sup>138</sup>

While each theory can independently explain part of the communicative process, using them together enables a more complete analysis. Media Richness Theory accounts for the supply-side design of messages, how AI-enhanced features increase cue multiplicity, feedback immediacy, and contextual clarity. Uses and Gratifications Theory accounts for the demand-side motivations why audiences seek, select, and interact with those same features to fulfill cognitive, affective, identity, and social needs. Without MRT, the analysis would miss how message richness is technically constructed; without UGT, it would overlook why audiences choose to engage with or ignore these strategies.<sup>139</sup> The dual-lens approach, therefore, prevents theoretical blind spots and ensures explanatory coverage across both message creation and audience reception.

#### 1. Media Richness Theory (MRT)

Media Richness Theory (MRT) was first introduced by Daft and Lengel (1986) as part of organizational communication research. The central concern at the time was how managers selected appropriate communication channels to reduce uncertainty and ambiguity in decision-making. Early studies compared media such as face-to-face meetings, telephone calls, memos, and written reports, ranking them according to their

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<sup>137</sup> Zhen Wang, "Media Richness and Continuance Intention to Online Learning Platforms: The Mediating Role of Social Presence and the Moderating Role of Need for Cognition," *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (July 12, 2022): 950501, <https://doi.org/10.3389/FPSYG.2022.950501/BIBTEX>.

<sup>138</sup> Jafar Mehrad and Pegah Tajer, "Uses and Gratification Theory in Connection with Knowledge and Information Science: A Proposed Conceptual Model," *International Journal of Information Science and Management (IJISM)* 14, no. 2 (July 1, 2016): e698234-, [https://ijism.isc.ac/article\\_698234.html](https://ijism.isc.ac/article_698234.html).

<sup>139</sup> Xiong, "Research on Exploding Video Creation Strategy Based on Visual Communication."

richness, that is, their ability to transmit multiple cues, provide immediate feedback, and convey personal focus and natural language.<sup>140</sup>

The foundational premise of MRT is that communication effectiveness depends on the match between the richness of the medium and the complexity of the task. Richer media are better suited for ambiguous or equivocal tasks, while leaner media suffice for routine or straightforward information exchange. Daft and Lengel (1986) defined four criteria that determine the richness of a communication medium:

- a. Immediacy of Feedback: The extent to which the medium allows quick interaction and clarification (e.g., face-to-face communication offers instant response).
- b. Multiple Cues: The ability to transmit various types of signals, including verbal, non-verbal, visual, and auditory cues.
- c. Language Variety: The capacity of the medium to convey natural language rather than restricted or coded symbols.
- d. Personal Focus: The extent to which the medium allows messages to be tailored personally, conveying emotional or social meaning.

According to the theory, media with higher scores across these criteria (e.g., face-to-face meetings) are considered “rich,” while those with fewer cues and limited interaction (e.g., formal reports) are considered “lean.” Although MRT was developed in the context of traditional organizational settings, it remains widely influential in the analysis of digital communication. Contemporary scholars have extended the theory to examine online platforms, social media, and virtual environments. TikTok, as a multimodal platform, exemplifies the principles of media richness by combining visuals, audio, text, and interactivity within a single communicative space.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Vivian C. Sheer, “Media Richness Theory,” *The International Encyclopedia of Media Psychology*, September 8, 2020, 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119011071.IEMP0118>.

<sup>141</sup> Kumi Ishii, Mary Madison Lyons, and Sabrina A. Carr, “Revisiting Media Richness Theory for Today and Future,” *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies* 1, no. 2 (April 1, 2019): 124–31,

Unlike earlier media analyzed by Daft and Lengel, TikTok offers not just multiple cues but layered cues enhanced by artificial intelligence. For instance, an apparel video may simultaneously present: Visual cues (outfits, colors, filters, background settings), Auditory cues (music, TTS narration, voiceovers), Textual cues (captions, hashtags, on-screen labels), and Interactive cues (polls, duets, mentions, CTAs). This convergence demonstrates that social media platforms like TikTok far exceed the richness of traditional communication channels, raising new questions about how richness should be conceptualized in digital contexts.<sup>142</sup>

In the specific context of this thesis, MRT provides a powerful lens to understand AI-enhanced visual and interactive strategies in apparel videos. TikTok apparel content is inherently rich because it mobilizes multiple communicative modes, but the addition of AI tools, filters, synthetic narration, and interactive stickers pushes richness further by layering cues that guide interpretation. For example, an outfit displayed with an AR filter (visual cue), narrated with TTS (auditory cue), and framed with a hashtag challenge (interactive cue) exemplifies a multi-cue communicative environment. This richness reduces ambiguity in message delivery: viewers not only see the outfit but also understand its intended style, context, and cultural meaning. Thus, MRT's relevance here lies in showing that apparel videos are not "simple displays" of fashion but complex, rich communication events where multiple cues are orchestrated to achieve clarity, persuasion, and engagement.<sup>143</sup>

Since its introduction, MRT has been widely cited but also contested. Critics argue that the original framework, focused on managers

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<https://doi.org/10.1002/HBE2.138;REQUESTEDJOURNAL:JOURNAL:25781863;CSUBTYPE:STRING:SPECIAL;PAGE:STRING:ARTICLE/CHAPTER>.

<sup>142</sup> Wang, "Media Richness and Continuance Intention to Online Learning Platforms: The Mediating Role of Social Presence and the Moderating Role of Need for Cognition," July 12, 2022.

<sup>143</sup> Fang-Yi Lo, Muhammad Dliya'ul Haq, and Yuan-Yi Shen, "Building Followers' Loyalty in Social Commerce: Influencers' Perspectives and Theoretical Insights from Social Presence and Media Richness Theory," *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, August 11, 2025, 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-06-2024-0433>.

choosing between memos, telephone calls, and face-to-face meetings, does not adequately explain the complexity of human communication in technologically mediated environments. For example, MRT initially assumed a linear relationship between task complexity and media richness: ambiguous tasks required richer media, while routine tasks could rely on lean media. However, empirical studies revealed that media choice is not solely determined by richness but also by social context, user preferences, and cultural norms.<sup>144</sup>

This critique is particularly relevant for social media platforms like TikTok, where media use is often driven less by task ambiguity and more by identity expression, trend participation, and community belonging. The choice to use a green screen effect or duet with another video may not be about reducing uncertainty but about aligning with cultural practices or maximizing algorithmic visibility.

One extension of MRT integrates the concept of social presence, defined as the degree to which a medium conveys a sense of interpersonal connection. Research has shown that richness is not purely an objective measure of cues but also a subjective perception by users. For instance, TikTok's use of emojis, interactive stickers, or mentions may create a heightened sense of presence and immediacy, even if they do not add traditional "cues" as defined by Daft and Lengel. This suggests that media richness in TikTok apparel videos must be understood as both technically afforded (multiple cues, feedback loops) and socially perceived (audiences feeling closer to creators or brands).<sup>145</sup>

Some scholars have extended Media Richness Theory by emphasizing the role of user agency in shaping communicative richness. Rather than treating media as inherently rich or lean, this perspective

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<sup>144</sup> Lae and Khine, "The Impact of Media Richness, Celebrity Endorsement and Consumers' Engagement of Tik Tok Marketing on Their Intention to Visit Restaurants in Thailand."

<sup>145</sup> Pei Chen Sun and Hsing Kenny Cheng, "The Design of Instructional Multimedia in E-Learning: A Media Richness Theory-Based Approach," *Computers & Education* 49, no. 3 (November 1, 2007): 662–76, <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.COMPEDU.2005.11.016>.

suggests that richness emerges from how users creatively apply available features. For example, on TikTok, a duet might be used for serious critique, playful parody, or supportive collaboration, each application shifting the communicative richness of the interaction. This view complements MRT by highlighting that richness is not only designed into the medium but also enacted through user behavior, reinforcing the theory's flexibility in dynamic, user-driven environments.<sup>146</sup>

In apparel content, this adaptive richness is evident when creators use the same AI feature (e.g., AR filters) in divergent ways: one to enhance realism (virtual try-on of clothing) and another to exaggerate humorously (oversized digital accessories). Both increase richness but serve different communicative ends.

Contemporary scholars have also explored the intersection of Media Richness Theory (MRT) and multimodality, which examines how meaning is constructed across modes such as text, image, sound, and gesture. Platforms like TikTok exemplify this multimodal environment, where creators combine music, visual filters, body movement, captions, and hashtags to produce layered communicative acts. While multimodality is not a primary framework in this study, its emphasis on composite meaning-making reinforces MRT's relevance in analyzing media that support diverse expressive resources.<sup>147</sup>

In this sense, richness is no longer only about more cues but about synergistic cues. For apparel communication, this means that an outfit's meaning is co-constructed through how the model moves, how the background sets context, how captions frame interpretation, and how

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<sup>146</sup> Rana Al-Marouf et al., "The Acceptance of Social Media Video for Knowledge Acquisition, Sharing and Application: A Comparative Study among YouTube Users and TikTok Users' for Medical Purposes," *International Journal of Data and Network Science* 5, no. 3 (June 1, 2021): 197, <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.ijdns.2021.6.013>.

<sup>147</sup> Chidiac and Bowden, "When Media Matters: The Role of Media Richness and Naturalness on Purchase Intentions within Influencer Marketing," August 18, 2023.

hashtags situate it culturally. The multimodal integration of these elements enhances richness far beyond the original scope of MRT.<sup>148</sup>

Recent research further extends MRT into the realm of AI-mediated communication. In these contexts, richness is shaped not only by human choice but also by algorithmic curation and AI-generated enhancements. TikTok's filters, text-to-speech narration, and AI-generated captions exemplify how machine intelligence actively co-produces richness by adding cues, adjusting accessibility, and shaping user interaction.<sup>149</sup>

This is especially relevant to apparel content. AI-driven captions ensure inclusivity for viewers with hearing impairments, while AR filters allow audiences to visualize garments in altered styles or contexts. Here, richness is not simply the creator's deliberate act but a product of human-AI collaboration. The extensions of MRT illustrate that richness in the digital age is:

- a. Not static but dynamic, shaped by cultural practices and user adaptation.
- b. Not only technical but perceptual, depending on how audiences interpret cues.
- c. Not purely human-driven but also AI-enhanced, as algorithms and machine intelligence contribute to multimodal environments.

Thus, applying MRT to TikTok apparel videos requires moving beyond its original managerial roots to a contemporary understanding of richness as multimodal, participatory, and AI-mediated.

Daft and Lengel (1986) identified immediacy of feedback as a central component of media richness, meaning how quickly messages can be clarified or responded to. On TikTok, immediacy takes on both synchronous and asynchronous forms. While TikTok is not a live

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<sup>148</sup> Feng and Xie, "Optimizing Branded Content for Beauty and Fashion Influencers from a Media Richness Perspective: How Post Topic and Visual Type Intertwine to Boost Consumer Engagement," 2025.

<sup>149</sup> El-Shinnawy, Lynne Markus, and Lynne, "MEDIA RICHNESS THEORY AND NEW ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION MEDIA: A STUDY OF VOICE MAIL AND ELECTRONIC MAIL."

communication medium like livestreaming, its design allows for rapid cycles of feedback: users comment, like, share, or stitch content almost instantaneously after publication.<sup>150</sup>

In apparel videos, immediacy is heightened through interactive tools. A creator may post a poll sticker asking, “Which outfit works better for a wedding?” and receive hundreds of votes within minutes. Similarly, comments provide real-time evaluative feedback that directly influences future content production. This immediacy reduces ambiguity: creators quickly learn which styles resonate with their audiences, while audiences feel their input shapes the communicative trajectory of the creator’s apparel discourse.

MRT emphasizes that richer media provide multiple cues, visual, auditory, textual, and nonverbal. TikTok apparel content epitomizes this principle. A single fashion video may combine:

- a. Visual cues: clothing style, color palettes, AR filters, green screen backgrounds.
- b. Auditory cues: background music, voiceovers, AI-generated text-to-speech.
- c. Textual cues: captions, on-screen labels, hashtags.
- d. Interactive cues: polls, duets, calls to action.

These multimodal signals layer meaning in ways that extend far beyond traditional lean media. For example, a video showing a red dress accompanied by upbeat music, framed with the hashtag #DateNightLook, and narrated with a TTS voice creates a composite meaning: sensuality, positivity, and situational context. The abundance of cues minimizes ambiguity by clarifying both the garment’s intended style and its cultural relevance. Language variety refers to the medium’s capacity to use natural and expressive language.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Sheer, “Media Richness Theory.”

<sup>151</sup> Ishii, Lyons, and Carr, “Revisiting Media Richness Theory for Today and Future.”

TikTok enhances language variety not only through spoken dialogue but also through written and symbolic forms. In apparel content, creators employ:

- a. Natural spoken language: narrating styling tips.
- b. Text overlays: written descriptions of clothing items.
- c. AI-driven captions: automatically generated text for accessibility.
- d. Emoji language: symbolic shorthand that conveys affective tone (e.g., Dress emoji for dresses, Fire emoji for trendy looks).

This linguistic plurality enables creators to address diverse audiences simultaneously. For example, a bilingual creator might mix English narration with localized captions and emojis, ensuring inclusivity across cultural and linguistic groups. The presence of AI-generated captions further enhances linguistic accessibility, broadening interpretive possibilities and reinforcing richness.<sup>152</sup>

MRT posits that richer media allow greater personalization, enabling communicators to tailor messages and convey emotion. TikTok apparel videos embody this through direct address and relational strategies. Creators often use the second-person pronoun (“you”) and personal CTAs (“This look is for you, try it out!”), which foster parasocial intimacy.

Features like mentions and duets personalize communication further by explicitly involving other users. For instance, a creator might tag @TagBrand to credit a featured item, or duet a fan’s video to validate their styling choices. Such practices personalize the apparel discourse, making viewers feel acknowledged as participants rather than spectators.<sup>153</sup>

The algorithmic personalization of TikTok also amplifies personal focus. Because content is curated for each user’s “For You” page, apparel videos are experienced as personally relevant, regardless of whether the

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<sup>152</sup> Abidin, “Mapping Internet Celebrity on TikTok: Exploring Attention Economies and Visibility Labours.”

<sup>153</sup> Toni and Mattia, “Tik Tok Hashtag Challenge: A New Digital Strategy for Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) Tik Tok Hashtag Challenge: A New Digital Strategy for Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) Tik Tok Hashtag Challenge: A New Digital Strategy for Consumer Brand Engagement (CB.”

creator directly addressed the viewer. This algorithmic tailoring transforms even mass communication into a perception of individualized interaction. Consider a video posted by @alluna.official showcasing two outfit options for a party. The video employs:

- a. Visual richness: AR filter-enhanced lighting and bold typography.
- b. Auditory richness: a trending upbeat sound combined with TTS narration.
- c. Textual richness: captions such as “Option A or B?” and hashtags like #PartyLook.
- d. Interactive richness: a poll sticker for audience voting.
- e. Personal richness: direct address (“Help me choose tonight’s outfit!”).

This video exemplifies maximized media richness: multiple cues, immediate feedback, linguistic variety, and personalized focus converge to reduce ambiguity and enhance communicative clarity. The audience does not merely observe clothing; they participate in defining its meaning and context.<sup>154</sup>

In this thesis, MRT underpins the analysis of AI-enhanced apparel communication by showing how TikTok features systematically increase richness across all four dimensions. Coding the presence of visual and interactive strategies is thus not a technical exercise alone but a theoretical mapping of how communicative richness is constructed.

By applying MRT, the study demonstrates that TikTok apparel videos are rich not by accident but by deliberate orchestration of cues, language, and interactivity. This reframes apparel communication as a highly complex, multimodal practice where richness is the key to message clarity, cultural resonance, and audience engagement.

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<sup>154</sup> David Chidiac and Jana Bowden, “When Media Matters: The Role of Media Richness and Naturalness on Purchase Intentions within Influencer Marketing,” *Journal of Strategic Marketing* 31, no. 6 (August 18, 2023): 1178–98, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2022.2062037>;CTYPE:STRING:JOURNAL.

Although MRT has been influential, it has also faced sustained critique for being too deterministic. Scholars argue that it overemphasizes the inherent richness of media while underestimating the role of users' agency and context. In real-world settings, people frequently use "lean" media for complex tasks and "rich" media for simple tasks, contradicting MRT's original prediction. For example, TikTok creators may address ambiguous identity questions such as "What counts as sustainable fashion?" through a short caption and hashtag (#EcoStyle), rather than via richer, multi-cue explanations. This demonstrates that richness is not always necessary for meaning-making.<sup>155</sup>

Media Richness Theory (MRT) has been critiqued for its conceptual overlap with adjacent perspectives, such as Social Presence Theory and Channel Expansion Theory. While these are not used in this study, they help contextualize how perceived richness evolves with user experience. For instance, TikTok may appear lean to a new user, but as they explore features like filters, duets, and hashtags, the platform's communicative potential expands. This reinforces MRT's relevance in dynamic environments, where richness is shaped by both design and user familiarity.<sup>156</sup>

Scholars also question the operationalization of richness. While Daft and Lengel's criteria (feedback, cues, language, and personalization) are widely cited, researchers disagree on how to measure them empirically. For TikTok, should richness be measured by the sheer number of cues, the quality of integration, or the audience's subjective perception? A single apparel video might employ ten features but still fail to resonate with

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<sup>155</sup> Rana Al-Marouf et al., "The Acceptance of Social Media Video for Knowledge Acquisition, Sharing and Application: A Comparative Study among YouTube Users and TikTok Users' for Medical Purposes," *International Journal of Data and Network Science* 5, no. 3 (June 1, 2021): 197, <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.ijdns.2021.6.013>.

<sup>156</sup> Yang Feng and Quan Xie, "Optimizing Branded Content for Beauty and Fashion Influencers from a Media Richness Perspective: How Post Topic and Visual Type Intertwine to Boost Consumer Engagement," *Journal of Advertising Research* 65, no. 1 (2025): 95–110, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00218499.2025.2464287>; WEBSITE: WEBSITE: TFOPB; PAGEGROUP: STRING: PUBLICATION.

audiences if cues are poorly integrated. This ambiguity complicates MRT's direct application to contemporary platforms.<sup>157</sup>

MRT was originally developed in U.S. corporate contexts and has been critiqued for lacking cultural sensitivity. In global platforms like TikTok, apparel communication is deeply shaped by cultural expectations, aesthetics, and norms. What counts as “rich” in one cultural setting may not translate elsewhere. For example, modest fashion apparel might prioritize text explanations and hashtags over AR filters, whereas streetwear culture may favor visual remixing through duets and green screens. This suggests that richness is not universal but culturally contingent.

Perhaps the most important reinterpretation comes from the rise of algorithmic mediation. On TikTok, communication is not only shaped by creator choices but also by AI-driven recommendation systems. The platform's “For You Page” determines visibility and virality, meaning that richness alone does not guarantee communicative effectiveness. An apparel video may be richly layered with cues, but if the algorithm does not circulate it, its communicative impact remains limited. Thus, richness is embedded within a larger ecology of algorithmic visibility that MRT did not anticipate.

Despite these critiques, MRT remains valuable as a conceptual lens for TikTok apparel research. Its strength lies in offering a systematic vocabulary to analyze the communicative layering of cues, feedback, language, and personalization. Even if richness is dynamic, contextual, and algorithmically mediated, the framework highlights how creators deliberately orchestrate multimodal strategies to reduce ambiguity and enhance clarity.<sup>158</sup>

For this thesis, MRT does not serve as a rigid predictive model but as an analytical tool. It enables a structured coding of AI-enhanced

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<sup>157</sup> Lo, Haq, and Shen, “Building Followers’ Loyalty in Social Commerce: Influencers’ Perspectives and Theoretical Insights from Social Presence and Media Richness Theory.”

<sup>158</sup> Al-Marouf et al., “The Acceptance of Social Media Video for Knowledge Acquisition, Sharing and Application: A Comparative Study among YouTube Users and TikTok Users’ for Medical Purposes,” June 1, 2021.

strategies, grounding the study in established communication theory while adapting its application to contemporary, AI-driven social media environments.

The preceding discussion shows that MRT, though developed in organizational contexts, remains highly relevant for understanding TikTok apparel communication. Its four core dimensions, immediacy of feedback, multiple cues, language variety, and personal focus are vividly present in TikTok's communicative environment. Unlike the linear task-media fit model of its origins, the richness of TikTok apparel videos is not merely about efficiency but about amplifying meaning, shaping identity, and fostering participatory culture. This thesis specifically focuses on AI-enhanced visual and interactive strategies in apparel videos.<sup>159</sup> From an MRT perspective, these strategies directly increase communicative richness:

- a. Visual Strategies (e.g., AR filters, green screen, emojis): expand multiple cues, enhancing clarity and symbolic meaning.
- b. Interactive Strategies (e.g., TTS, polls, duets, hashtags, CTAs): amplify immediacy of feedback and personal focus, reducing ambiguity while creating dialogic exchange.
- c. AI Tools (e.g., captions, synthetic voices): broaden language variety and accessibility, ensuring that messages reach diverse audiences.

In other words, each category of coded indicator in this study maps neatly onto the theoretical dimensions of MRT, providing a systematic framework for analysis. While MRT has been critiqued as deterministic, this study adopts it as an analytical vocabulary rather than a predictive model. By doing so, it avoids the limitations of assuming linear media-task relationships. Instead, the thesis recognizes that TikTok richness is shaped by cultural norms, user adaptation, and algorithmic mediation. For instance, Richness is culturally specific: hashtags like #HijabFashion or

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<sup>159</sup> Chidiac and Bowden, "When Media Matters: The Role of Media Richness and Naturalness on Purchase Intentions within Influencer Marketing," August 18, 2023.

#KPopFashion convey different cultural meanings. Richness is adaptively constructed: the same duet function may serve parody in one case and brand endorsement in another. And Richness is algorithmically mediated: richness matters only if visibility is granted by the platform's recommendation system.<sup>160</sup>

Thus, MRT here is interpreted flexibly, attuned to both technological affordances and socio-cultural contexts. Applying MRT in this thesis contributes to both theoretical and methodological levels:

- a. Theoretically, it situates TikTok apparel videos within a broader tradition of communication scholarship, showing how established models of richness remain relevant in digital, AI-enhanced environments.
- b. Methodologically, it provides a rationale for coding indicators as manifestations of communicative richness. The binary coding scheme (presence/absence) systematically documents how creators mobilize cues to enhance richness in apparel communication.

In this way, MRT anchors the study's analytical framework, ensuring that its descriptive findings are not isolated observations but linked to well-established communication theory.<sup>161</sup>

While MRT explains how AI-enhanced strategies increase communicative richness, it does not fully address why audiences engage with these strategies or what gratifications they derive from them. To capture the audience-centered dimension of TikTok apparel communication, this thesis also employs Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). Together, the two frameworks provide a complementary lens: MRT focuses on the supply side (message richness), while UGT illuminates the demand side (audience motivations and gratifications).

## 2. Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

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<sup>160</sup> Zhen Wang, "Media Richness and Continuance Intention to Online Learning Platforms: The Mediating Role of Social Presence and the Moderating Role of Need for Cognition," *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (July 12, 2022): 950501, <https://doi.org/10.3389/FPSYG.2022.950501/BIBTEX>.

<sup>161</sup> Sheer, "Media Richness Theory."

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) emerged in the mid-20th century as a reaction against traditional media effects research, which largely emphasized what media “do to people.” Early communication studies, such as the hypodermic needle model, portrayed audiences as passive recipients of powerful media messages. By contrast, UGT shifted the focus toward what people do with media.<sup>162</sup>

The foundations of UGT were laid in the 1940s and 1950s, when scholars like Herta Herzog studied why audiences consumed radio soap operas and quiz programs. Herzog’s findings revealed that listeners were motivated by specific gratifications, such as emotional release, wishful thinking, and practical advice. These early insights challenged the assumption of passive audiences and emphasized the active role of individuals in selecting and interpreting media content.<sup>163</sup> The definitive articulation of UGT came with Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch’s seminal work, which outlined the theory’s central assumptions:

- a. Active Audiences: Media users are not passive; they actively seek content that meets their psychological and social needs.
- b. Goal-Directed Media Use: Media consumption is purposive and oriented toward satisfying specific needs.
- c. Awareness of Needs: Audiences are often conscious of their motivations and can articulate why they choose certain media.
- d. Competition of Media and Non-Media Sources: Gratifications can be derived not only from media but also from interpersonal interactions and other activities.
- e. Value in Media Use: Audience choice is meaningful and reflects broader cultural, social, and psychological dynamics.

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<sup>162</sup> Weiyang LIU and Weiyang LIU, “A Historical Overview of Uses and Gratifications Theory,” *Cross-Cultural Communication* 11, no. 9 (September 26, 2015): 71–78, <https://doi.org/10.3968/90x>.

<sup>163</sup> Ivana Stamenković and Marta Mitrović, “The Motivation for Using the Social Media Platform TikTok from the Perspective of the Uses and Gratifications Theory,” *Applied Media Studies Journal* 4, no. 2 (December 26, 2023): 9–23, <https://doi.org/10.46630/msae.2.2023.02>.

This perspective represented a paradigm shift: media were no longer viewed as omnipotent forces shaping behavior but as resources that audiences selectively use to satisfy needs. UGT scholars have identified several recurring categories of needs that drive media consumption:

- a. Cognitive needs: seeking information, knowledge, or understanding.
- b. Affective needs: seeking emotional experiences, pleasure, or aesthetic enjoyment.
- c. Personal integrative needs: reinforcing credibility, status, or identity.
- d. Social integrative needs: strengthening connections with family, friends, or communities.
- e. Tension release needs: escapism, diversion, or stress relief.

These categories, though initially developed in the context of mass media like radio and television, remain highly relevant in analyzing digital platforms, where users continue to pursue information, identity formation, entertainment, and social belonging.<sup>164</sup>

One of UGT's most important contributions is its recognition of audience agency. Unlike theories that portray audiences as vulnerable to media influence, UGT assumes that audiences actively shape their own media experiences. The same piece of content may gratify different needs for different individuals. For instance, one TikTok viewer may watch an apparel video for styling inspiration (cognitive need), while another may enjoy it for its humorous editing style (affective need). This recognition of agency makes UGT particularly suitable for analyzing TikTok, where users engage with content in personalized, participatory, and often self-directed ways.

While UGT originated in the era of radio and television, its core assumptions remain remarkably applicable to social media contexts. TikTok, as a platform where users can both consume and produce content, exemplifies the principle of active audiences. Users not only choose which

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<sup>164</sup> Wang and Oh, "Factors Influencing Consumers' Continuous Purchase Intentions on TikTok: An Examination from the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) Theory Perspective."

apparel videos to watch but may also remix, duet, or respond to them, creating a dynamic cycle of gratifications.<sup>165</sup>

Thus, UGT provides a foundation for understanding the audience side of AI-enhanced TikTok apparel communication. It explains not just the presence of features like AR filters or duets but why audiences engage with them, whether to be entertained, to find fashion knowledge, to express identity, or to connect socially.

The migration from traditional mass media (radio, television, newspapers) to digital and interactive platforms has significantly expanded UGT's relevance. While early studies emphasized selective exposure, audiences choosing certain media channels to satisfy needs, digital environments add new layers of interactivity, participation, and customization.<sup>166</sup>

Unlike traditional one-way communication, platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube enable two-way or even multi-way interaction. Users are not only receivers of content but also producers, remixers, and distributors. This convergence of production and consumption (prosumer behavior, Toffler, 1980) transforms the gratifications process, as users now derive satisfaction not just from watching but from actively shaping content flows.<sup>167</sup>

Scholars have widely applied UGT to social media platforms, identifying gratifications that differ from those found in earlier broadcast media. For example, Facebook users often seek social interaction, relationship maintenance, and entertainment. Instagram gratifications include self-expression, aesthetic enjoyment, and social validation through

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<sup>165</sup> Korhan and Ersoy, "Usability and Functionality Factors of the Social Network Site Application Users from the Perspective of Uses and Gratification Theory."

<sup>166</sup> Gyimah, "Uses and Gratification Theory: A Study of Social Media Usage, Tiktok among the Youth."

<sup>167</sup> Jingjing Qiu, "How TikTok Satisfies the Public's Psychological Needs—A Perspective From the Uses and Gratifications Theory," *Proceedings of the 2021 International Conference on Social Development and Media Communication (SDMC 2021)* 631 (January 17, 2022): 1080–83, <https://doi.org/10.2991/ASSEHR.K.220105.199>.

likes and comments (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). And on YouTube, users are motivated by information-seeking, relaxation, companionship, and identity formation.

These findings confirm that UGT remains adaptable: the underlying assumption of active audiences persists, but the forms of gratification evolve in line with technological affordances.<sup>168</sup> TikTok exemplifies the short-form video model, characterized by brevity, creativity, and algorithm-driven visibility. Studies applying UGT to TikTok reveal a range of gratifications, including:

- a. Entertainment and escapism: users enjoy light-hearted, humorous, and fast-paced content (Omar & Dequan, 2020).
- b. Information-seeking: TikTok has become a source of tutorials, hacks, and knowledge sharing, including fashion styling tips.
- c. Social interaction and belonging: users engage with communities around hashtags (#OOTD, #ModestFashion) and trends.
- d. Self-expression and identity: creators use filters, captions, and duets to project individuality while aligning with larger cultural movements.
- e. Trend participation: joining viral challenges or remixing content gratifies needs for inclusion and visibility.

These gratifications resonate strongly with the apparel niche, where audiences consume videos for inspiration, validation, and identity reinforcement. One of the key extensions of UGT in digital contexts is the emphasis on interactivity. Unlike passive television audiences, TikTok users continuously interact through likes, shares, comments, stitches, duets, and CTAs. This participatory affordance intensifies gratifications: A viewer commenting on an outfit not only gratifies their need for expression but also gains social recognition if their comment receives likes. And a user dueting

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<sup>168</sup> Elif Aksoy et al., "Social Media Use Motives Explained by Uses and Gratifications Theory," *Kültür ve İletişim* 28, no. 55 (March 28, 2025): 231–53, <https://doi.org/10.18691/KULTURVEILETISIM.1596623>.

an apparel video gratifies creative self-expression while reinforcing a sense of belonging to a trend community.<sup>169</sup>

This shows that gratifications in TikTok are multi-layered and recursive: interaction gratifies the user while simultaneously amplifying the visibility of the original creator. A novel dimension for UGT in the digital era is the presence of AI-driven features. On TikTok, AI enhances both content creation and user experience: Filters and AR lenses gratify aesthetic and playful needs, allowing users to experiment with looks without material cost. Text-to-speech (TTS) and AI captions enhance accessibility, meeting cognitive and inclusivity requirements. And Algorithmic personalization on the “For You Page” gratifies efficiency and relevance needs, delivering content aligned with users’ tastes.

These AI affordances extend UGT’s explanatory power by demonstrating how technology co-produces gratifications. The platform itself anticipates user needs, surfacing fashion content for those interested in apparel, thereby blurring the line between active choice and algorithmic suggestion. In fashion and apparel, UGT becomes particularly salient because consumption is not purely utilitarian but also expressive and symbolic.<sup>170</sup> Apparel TikToks satisfy:

- a. Cognitive needs: learning how to style outfits, keep up with trends.
- b. Affective needs: enjoying visually appealing, entertaining, or humorous fashion content.
- c. Identity needs: expressing individuality through participation in challenges, duets, or hashtag communities.
- d. Social needs: connecting with like-minded individuals (e.g., modest fashion, streetwear, vintage subcultures).

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<sup>169</sup> Falgoust et al., “Applying the Uses and Gratifications Theory to Identify Motivational Factors behind Young Adult’s Participation in Viral Social Media Challenges on TikTok.”

<sup>170</sup> J. Mitchell Vaterlaus and Madison Winter, “TikTok: An Exploratory Study of Young Adults’ Uses and Gratifications,” *Social Science Journal*, August 23, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03623319.2021.1969882;WGROU:STRING:PUBLICATION>.

- e. Escapist needs: using fashion content as diversion or fantasy, experimenting with AR filters to visualize styles.

Thus, UGT helps explain why audiences not only watch but actively engage with apparel content enhanced by AI features.<sup>171</sup>

TikTok apparel videos often function as micro-tutorials, offering quick styling tips, product reviews, or fashion hacks. For instance, creators may use AR filters to demonstrate how a garment appears under different lighting or with altered colors, thereby satisfying audiences' cognitive needs for knowledge and evaluation. Text overlays and AI-generated captions also facilitate learning by providing step-by-step instructions, clarifying product details, or ensuring accessibility. For apparel consumers, cognitive gratification is especially valuable because fashion is a domain that blends aesthetic appeal with practical decision-making. Viewers want to know how to wear an item, when it is appropriate, and why it suits a particular trend. TikTok's multimodal affordances allow such information to be presented quickly and memorably. Fashion communication on TikTok is not limited to utilitarian purposes; it is also a source of entertainment. The use of emojis, stickers, typography effects, and music synchronization transforms apparel content into playful and engaging micro-performances. Audiences may watch not only for fashion inspiration but also for the joy of seeing creative editing, humorous skits, or aesthetically pleasing transitions.

AI-enhanced features such as voice filters or exaggerated AR lenses further amplify affective gratifications by adding humor or surprise. For example, a creator showcasing a glamorous outfit might intentionally switch to a comedic AR filter at the end, generating laughter while keeping viewers entertained. UGT highlights the importance of media in supporting personal identity and self-esteem. Apparel TikToks are prime vehicles for such gratification, as clothing is deeply tied to identity construction. Features like

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<sup>171</sup> Thomas E. Ruggiero, "Uses and Gratifications Theory in the 21st Century," *Mass Communication & Society* 3, no. 1 (February 2000): 3–37, [https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0301\\_02](https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0301_02).

green screen backgrounds allow creators to situate themselves in aspirational contexts (e.g., a virtual runway or luxury boutique), reinforcing status or credibility.<sup>172</sup>

Interactive strategies also contribute to identity gratification. When a creator issues a call-to-action (“Follow for more modest fashion ideas”), they position themselves as an authority, enhancing credibility. For viewers, duetting or stitching apparel videos allows them to align with or challenge certain fashion identities, using participation itself as a form of self-expression.<sup>173</sup>

Fashion on TikTok is embedded in networked publics, where hashtags and mentions serve as gateways to communities. A video tagged with #OOTD or #HijabFashion connects viewers with like-minded individuals, satisfying needs for social belonging. Mentions and duets create interpersonal ties by acknowledging other users, fostering reciprocity. In apparel content, this gratification is often reinforced by AI tools. For example, AI-generated captions not only ensure accessibility but also facilitate community inclusivity, allowing people with different linguistic backgrounds or hearing impairments to participate fully. In this way, interactive strategies expand the social reach of apparel discourse.<sup>174</sup>

Finally, apparel videos often provide diversion and escapism. Viewers may browse TikTok for relaxation after work, finding in fashion content a light-hearted, enjoyable distraction. AI-enhanced filters and effects allow audiences to imagine themselves in alternative styles or identities, trying on a “digital” designer dress or experimenting with futuristic outfits through augmented reality.

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<sup>172</sup> Shengwei Du, Norliana Hashim, and Syafila Kamarudin, “Digital and Social Interaction: A Systematic Literature Review of TikTok’s Appeal via Uses and Gratifications Theory,” *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences* 22, no. 2 (2024): 8113–29, <https://doi.org/10.57239/PJLSS-2024-22.2.00614>.

<sup>173</sup> Zhang, Ding, and Xu, “Call-to-Action or Inaction? Call-to-Action Buttons Hurt in-Feed Social Advertising.”

<sup>174</sup> Maria Natasha Liestia, “Utilization of Uses and Gratifications in Media Use Literature During the Covid-19 Pandemic,” *Journal of Social Research* 2, no. 8 (July 25, 2023): 2608–27, <https://doi.org/10.55324/JOSR.V2I8.1299>.

Such playful exploration gratifies the need for temporary escape from reality, while also reducing the financial or practical barriers associated with physical fashion experimentation. This highlights the democratizing potential of TikTok's AI tools, which make fashion exploration accessible to anyone with a smartphone. The coding framework of this thesis maps directly onto UGT categories:

- a. Visual Strategies (AR filters, text overlays, emojis, typography): serve cognitive (information), affective (enjoyment), and identity (self-expression) gratifications.
- b. Interactive Strategies (TTS, polls, duets, hashtags, CTAs): serve social (community, belonging), identity (credibility, self-presentation), and escapist gratifications.

By systematically coding these strategies, the thesis demonstrates not only their technical presence but also their theoretical significance in satisfying diverse audience needs. In short, UGT enriches the analysis by explaining why audiences engage with apparel content in the first place. Visual and interactive strategies do not simply exist as features; they function as mechanisms of gratification. Whether seeking knowledge, entertainment, identity, belonging, or escape, viewers approach apparel TikToks as active agents, deriving meaning and satisfaction through their engagement.<sup>175</sup>

A longstanding critique of UGT is its tendency to overemphasize the rationality and autonomy of audiences. While the theory assumes that users consciously select media to satisfy specific needs, in reality, much media consumption, particularly on algorithm-driven platforms like TikTok, is habitual, passive, or shaped by recommendation systems. For instance, a user may scroll through apparel videos not out of a clear cognitive need but because TikTok's "For You Page" presents them with content aligned to

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<sup>175</sup> Ibáñez-Sánchez, Orús, and Flavián, "Augmented Reality Filters on Social Media. Analyzing the Drivers of Playability Based on Uses and Gratifications Theory."

prior engagement. Thus, gratifications are sometimes post hoc rationalizations rather than deliberate motives.

UGT research often relies on surveys and interviews, asking audiences to report their motivations. Critics argue that self-reports are limited by memory biases and social desirability effects. In the context of TikTok apparel videos, a user may claim they watch content for styling inspiration (cognitive gratification), but their actual behavior may be driven by escapism or algorithmic nudges. This raises concerns about whether gratifications are always consciously accessible or accurately articulated.<sup>176</sup>

Another critique is that UGT traditionally focuses on individual agency while neglecting the structural role of media systems. In digital platforms, algorithms actively shape exposure, circulation, and engagement. On TikTok, the “For You Page” can amplify certain apparel aesthetics while suppressing others, regardless of user intention. Thus, gratifications cannot be understood solely as user-driven; they are co-constructed by platform logics and commercial imperatives.<sup>177</sup>

UGT has also been critiqued for its individualistic bias, often overlooking how cultural contexts influence media use. For example, gratifications sought from apparel videos may vary across cultural groups: modest fashion audiences may emphasize identity affirmation and community belonging, while Western streetwear communities may prioritize trendiness and self-promotion. Without considering such cultural variability, UGT risks presenting gratifications as universal when they are, in fact, socially and culturally mediated.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Omar and Dequan, “Watch, Share or Create: The Influence of Personality Traits and User Motivation on TikTok Mobile Video Usage.”

<sup>177</sup> Huu Dat Tran and Pham Phuong Uyen Diep, “Me, Myself, and I: Self-Presentation, Self-Esteem, and Uses and Gratifications on Facebook, LinkedIn, and TikTok,” *First Monday* 30, no. 3 (March 2, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.5210/FM.V30I3.13711>.

<sup>178</sup> Sebastian Scherr and Kexin Wang, “Explaining the Success of Social Media with Gratification Niches: Motivations behind Daytime, Nighttime, and Active Use of TikTok in China,” *Computers in Human Behavior* 124 (November 1, 2021): 106893, <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.CHB.2021.106893>.

In social media environments, users are not only consumers but also prosumers. This complicates UGT's traditional framing of gratifications as motivations for media consumption. On TikTok, gratifications also arise from production and interaction: creators receive gratification from audience validation (likes, shares, comments), while viewers may gain gratification from participating in duets or stitches. This blurring of roles challenges UGT's original consumption-centered lens.<sup>179</sup>

To address these critiques, scholars have proposed updated models of UGT: UGT 2.0, which recognizes that digital media provide gratifications through technological affordances, such as interactivity, modality, agency, and navigability. For TikTok apparel, this means that gratifications are tied not just to content (fashion tips) but to features (filters, captions, duets) that enable richer engagement. Algorithmic Gratifications, emerging scholarship suggests that users also derive satisfaction from algorithmic relevance, the sense that platforms “know them” and deliver content efficiently. Apparel audiences, for instance, may feel gratified when TikTok curates fashion content aligned with their tastes without deliberate searching. And Networked Gratifications, in social media contexts, gratifications often stem from participation in networked publics. On TikTok, this is evident in hashtag-driven communities (#HijabFashion, #Streetwear), where belonging and visibility are as important as content itself.<sup>180</sup>

For this thesis, these critiques and reinterpretations are crucial. While UGT provides a strong foundation for analyzing why audiences engage with apparel TikToks, the study recognizes that motivations are not always conscious, purely individual, or detached from platform structures. Thus, UGT is employed here not as a rigid model but as a flexible lens that

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<sup>179</sup> Praveityasari Mutiara, Kinkin Yuliaty, and Subarsa Putri, “The Study of Uses and Gratification Theory of TikTok as A Shopping Platform Seen from Buyers’ View,” *Journal of Digital Marketing and Communication* 4, no. 1 (May 20, 2024): 7–18, <https://doi.org/10.53623/JDMC.V4I1.429>.

<sup>180</sup> Zimmermann and Tomczyk, “The Ways of Using Social Media for Health Promotion Among Adolescents: Qualitative Interview and Focus Group Study.”

highlights audience agency while also acknowledging algorithmic and cultural mediation.

UGT's enduring strength lies in its ability to explain why audiences engage with media. For TikTok apparel content, this framework demonstrates that viewers are not passive consumers but active participants who seek specific gratifications. Audiences approach fashion videos to learn styling techniques, enjoy visual creativity, reinforce identity, connect with communities, or simply escape everyday pressures. By emphasizing audience agency, UGT ensures that apparel TikToks are analyzed not just as media outputs but as resources for need satisfaction.<sup>181</sup>

The coding framework of this thesis (visual + interactive strategies) aligns directly with UGT's categories of needs:

- a. Visual Strategies (filters, overlays, emojis, typography, green screen): support cognitive gratifications (learning about fashion), affective gratifications (enjoyment of creative editing), and identity gratifications (self-expression through aesthetics).
- b. Interactive Strategies (TTS, polls, duets, hashtags, mentions, CTAs): foster social gratifications (community building, dialogue), identity gratifications (affirming personal style or credibility), and escapist gratifications (playful engagement with alternative personas via AR or voice effects).

Thus, every coded indicator in the study has a dual significance: as a communicative strategy (MRT) and as a source of audience satisfaction (UGT).<sup>182</sup>

The application of UGT here also takes into account the critiques outlined earlier. While audiences do exercise agency in engaging with

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<sup>181</sup> Arif Ardy Wibowo, "Publication Trends Related to Uses and Gratification Theory on Social Media," *International Journal of Communication and Society* 4, no. 2 (December 23, 2022): 258–66, <https://doi.org/10.31763/IJCS.V4I2.789>.

<sup>182</sup> Karoline Cruzado Bautista, Victor Omar Vite-León, and Christiana Poggi-Parodi, "Uses and Gratifications of Scientific Dissemination on TikTok in Peru—A Case Study@AdrianCiencia," *Smart Innovation, Systems and Technologies* 375 (2024): 411–20, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-7210-4\\_38](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-7210-4_38).

apparel TikToks, their choices are shaped by algorithmic curation, cultural values, and social networks. For example, gratifications of identity or belonging may be amplified by hashtag-driven communities (#ModestFashion, #Streetwear), but visibility itself depends on TikTok’s recommendation system.<sup>183</sup>

This study, therefore, interprets gratifications not as purely self-directed choices but as co-constructed by users, creators, and platform logics. Such a nuanced application of UGT avoids the simplistic “active audience” assumption and acknowledges the complexity of digital environments.

UGT and MRT together provide a two-sided theoretical foundation: MRT explains how AI-enhanced strategies increase communicative richness by layering cues, enhancing feedback, and personalizing messages. And UGT explains why audiences respond to these strategies, identifying the needs they satisfy and the gratifications they provide. By combining these perspectives, the thesis achieves a balanced framework: it situates apparel TikToks both as messages strategically designed for richness and as media actively consumed for need satisfaction.<sup>184</sup> This dual framework ensures that the study’s descriptive findings are grounded in communication theory from both the message-centered and audience-centered sides.<sup>185</sup> The synthesis of UGT in this study contributes to:

- a. Theory: Extending UGT’s application to AI-enhanced short-form video, showing how gratifications emerge not only from content but also from algorithmic personalization and participatory features.

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<sup>183</sup> Mehrad and Tajer, “Uses and Gratification Theory in Connection with Knowledge and Information Science: A Proposed Conceptual Model.”

<sup>184</sup> José A. Flecha-Ortiz et al., “Hedonic and Utilitarian Gratifications to the Use of TikTok by Generation Z and the Parasocial Relationships with Influencers as a Mediating Force to Purchase Intention,” *Journal of Interactive Advertising* 23, no. 2 (2023): 114–27, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2023.2195403>.

<sup>185</sup> LIU and LIU, “A Historical Overview of Uses and Gratifications Theory.”

- b. Methodology: Justifying the coding of visual and interactive strategies as meaningful not only in communicative terms but also in their potential to gratify audience needs.
- c. Practice: Helping creators and marketers recognize which AI-enhanced features resonate with audiences, enabling more effective fashion communication strategies.

### C. Relevant Previous Studies

Since its global expansion in 2018, TikTok has rapidly grown into one of the most influential social media platforms, especially among younger audiences. Scholars have begun to examine its communicative dynamics, highlighting its distinctiveness from earlier platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Kaye et al. investigated TikTok's role in participatory culture and found that short-form videos foster immediacy, intimacy, and virality unmatched by longer video platforms. The study emphasized TikTok's unique blend of algorithmic curation and participatory features, which together create new forms of networked publics. This is important for the present thesis because it shows that TikTok is not merely a content-sharing tool but a communication environment where features (filters, duets, hashtags) are central to meaning-making.<sup>186</sup>

Omar and Dequan conducted a study on TikTok usage motivations and identified entertainment, self-expression, and social interaction as dominant drivers of engagement. Their findings align with the assumptions of Uses and Gratifications Theory, confirming that TikTok audiences are highly active in selecting and interpreting content. This study also revealed that TikTok's brevity and multimodality rapid edits, audio-visual layering, and participatory features make it especially attractive for Gen Z audiences.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Kaye, Chen, and Zeng, "The Co-Evolution of Two Chinese Mobile Short Video Apps: Parallel Platformization of Douyin and TikTok."

<sup>187</sup> Stamenković and Mitrović, "The Motivation for Using the Social Media Platform TikTok from the Perspective of the Uses and Gratifications Theory."

For apparel-related videos, this suggests that TikTok's affordances may amplify how clothing is presented, consumed, and reinterpreted in user-driven ways.

Zeng et al. explored TikTok's use in marketing communication, particularly the rise of influencer marketing. They argued that TikTok differs from Instagram by relying less on polished aesthetics and more on authentic, AI-enhanced creative features. This authenticity makes TikTok highly effective for consumer engagement, but also raises questions about how "authenticity" is mediated by AI effects.<sup>188</sup>

Although focused on marketing, the study underscores a key tension: TikTok is simultaneously a commercial and cultural space. For apparel communication, this means AI features are not just marketing gimmicks but culturally meaningful devices that shape identity and community participation.

These early studies establish TikTok as a distinctive communication platform characterized by brevity, interactivity, and algorithmic curation. However, they largely discuss TikTok at a general platform level, audience motivation, influencer marketing, or participatory culture without providing systematic content analyses of AI-enhanced strategies.

The present thesis fills this gap by conducting a structured, quantitative descriptive content analysis of TikTok apparel videos, focusing specifically on the communicative role of visual and interactive strategies.

Recent scholarship has highlighted the communicative potential of augmented reality (AR) and AI filters in shaping how users present themselves online. Javornik et al. studied AR filters in beauty and retail contexts, finding that such tools enhance experiential richness by allowing users to visualize products in playful, interactive ways. These findings resonate strongly with

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<sup>188</sup> Zeng, Abidin, and Schäfer, "Research Perspectives on TikTok and Its Legacy Apps: Introduction."

Media Richness Theory (MRT), as AR overlays add nonverbal cues that increase the immediacy and clarity of messages.<sup>189</sup>

For fashion communication on TikTok, this suggests that AR filters are not just cosmetic but fundamentally reshape how apparel is experienced and shared, allowing audiences to “try on” identities digitally.

Accessibility is another important dimension of AI-enhanced media. Meng and Leung examined AI-generated captions and text-to-speech systems in social platforms, showing that they reduce barriers for audiences with hearing or language difficulties. Their study demonstrated that AI captioning is not only a technical aid but also a communication strategy that broadens participation.<sup>190</sup>

In TikTok apparel videos, captions and overlays serve dual purposes: they convey fashion-related information (e.g., outfit breakdowns, styling instructions) and ensure inclusivity, thereby satisfying both cognitive and social gratifications.<sup>191</sup>

Personalization is central to AI-driven communication. Bucher analyzed how algorithms create a sense of intimacy by curating content that “feels personal” to users. While not specific to fashion, the study demonstrated that algorithmic curation itself produces gratification by anticipating user needs. On TikTok, this means that fashion videos appear tailored to the audience’s preferences, reinforcing the perception of relevance.

For apparel TikToks, AI-driven personalization amplifies visibility of styles (e.g., streetwear, modest fashion, vintage trends), aligning gratifications with identity and community belonging.

Beyond functionality, AI features also carry semiotic weight. Hongying Zhao et al. argued that AI-enhanced visuals operate as signifiers of cultural and

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<sup>189</sup> Kirsten Cowan, Ana Javornik, and Peilin Jiang, “Privacy Concerns When Using Augmented Reality Face Filters? Explaining Why and When Use Avoidance Occurs,” *Psychology and Marketing* 38, no. 10 (October 1, 2021): 1799–1813, <https://doi.org/10.1002/MAR.21576>.

<sup>190</sup> Abderahman Rejeb et al., “Mapping the Scholarly Landscape of TikTok (Douyin): A Bibliometric Exploration of Research Topics and Trends,” *Digital Business* 4, no. 1 (June 1, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.digbus.2024.100075>.

<sup>191</sup> Wibowo and Ningtyas, “Abbreviation as a Language Phenomenon in Self-Made Captions Used by Teenagers on TikTok Social Media.”

social meaning. For instance, filters can index playfulness, irony, or aspiration. In apparel videos, the choice of filter (e.g., vintage aesthetics, luxury-inspired overlays) communicates fashion identity while shaping how meaning is constructed. This confirms that AI-enhanced features are not neutral but actively shape the symbolic environment of apparel communication. Collectively, these studies show that AI-enhanced feature filters, captions, and personalization are central to contemporary digital communication. However, most prior research focuses on retail, accessibility, or general social media usage, without conducting systematic, category-based analyses in the fashion and apparel domain.<sup>192</sup>

The present thesis addresses this gap by coding AI-enhanced strategies in TikTok apparel videos, treating them not only as technical add-ons but as strategic communicative devices.

Interactivity has long been identified as a core affordance distinguishing social media from legacy broadcast media. Early conceptualizations framed interactivity as the degree to which users can influence the form or content of mediated communication, later refined to include reciprocal communication, user control, and synchronicity. In short-form video environments, interactivity is not merely additive; it is constitutive of the communicative experience. On TikTok, built-in mechanisms for commenting, sharing, stitching, duetting, voting, mentioning, and acting on calls to action convert viewing into participatory practice, thereby altering the message itself. Empirical research across platforms consistently finds that interactive features are associated with higher user involvement, perceived social presence, and message effectiveness.<sup>193</sup>

A growing body of scholarship identifies Duet and Stitch as paradigmatic of TikTok's "remix" culture. Studies of platformed remixing show

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<sup>192</sup> Hongying Zhao and Christian Wagner, "How TikTok Leads Users to Flow Experience: Investigating the Effects of Technology Affordances with User Experience Level and Video Length as Moderators," *Internet Research* 33, no. 2 (April 14, 2023): 820–49, <https://doi.org/10.1108/INTR-08-2021-0595>.

<sup>193</sup> Razali and Ramonita, "Visual Communication Psychology in the Age of AI: An Audience Perception Analysis of Face Filters on TikTok Media."

that these tools facilitate dialogic chains in which users respond to, appropriate, or reframe the meanings of prior videos (often with divergent stances such as endorsement, critique, or parody). In fashion-oriented content, duets have been analyzed as sites of collaborative styling (e.g., “style this piece three ways”), credibility signaling (creators co-appearing with recognized tastemakers), and value contestation (budget “dupes” versus luxury items). Stitch, which embeds a segment of the original clip, has been examined as a mechanism of “contextual reanchoring,” allowing new creators to reposition apparel display within alternative narratives (sustainability, modesty, subcultural authenticity). Collectively, this literature underscores that interactive remix does not simply add reach; it reconfigures the semiotics of apparel communication by layering voices within a single, evolving discourse.<sup>194</sup>

Research on hashtags across platforms (Twitter/Instagram/TikTok) converges on three communicative functions: indexing, framing, and community formation. On TikTok, hashtag ecologies such as #OOTD, #ThriftFlip, #ModestFashion, #Streetwear, and #GRWM operate as navigational infrastructures and as rhetorical cues that frame interpretation. Recent studies show that hashtags enable the emergence of “networked publics,” where dispersed users coalesce around shared styles, identities, or practices; in fashion contexts, these publics often crystallize into aesthetic communities (e.g., #Cottagecore, #Y2K). Empirical findings also note a life-cycle pattern: hashtags surge with trend adoption, plateau, and either diffuse into general use or fragment into niche sub-tags (e.g., #Y2KJeans, #HijabOOTD). For apparel creators, strategic hashtagging has been linked to discoverability and algorithmic surfacing; for audiences, it provides predictable pathways to gratifications such as identity affirmation and social belonging.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Quick and Maddox, “Us, Them, Right, Wrong: How TikTok’s Green Screen, Duet, and Stitch Help Shape Political Discourse.”

<sup>195</sup> Izotova, Polishchuk, and Taranik-Tkachuk, “Discourse Analysis and Digital Technologies: (TikTok, Hashtags, Instagram, YouTube): Universal and Specific Aspects in International Practice.”

Interactive stickers. Polls and quizzes have been studied as “low-threshold” participatory devices that convert spectators into contributors with minimal effort. In fashion and retail settings, polls elicit preference signaling (“look A vs. look B”), while quizzes gamify knowledge (“which decade inspired this outfit?”). Empirical work associates such stickers with increased dwell time and comment likelihood, suggesting that micro-commitments can escalate into deeper engagement. Communication-theoretic analyses further argue that these tools redistribute agency by inviting audiences to co-author the evaluative frame of apparel (e.g., collectively deciding which styling “works”). However, research also cautions that binary polls may oversimplify fashion interpretation, privileging consensus over nuance and novelty.<sup>196</sup>

Studies of @mentions across social platforms demonstrate their role in constructing relational visibility and networked credibility. In the apparel domain, mentions fulfill attribution (crediting brands/designers), solicitation (inviting collaboration), and affiliation (aligning with subcultural or prestige identities). Quantitative analyses show that outbound and inbound mentions correlate with conversational threads, duet/stitch cascades, and subsequent network growth. Qualitative work highlights power dynamics: tagging luxury brands can function aspirationally even without brand response, while tagging small designers performs solidarity and community support. The mention, in this sense, is both an interactive mechanism and a cultural signal.<sup>197</sup>

CTAs “follow for more looks,” “comment your favorite,” “shop via link in bio” have been examined through persuasion and engagement frameworks. Experimental and correlational studies indicate that explicit CTAs increase the likelihood of desired behaviors (e.g., comments, shares) when perceived as relevant and non-intrusive. In TikTok’s attention economy, CTAs serve dual functions: they mobilize participation (strengthening community dialogue) and

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<sup>196</sup> Zimmermann and Tomeczyk, “The Ways of Using Social Media for Health Promotion Among Adolescents: Qualitative Interview and Focus Group Study.”

<sup>197</sup> Wibowo, “Publication Trends Related to Uses and Gratification Theory on Social Media.”

optimize algorithmic signals (boosting engagement metrics that influence distribution). In apparel content, commercial CTAs (discount codes, shop links) integrate communication with commerce, prompting debates about transparency and disclosure. Ethical analyses recommend clear labeling (#ad, #sponsored) to maintain trust while leveraging CTAs' mobilizing potential.<sup>198</sup>

A cross-cutting line of research links interactive features to heightened social presence and perceived media richness. Comment responsiveness, duets, and mentions increase perceptions of creator accessibility and interpersonal warmth; polls and CTAs create a sense of co-presence and joint action. These relational perceptions have been associated with stronger parasocial bonds, which, in fashion contexts, translate into sustained attention to styling narratives and greater willingness to co-create (e.g., replicating a look, posting a response outfit). Notably, several studies argue that perceived richness can be elevated by interactive cues alone, even when sensory cues remain constant, an insight that complements Media Richness Theory with audience-centric measures.<sup>199</sup>

The literature also documents risks accompanying interactivity. Duet/stitch affordances may enable harassment, ridicule, or unwanted appropriation of creators' content; mentions can expose small designers to overwhelming attention; CTAs can generate engagement fatigue if overused or manipulative; and polls/quizzes may steer audiences toward predetermined, commercially advantageous outcomes. Scholars recommend platform-level affordances (e.g., ability to disable duet/stitch on specific posts) and creator-level norms (transparent disclosures, respectful tagging) to balance openness with safety and integrity.<sup>200</sup>

Collectively, prior work confirms that interactive features on TikTok are not peripheral; they are integral to how meaning is produced, circulated, and

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<sup>198</sup> Dindar, "The Influence on Consumer Purchase Intention of Call-to-Action in Promotional Messages on Instagram Channel /."

<sup>199</sup> Feng and Xie, "Optimizing Branded Content for Beauty and Fashion Influencers from a Media Richness Perspective: How Post Topic and Visual Type Intertwine to Boost Consumer Engagement," 2025.

<sup>200</sup> Quick and Maddox, "Us, Them, Right, Wrong: How TikTok's Green Screen, Duet, and Stitch Help Shape Political Discourse."

negotiated. However, much of the empirical literature either treats interactivity in aggregate (overall engagement metrics) or examines single features in isolation (e.g., only hashtags, only influencer mentions). There is a relative paucity of systematic, category-based content analyses that map the presence of multiple interactive strategies within a coherent corpus, particularly within the apparel niche. The present study addresses this gap by coding six interactive indicators (TTS, polls/quizzes, duet/stitch, hashtags, mentions, CTAs) across a purposive sample from one account. This approach foregrounds message-level features rather than outcome metrics, aligning with the thesis's communication-centered aim to describe how interactivity is built into apparel videos as deliberate practices of meaning-making.

Razali and Ramonitahas long argued that fashion is not merely about clothing but about the communication of identity, status, and cultural affiliation. In the digital era, TikTok extends this communicative function by enabling micro-narratives in which apparel is styled, performed, and re-contextualized within seconds.<sup>201</sup> Marwick observed that fashion influencers use TikTok not only to display clothes but to stage identities, embedding apparel within broader lifestyle cues such as music, humor, or political statements. These studies highlight that fashion on digital platforms is as much about meaning-making as it is about garment display.<sup>202</sup>

Koswara analyzed TikTok's role in democratizing fashion influence. Unlike Instagram, where aesthetics are heavily curated, TikTok thrives on participatory remixing, enabling ordinary users to shape trends through duets, stitches, and hashtag challenges. Their findings showed that participatory features empower micro-influencers and everyday users, not just established fashion figures, to set styles in circulation. For apparel communication, this indicates that AI-enhanced strategies (filters, captions, AR overlays)

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<sup>201</sup> Razali and Ramonita, "Visual Communication Psychology in the Age of AI: An Audience Perception Analysis of Face Filters on TikTok Media."

<sup>202</sup> Alice E. Marwick, "The Public Domain: Surveillance in Everyday Life," *Surveillance & Society* 9, no. 4 (June 20, 2012): 378–93, <https://doi.org/10.24908/ss.v9i4.4342>.

democratize creative authority by lowering technical barriers for stylish self-presentation.<sup>203</sup>

Research on TikTok hashtags reveals that fashion publics are structured around shared aesthetic markers. For example, Feng et al. studied communities like #ModestFashion and #Streetwear, showing how hashtags create affiliative spaces where users articulate values (e.g., modesty, thrift, sustainability) alongside fashion content. This suggests that hashtags are not neutral descriptors but performative tools that embed apparel videos in broader discourses. The presence of AI-generated captions or CTAs amplifies this dynamic by making content more legible and interactive within hashtag streams.<sup>204</sup>

Several marketing-oriented studies have highlighted TikTok's role in apparel promotion. For instance, Sun et al. explored TikTok's short-form videos as tools for fashion retail engagement, finding that authenticity and interactivity were central to consumer trust.<sup>205</sup> Similarly, Ramadhan et al. examined influencer-driven campaigns and concluded that visual creativity (filters, transitions, typography) directly influenced perceptions of brand authenticity.<sup>206</sup> While these studies focus on commercial impact, they underscore the communicative importance of AI features in shaping consumer perception.

Another line of inquiry addresses ethical and cultural considerations. For example, a Researcher named Yang discussed how TikTok fashion videos negotiate sustainability discourses by showcasing thrift flips or slow fashion practices. Here, features like text overlays and hashtags serve to contextualize clothing within ethical narratives. Meanwhile, other studies note that fashion TikToks can reinforce problematic ideals (e.g., unattainable body images),

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<sup>203</sup> Koswara, "TikTok and the Future of Digital Business: Exploring the Platform's Role in Shaping Global Trends."

<sup>204</sup> Feng and Xie, "Optimizing Branded Content for Beauty and Fashion Influencers from a Media Richness Perspective: How Post Topic and Visual Type Intertwine to Boost Consumer Engagement," 2025.

<sup>205</sup> Sun, Lee, and Wong, "Technology Acceptance Model in Video-Sharing Platforms: Comparisons between Tiktok and Youtube."

<sup>206</sup> Marwick, "The Public Domain: Surveillance in Everyday Life."

though interactive tools like comment sections sometimes create counter-narratives. Thus, AI-enhanced communication operates within a contested cultural field where meaning is constantly negotiated.<sup>207</sup>

Although scholars recognize TikTok's role in shaping fashion discourse, much of the literature is fragmented: Marketing studies emphasize outcomes (e.g., purchase intent, influencer impact). Cultural studies focus on identity and community without systematic coding of features. Accessibility studies touch on captions or AR filters, but rarely situate them within apparel communication specifically.

Very few studies have undertaken descriptive content analysis to systematically map the presence and categorization of visual and interactive strategies in fashion TikToks. This absence underlines the novelty of the present research, which addresses fashion TikToks at the message-level rather than the consumer outcome level.

For this thesis, these insights confirm that TikTok is a central stage for fashion communication, where AI-enhanced strategies are not peripheral but structural to meaning-making. Yet, existing studies are piecemeal, either focusing on influencers, hashtags, or marketing campaigns in isolation. By coding both visual and interactive features across a corpus of apparel videos, the present study builds a comprehensive and systematic account of how AI-enhanced communication is deployed in the apparel niche.

The reviewed literature collectively highlights the transformative role of TikTok in contemporary digital communication. Studies have established TikTok as a distinctive short-form platform characterized by brevity, interactivity, and algorithmic curation.<sup>208 209</sup> Research on AI-enhanced features has demonstrated that filters, captions, and personalization add media richness

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<sup>207</sup> Yang, "TikTok/Douyin Use and Its Influencer Video Use: A Cross-Cultural Comparison between Chinese and US Users."

<sup>208</sup> Kaye, Chen, and Zeng, "The Co-Evolution of Two Chinese Mobile Short Video Apps: Parallel Platformization of Douyin and TikTok."

<sup>209</sup> Stamenković and Mitrović, "The Motivation for Using the Social Media Platform TikTok from the Perspective of the Uses and Gratifications Theory."

and broaden accessibility.<sup>210</sup> Parallel strands on interactivity underscore how duets, hashtags, and polls reshape audience participation and meaning-making.<sup>211</sup> Finally, scholarship on fashion communication confirms that TikTok is a key site for identity performance, cultural discourse, and marketing engagement.<sup>212</sup>

Taken together, these studies show that AI-enhanced communication strategies are central to TikTok's ecology. They enrich messages, satisfy diverse gratifications, and facilitate community building.

Despite these contributions, several gaps remain:

- a. **Fragmentation of Focus:** Existing works often isolate one feature (e.g., AR filters, hashtags) or one outcome (e.g., purchase intent), but do not provide a holistic mapping of multiple strategies within a single corpus.
- b. **Overemphasis on Marketing Outcomes:** Much of the research frames TikTok apparel videos in terms of consumer behavior or branding effectiveness. By contrast, fewer studies adopt a communication-centered perspective that treats AI-enhanced features as strategic devices for meaning-making.
- c. **Absence of Systematic Content Analysis in Fashion:** While quantitative content analysis is common in media studies, few scholars have applied it to TikTok apparel videos. Most insights come from interviews, surveys, or qualitative ethnography, leaving a methodological gap.
- d. **Limited Attention to AI Transparency:** Emerging discussions on platform labeling (e.g., "AI-generated" tags) exist, but systematic coding of such markers in fashion TikToks is scarce.

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<sup>210</sup> Cowan, Javornik, and Jiang, "Privacy Concerns When Using Augmented Reality Face Filters? Explaining Why and When Use Avoidance Occurs."

<sup>211</sup> Pilipets, "Hashtagging, Duetting, Sound-Linking: TikTok Gestures and Methods of (In)Distinction."

<sup>212</sup> Yu Fan, "Marketing Strategy of Byte Dance to Operate TikTok," *Transactions on Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 11 (August 20, 2024): 533–37, <https://doi.org/10.62051/271HXJ72>.

This thesis addresses these gaps by conducting a quantitative descriptive content analysis of 100 purposively selected TikTok apparel videos from a single TikTok account. Unlike prior work, it systematically codes two integrated categories of AI-enhanced strategies: Visual Strategies: AR filters, AI captions, green screen, emojis and stickers, typography/layouts. And Interactive Strategies: text-to-speech, polls/quizzes, duet/stitch, hashtags, mentions, calls-to-action.

The novelty lies in treating these strategies as communication practices, not just technical affordances or marketing tools. By doing so, the study situates apparel TikToks within communication and broadcasting scholarship, extending Media Richness Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory to an underexplored domain. The integration of MRT and UGT ensures that the findings are theoretically grounded: MRT explains how visual and interactive features enhance the richness of apparel messages by layering cues. And UGT explains why audiences engage with these features, linking them to cognitive, affective, identity, social, and escapist gratifications. This dual-theoretical framework ensures that the study's descriptive findings are not only empirical but also interpretively significant.

Methodologically, the study contributes by offering a codebook-driven content analysis that operationalizes AI-enhanced communication in apparel TikToks. This structured approach provides replicable measures that future researchers can adapt for other digital domains, bridging a gap between theory-driven content analysis and platform-specific case studies.

Finally, the thesis offers practical insights for fashion content creators and digital marketers. By identifying which AI-enhanced strategies are most frequently employed, it provides an empirical baseline for optimizing apparel video communication. Importantly, the focus remains on communication effectiveness, not sales performance, maintaining fidelity to the thesis's disciplinary orientation. The reviewed studies illuminate TikTok's communicative richness but leave unexamined the systematic role of AI-enhanced strategies in apparel contexts. This study positions itself at the

intersection of TikTok research, AI communication, and fashion studies, filling a scholarly gap by mapping how visual and interactive strategies function as deliberate practices of apparel communication.

#### **D. Conceptual Framework**

In communication research, a conceptual framework operates as the analytical bridge between theory and empirical investigation. It specifies the categorical lenses through which data are observed, ensuring theoretical grounding and methodological coherence. In descriptive content analysis, unlike hypotheses that predict relationships, the conceptual framework functions as a classification schema enabling communicative phenomena to be systematically identified, mapped, and compared. In this thesis, it explicitly links the dual theoretical anchors, Media Richness Theory (MRT) and Uses & Gratifications Theory (UGT), to the operational coding of AI-enhanced strategies, ensuring every indicator in the codebook directly embodies both message-level richness and audience-level gratification dimensions.

For this study, the conceptual framework specifies how AI-enhanced communication strategies are to be examined in TikTok apparel videos. By structuring the analysis into two major categories, visual strategies and interactive strategies, the framework makes it possible to code communicative features systematically while remaining closely aligned with Media Richness Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory.

The framework also ensures disciplinary alignment. Because this thesis is situated within Communication and Broadcasting, the emphasis is not on consumer sales metrics or marketing, but on communicative practices themselves: how they are designed, encoded, and decoded in digital environments. The focus is therefore placed on message-level features that carry symbolic and interactive meaning within apparel-related TikTok content.

The first dimension, visual strategies, refers to the aesthetic and symbolic techniques through which apparel is represented in short-form video communication. While the technical details of features such as filters, captions,

or background replacement were defined earlier, their analytical role here is to demonstrate how TikTok creators stylize and enrich communication. Visual strategies contribute to Media Richness Theory by layering multimodal cues that reduce ambiguity and enhance message clarity. At the same time, they align with Uses and Gratifications Theory because they serve motivations such as identity construction, entertainment, and cognitive understanding. In this way, visual strategies directly operationalize the first research question regarding the use of AI-enhanced visual communication in TikTok apparel videos.

The second dimension, interactive strategies, concerns the ways TikTok fosters participation and dialogue between creators and audiences. Features such as text-to-speech, polls, duets, and hashtags are significant because they transform communication into a collaborative process rather than a one-way message. From the standpoint of Media Richness Theory, these strategies increase richness by generating feedback loops, layering multiple voices, and embedding contextual cues that guide interpretation. From the perspective of Uses and Gratifications Theory, they satisfy motivations for social interaction, community belonging, identity performance, and instrumental actions such as following or purchasing. Accordingly, interactive strategies operationalize the second research question on AI-enhanced interactivity in apparel communication.

The strength of the framework lies in its theoretical integration. By combining Media Richness Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory, it treats TikTok's AI features simultaneously as communicative tools and as gratifications sought by audiences. MRT explains how these strategies enrich messages through multiplicity of cues and immediacy, while UGT explains why audiences are motivated to engage with them. This dual perspective accounts for both the supply side of communication (message design) and the demand side (audience interpretation and response).

Table 2.1: Conceptual Framework Summary

Category	Indicator	Definition	MRT Relevance (Message-Centered)	UGT Relevance (Audience-Centered)
<b>Visual Strategies</b>	AR Filters / Lenses	Augmented reality overlays for beauty, try-ons, or effects	Adds nonverbal cues; reduces ambiguity in fashion presentation	Identity (self-expression), Affective (playful enjoyment)
	AI Captions / Text Overlays	Auto-generated/stylized text on screen	Provides a redundant channel; enhances clarity and richness	Cognitive (learning details), Social (cross-language sharing)
	Green Screen / Background Replacement	Digital substitution of the video background	Embeds apparel in meaningful contexts; increases contextual cues	Escapist (aspirational settings), Identity (cultural affiliation)
	Emojis & Stickers	Animated or static symbols/icons	Emotional cues that enrich visual expressiveness	Affective (fun, humor), Social (community symbols)
	Typography / Layout Styles	Bold fonts, kinetic text, templated layouts	Structures information; reduces ambiguity in message flow	Cognitive (clearer learning), Affective (pleasure from visuals)
<b>Interactive Strategies</b>	Text-to-Speech (TTS)	AI voice narrating text	Adds an auditory channel, enhancing multimodality	Cognitive (clarity), Accessibility (inclusive experience)
	Polls / Quizzes	Stickers allowing audience voting or answering	Feedback loop reduces uncertainty; adds interactivity	Social (community participation), Identity (style preference)
	Duets / Stitches	Remixing videos by layering or embedding	Adds multiple perspectives; increases richness	Social (collaboration), Identity (alignment/critique)
	Hashtags	Keywords linking the video to broader discourse	Provides contextual cues; organizes meaning	Social (community affiliation), Identity (belonging), Cognitive (discoverability)
	Mentions (@-Tagging)	Tagging users or brands	Clarifies relational ties; adds association cues	Social (networking), Identity (brand alignment, recognition)

	Calls-to-Action (CTAs)	Prompts like “follow,” “comment,” or “shop now”	Reduces ambiguity about intended audience response	Social (dialogue), Instrumental (goal-driven actions like shopping/following)
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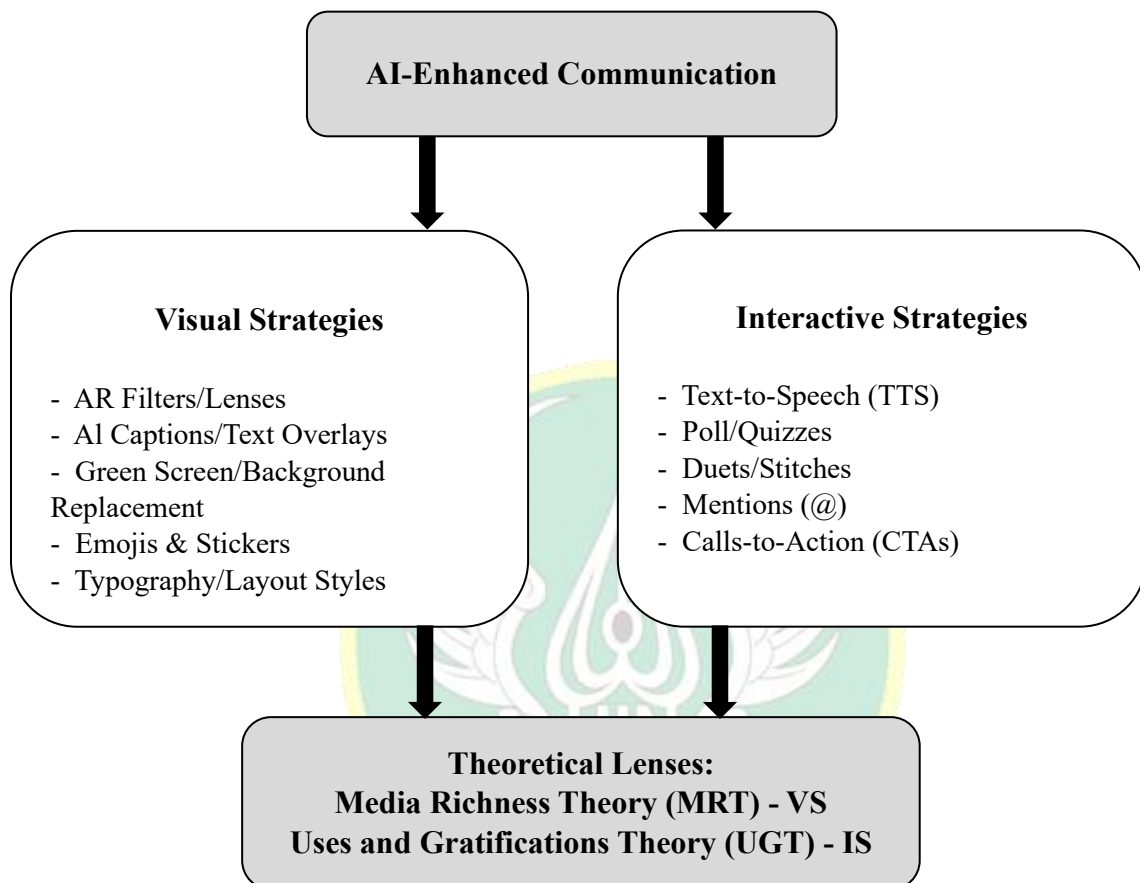


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Conceptually, the framework can be visualized as a model in which the central focus, AI-enhanced communication in TikTok apparel videos, branches into two dimensions: visual strategies and interactive strategies. The first dimension operationalizes Research Question 1 by examining how aesthetic and symbolic techniques enrich message clarity and resonance. The second dimension operationalizes Research Question 2 by capturing how participatory features foster interaction and dialogue. Both dimensions are interpreted through the complementary lenses of Media Richness Theory and Uses and

Gratifications Theory, ensuring the framework addresses both message design and audience engagement.

In simple words, the conceptual framework secures both theoretical and methodological coherence for this thesis. By distinguishing between visual and interactive strategies, and by interpreting them through the complementary lenses of Media Richness Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory, it provides a reliable foundation for coding and descriptive analysis. More importantly, it positions TikTok's AI features as central communicative devices rather than incidental technical additions, reinforcing the novelty and scholarly contribution of this study within the broader field of communication studies.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### A. Research Paradigm and Approach

This study is grounded in the positivist-quantitative paradigm, which conceptualizes social phenomena as observable and measurable through systematic analysis.<sup>213</sup> Within this orientation, TikTok apparel videos are treated as communicative artifacts that can be decomposed into observable indicators, coded with consistency, and analyzed numerically. The emphasis is on objectivity: rather than interpreting creator intentions or audience subjectivities, the analysis focuses exclusively on the manifest features present in the videos. Augmented-reality filters, text overlays, duets, hashtags, and similar features are treated as discrete, identifiable data points that can be categorized and quantified.

This paradigm ensures that research findings are not impressionistic but grounded in verifiable evidence. By focusing solely on observable content, the study minimizes bias, while quantification allows patterns to be represented through frequencies, percentages, and cross-tabulations. This yields a structured, replicable account of how AI-enhanced strategies are deployed in TikTok apparel communication.

Consistent with this paradigm, the study employs descriptive quantitative content analysis as its methodological approach. Content analysis is a well-established method in communication research, recognized for bringing systematic rigor to the study of media artifacts from early print to contemporary digital platforms.<sup>214</sup> For short, multimodal TikTok apparel videos heavily encoded with visual and interactive elements, content analysis provides

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<sup>213</sup> Maksimovic Jelena and Evtimov Jelena, "Positivism and Post-Positivism As the Basis of Quantitative Research in Pedagogy," *Research in Pedagogy* 13, no. 1 (2023): 208–18.

<sup>214</sup> Mojtaba Vaismoradi, Hannele Turunen, and Terese Bondas, "Content Analysis and Thematic Analysis: Implications for Conducting a Qualitative Descriptive Study," *Nursing & Health Sciences* 15, no. 3 (September 1, 2013): 398–405, <https://doi.org/10.1111/NHS.12048>.

a means to reduce complexity by coding each video into discrete, analyzable indicators.

The focus is on description rather than prediction or causation. Unlike inferential designs, which test hypotheses or establish cause-and-effect relationships, descriptive content analysis seeks to map and categorize existing practices. This makes it methodologically optimal for documenting AI-enhanced communication strategies in TikTok apparel videos. Binary coding (0 = absent, 1 = present) allows each feature to be systematically recorded, summarized statistically, and interpreted in relation to established communication theories.

This approach is directly aligned with the study's theoretical foundations. From a Media Richness Theory (MRT) perspective, AI-driven features function as communicative tools that increase message richness by providing multiple cues and reducing ambiguity. From a Uses & Gratifications Theory (UGT) perspective, these same features address audience motivations such as entertainment, identity expression, and social interaction. Employing descriptive content analysis thus creates an empirical bridge between these theoretical perspectives and the observable communicative practices on TikTok.

## **B. Research Setting and Time**

This study was conducted within the digital environment of TikTok, which has become one of the most influential platforms for short-form video communication and cultural expression. TikTok's integration of artificial intelligence tools, its algorithm-driven distribution, and its emphasis on multimodal storytelling make it a particularly relevant site for investigating fashion-related content. Unlike traditional fashion media, which relies on static imagery or long-form advertisements, TikTok enables apparel to be communicated through dynamic, layered performances that combine visual, auditory, textual, and interactive elements.

Within this platform, the research focuses specifically on the selected TikTok account, which was purposively selected because of its consistent

production of apparel-focused content and frequent use of AI-enhanced features such as filters, captions, interactive stickers, and duet functions. Limiting the scope to a single account ensures analytical consistency and contextual depth, reducing stylistic variability and providing a coherent environment in which to examine AI-enhanced communication strategies.

The study draws exclusively on publicly available data, analyzing only videos that are accessible on TikTok without restrictions. This approach ensures ethical compliance while allowing the analysis of authentic digital artifacts. The timeframe of analysis encompassed 100 purposively selected videos produced by the selected TikTok account between August 2024 and August 2025, representing the account's active use of AI-enhanced features.

The research process was implemented in sequential stages, summarized in Table 3.1. This structured timeline ensured that the analysis remained systematic and timely, capturing a representative snapshot of communicative practices within a clearly defined period.

Table 3.1: Research Timeline

Stage	Period	Description
Identification and selection of eligible videos	June 2025	Screening of the account's corpus; purposive selection of videos meeting inclusion criteria (apparel-focused + at least one AI-enhanced feature).
Archiving and cataloguing	June 2025	Selected videos downloaded and secured; each assigned a unique Video ID; metadata recorded for verification.
Codebook development and first coding	Late July 2025	Codebook finalized based on pilot coding; first full round of coding conducted using binary indicators.
Reliability testing (intra-coder)	Early August 2025	A subsample (20%) was re-coded after a seven-day interval; Cohen's $\kappa$ was calculated to confirm coding stability.

Final coding and dataset completion	Late August 2025	All coding verified and corrected; complete dataset finalized for analysis.
Data entry, validation, and analysis preparation	Early September 2025	Dataset cleaned and imported into Jamovi for descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations.

### C. Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of all apparel-related videos produced by the purposively selected TikTok account @alluna.official. This account was identified as an appropriate population frame because of its consistent thematic focus on fashion and apparel, its sustained activity during the study period, and its frequent use of AI-enhanced features such as augmented reality filters, auto-captions, duet and stitch functions, interactive stickers, and calls-to-action. These features are directly aligned with the study's conceptual focus, making the account an information-rich case for examining how AI-driven communicative strategies are embedded in digital apparel communication. By delimiting the research population to a single, thematically coherent account, the study ensures contextual consistency and reduces extraneous variability that could otherwise arise from stylistic or strategic differences across multiple accounts.

From within this defined population, a sample was selected to create a dataset that was both analytically rigorous and practically manageable. A purposive sampling strategy was employed, which is appropriate when units of analysis are deliberately chosen for their direct relevance to the research objectives rather than for statistical generalization. In this study, purposive sampling was justified because the aim was not to estimate proportions across the entirety of TikTok, but to conduct an in-depth descriptive analysis of a specific communicative environment where AI-enhanced strategies are actively used.

The inclusion criteria for sample selection were established to ensure direct alignment with the research problem. Two conditions were applied:

Topical relevance, the video must primarily focus on the presentation, styling, or promotion of apparel (e.g., showcasing clothing items, demonstrating fit, or styling outfits). And AI feature presence - the video must employ at least one AI-enhanced communicative feature (e.g., AR filter, AI-generated captions, text-to-speech, duet/stitch, or interactive stickers).

Only videos that met both criteria simultaneously were included. This approach excluded videos that were unrelated to apparel (such as general lifestyle or entertainment clips) and videos devoid of AI-enhanced features, thereby ensuring that the dataset captured the specific phenomenon under investigation.

Applying these criteria produced a final sample of 100 videos. The decision to work with 100 units was guided by both methodological norms in content analysis and considerations of feasibility.<sup>215</sup> On the one hand, a dataset of this size is sufficiently large to allow for meaningful descriptive statistics, enabling the identification of patterns, frequencies, and co-occurrence relationships with a reasonable degree of confidence. On the other hand, it remains sufficiently manageable for detailed manual coding, reducing the risk of coder fatigue and ensuring consistency across multiple indicators. This balance reflects the methodological best practices of communication research, where manual content analysis often requires a trade-off between depth of coding and breadth of coverage.

The resulting sample is thus representative of the communicative repertoire of selected TikTok accounts during the study period, while remaining practical for systematic, replicable analysis. By focusing on 100 purposively selected videos, the study establishes a methodologically transparent foundation for describing how AI-enhanced visual and interactive strategies are deployed in TikTok apparel communication. This careful delineation of the population and sampling procedure strengthens the credibility, transparency, and

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<sup>215</sup> Matthew Lombard, Jennifer Snyder-Duch, and Cheryl Campanella Bracken, "Content Analysis in Mass Communication: Assessment and Reporting of Intercoder Reliability," *Human Communication Research* 28, no. 4 (October 1, 2002): 587–604, <https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1468-2958.2002.TB00826.X>.

replicability of the research design, positioning the study firmly within established standards of quantitative content analysis.

Having defined the scope of the sample, the study next specifies the unit of analysis as the foundation for systematic coding.

#### **D. Unit of Analysis**

In content analysis, the unit of analysis defines the smallest segment of content that is independently observed, coded, and statistically aggregated.<sup>216</sup> For this study, the unit of analysis was established as the individual TikTok video produced by the selected account. Each video constitutes a discrete, bounded communicative artifact, integrating multiple modalities (visual, textual, and auditory) within a self-contained performance. Treating the video as the core unit allows for systematic documentation of AI-enhanced communicative strategies without fragmenting them into isolated cues or expanding them into account-level generalizations.

This decision is both methodologically and theoretically justified. Methodologically, individual videos are readily identifiable, countable, and replicable for coding. The format of TikTok videos short, bounded clip, naturally lends itself to being operationalized as an independent unit. Theoretically, analyzing the video level aligns with the study's dual conceptual lenses: Media Richness Theory (MRT) and Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). MRT suggests that richness is determined by the layering of cues within a single communication event; UGT highlights how discrete media texts satisfy specific audience motivations. Both theories converge on the appropriateness of the video as the unit of analysis, since it is within this artifact that richness and gratifications are simultaneously encoded.

To clarify the scope and rationale, the specifications of the unit of analysis are summarized in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Unit of Analysis

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<sup>216</sup> Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas, "Content Analysis and Thematic Analysis: Implications for Conducting a Qualitative Descriptive Study."

<b>Element</b>	<b>Specification</b>
Unit of Analysis	Individual TikTok video
Platform	TikTok
Account Analyzed	@alluna.official (purposively selected)
Number of Units	100 videos
Inclusion Criteria	(1) Apparel-focused content; (2) At least one AI-enhanced feature (e.g., AR filter, captions, duet, TTS, stickers)
Rationale	Videos are discrete, bounded communicative artifacts suitable for systematic coding and reliable quantification.
Theoretical Relevance	MRT: assesses richness through multimodal cues; UGT: links features to audience motivations (e.g., entertainment, identity, interaction).

Following the specification of the unit of analysis, it was necessary to identify the categories and indicators that would operationalize the conceptual framework and guide the systematic examination of the videos.

#### **E. Categories and Indicators of Analysis**

To systematically analyze AI-enhanced communication in TikTok apparel videos, the study operationalized two broad categories of strategies: (1) visual strategies, which shape how apparel is aesthetically and symbolically represented, and (2) interactive strategies, which structure how audiences are invited to engage with or respond to the content. This categorization is directly derived from the conceptual framework presented in Chapter II, where Media Richness Theory (MRT) justifies analyzing multimodal richness in visual features, while Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) supports the examination of interactive functions that meet audience needs for entertainment, social interaction, and identity expression.

Specifying clear categories and indicators serves three functions: it provides conceptual clarity by defining what counts as a communicative feature; it ensures methodological consistency by establishing standardized

rules for coding; and it enhances replicability, enabling other researchers to apply the same scheme to comparable datasets.

### 1. Visual Strategies

Visual strategies refer to the use of AI-enhanced features that shape the aesthetic, symbolic, and multimodal presentation of apparel in TikTok videos. These strategies extend beyond simple visuals to include filters, overlays, and stylistic devices that enrich the communicative act.

These indicators enhance message richness (Media Richness Theory) by adding multimodal cues that reduce ambiguity, and fulfill audience gratifications (Uses and Gratifications Theory) related to identity expression, aesthetic enjoyment, and information seeking.

- a. Augmented Reality (AR) Filters/Lenses: These include beautification tools, virtual try-ons, or environmental overlays that alter the visual presentation of clothing or the setting. Their use signals an attempt to dramatize or stylize apparel communication.<sup>217</sup>
- b. AI-Generated Captions/Text Overlays: Automated captions, stylized subtitles, or text that interacts with audio/visual elements fall under this indicator. They enhance accessibility and reinforce key messages.
- c. Green Screen/Background Replacement: The use of TikTok's green screen feature or other background replacement tools that situate apparel in new contexts, such as boutiques, runways, or fantasy environments.
- d. Emojis and Stickers: The inclusion of animated or static emojis, GIFs, or stickers, which function as symbolic cues that add emotional, humorous, or playful dimensions to apparel videos.

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<sup>217</sup> Ruggero Eugeni, "A Scanner Darkly: Augmented Reality Face Filters as Algorithmic Images," *Visual Communication* 23, no. 3 (August 1, 2024): 498–512, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14703572241235286>;CTYPE:STRING:JOURNAL.

- e. **Typography/Layout Styles:** Stylized fonts, bold titles, and creative layouts that frame or highlight key elements of the apparel. These features contribute to message clarity and visual impact.

## 2. Interactive Strategies

Interactive strategies refer to AI-enhanced features that invite participation, encourage response, and transform videos into dialogic rather than monologic communication. Unlike visual strategies, which emphasize representation, interactive strategies foreground the relational dimension of communication.

These indicators increase message richness (Media Richness Theory) through feedback loops, relational cues, and layered participation, and satisfy audience gratifications (Uses and Gratifications Theory) associated with social interaction, community belonging, identity affirmation, and instrumental engagement.

- a. **Text-to-Speech (TTS):** TikTok's automated voice narration that converts written text into synthetic speech, guiding audience interpretation and adding an auditory channel.
- b. **Polls and Quizzes Stickers:** Embedded stickers that allow audiences to vote, select preferences, or answer questions, fostering direct engagement with apparel content.
- c. **Duet and Stitch Functions:** Features that enable users to create side-by-side responses or incorporate clips from other videos, extending apparel communication into collaborative discourse.
- d. **Hashtags:** Explicit inclusion of hashtags such as #fashion, #OOTD, or brand-specific tags, which organize content into searchable categories and situate it within broader fashion discourses.
- e. **Mentions:** Direct tagging of other users, influencers, or brands, which connects apparel videos to wider networks of interaction.
- f. **Call-to-Action (CTA) Prompts:** Verbal or textual prompts such as "follow," "shop now," or "comment below," which explicitly guide audience behavior.

### 3. Coding Format

Each indicator was coded using a binary scheme: 0 = Absent (the feature does not appear in the video), and 1 = Present (the feature is observable in the video). This format emphasizes whether communicative strategies were employed at all, rather than measuring frequency or duration within a single video. The binary approach was chosen for its simplicity, clarity, and reliability, making it possible to aggregate data across 100 videos and to generate descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, proportions, co-occurrence profiles).

To provide a concise conceptual overview prior to detailing operational procedures, the categories and indicators applied in this research are summarised in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Categories and Indicators of Analysis

Category	Indicators
<b>Visual Strategies</b>	AR Filters, AI Captions/Text Overlays, Green Screen, Emojis/Stickers, Typography/Layout
<b>Interactive Strategies</b>	Text-to-Speech, Polls/Quizzes, Duet/Stitch, Hashtags, Mentions, Calls-to-Action

The categorisation in Table 3.3 distils the communicative features into analytically distinct units. This structural delineation forms the basis for the operational definitions and binary coding rules presented in Table 3.4, ensuring that theoretical constructs are rendered consistently measurable.

## F. Research Instruments

### 1. Codebook Development

The primary research instrument for this study was the codebook, which served as the methodological backbone of the content analysis.<sup>218</sup> A

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<sup>218</sup> Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas, “Content Analysis and Thematic Analysis: Implications for Conducting a Qualitative Descriptive Study.”

codebook in content analysis is not merely a list of categories, but a carefully constructed tool that transforms abstract theoretical constructs into operationally defined, observable indicators. Its function is to ensure that coding decisions are made with consistency, transparency, and replicability, thereby safeguarding the methodological rigor of the study.

The design of the codebook was guided by three principles. First, each indicator was defined in precise operational terms, so that coders could unambiguously determine whether a feature was present. For example, “AR Filter” was not defined broadly as any visual modification, but specifically as an effect created through TikTok’s augmented reality functions that altered either the appearance of apparel or its environment. Second, each indicator was paired with clear inclusion and exclusion rules, reducing ambiguity and ensuring consistent application. For instance, captions manually typed by the creator were excluded from the “AI-Generated Captions” category, which was reserved strictly for auto-generated or stylized overlays produced by TikTok’s tools. Third, illustrative examples were incorporated to resolve borderline cases, giving coders reference points for applying rules consistently across diverse content.

The structure of the codebook directly reflected the study’s conceptual framework, distinguishing between visual strategies (linked to MRT’s construct of message richness) and interactive strategies (aligned with UGT’s focus on audience gratifications). Within each category, indicators were organized with their operational definition, coding rules, and binary scoring scheme (0 = absent, 1 = present). This design enabled the systematic documentation of communicative strategies while maintaining fidelity to the theoretical underpinnings of the research.

The development of the codebook proceeded iteratively. An initial draft was derived from the theoretical framework in Chapter II and the categories detailed in Section E. This version was piloted on a subset of videos, during which ambiguities were identified. Adjustments were subsequently made to refine definitions, simplify wording, and clarify

borderline cases. This pilot–refinement cycle enhanced the clarity and usability of the codebook, ensuring that it functioned as a replicable instrument rather than as an ad hoc checklist. The finalized version was then employed across the full sample of 100 videos.

In applying the coding scheme, it was necessary to distinguish whether indicators were identified only within the video frame or also in the accompanying description. Visual strategy indicators (VS1-VS5) together with text-to-speech, polls/quizzes, and duet/stitch functions (IS1-IS3) were coded exclusively when they appeared in the video itself. By contrast, emojis (VS4), hashtags (IS4), mentions (IS5), and call-to-action prompts (IS6) were coded as present if they appeared either within the video or in the description. This distinction ensured clarity and consistency in coding decisions. The complete coding scope is provided in the Appendix.

An excerpt of the finalized codebook is presented in Table 3.4, showing representative indicators, their definitions, and coding rules. The complete codebook, with additional examples and notes, is included in the Appendix to ensure transparency and replicability.

Table 3.4: Excerpt from Codebook (Visual and Interactive Strategies)

Category	Indicator Code	Indicator Name	Operational Definition	Coding Rule
Visual Strategies	VS1	AR Filters / Lenses	Use of TikTok’s augmented reality tools (beautification, virtual try-ons, environmental overlays).	1 = present if AR effect is applied anywhere in the video; 0 = absent if no AR effect is visible.
	VS2	AI Captions / Text Overlays	Auto-generated captions or stylized	1 = present if at least one instance

			on-screen text created using TikTok's AI or text-overlay functions.	appears in-video; 0 = absent
	VS3	Green Screen / Background	Replacement of the real background with an image/video using TikTok's green screen or similar AI tool.	1 = present if background is digitally replaced; 0 = absent if background remains real.
	VS4	Emojis / Stickers	Animated or static emojis, GIFs, or stickers layered onto the video.	1 = present if any emoji/sticker appears in-video or caption; 0 = absent if none.
	VS5	Typography / Layout Styles	Use of bold/stylized fonts, kinetic text, or layout templates to highlight apparel content.	1 = present if typography/layout is clearly stylized; 0 = absent if only plain/default text is used.
<b>Interactive Strategies</b>	IS1	Text-to-Speech (TTS)	TikTok's synthetic voice narrates any written text in the video.	1 = present if AI voice is audible; 0 = absent otherwise.

	IS2	Polls / Quizzes Stickers	An interactive sticker allowing the audience to vote or answer questions.	1 = present if poll/quiz sticker is visible; 0 = absent if none.
	IS3	Duet / Stitch Functions	Video format incorporating or responding to another user's content.	1 = present if split-screen or clipped segment is from another video; 0 = absent otherwise.
	IS4	Hashtags	Use of hashtags in captions or overlaid text to categorize content or join trends.	1 = present if at least one hashtag is visible; 0 = absent if none.
	IS5	Mentions	Tagging another user or brand using “@username” in the caption or overlay.	1 = present if any mention appears; 0 = absent otherwise.
	IS6	Call-to-Action (CTA) Prompts	Explicit verbal or textual prompt for the audience to act (e.g., follow, comment, shop).	1 = present if CTA is stated anywhere; 0 = absent if none.

Once the codebook was finalized with clearly defined indicators and coding rules, its operational structure was translated into a coding sheet, which served as the recording instrument for the dataset.

## 2. Coding Sheet

The coding sheet translated the finalized codebook into a structured recording instrument for the dataset. While the codebook provided definitions and decision rules, the coding sheet functioned as the practical template where coders entered data in a systematic and replicable manner. Each row of the sheet represented a single TikTok video, while each column corresponded to an indicator drawn from the two overarching categories (Visual Strategies and Interactive Strategies), along with metadata fields for contextual information.

This design ensured that coding was conducted in a uniform and transparent format, minimizing coder error and facilitating subsequent statistical analysis. By organizing indicators and metadata in a grid, the sheet provided both a comprehensive overview of each video and a standardized dataset ready for descriptive analysis.

To maintain consistency with the operational definitions established in the codebook, each indicator was recorded using the binary coding scheme (0 = Absent, 1 = Present). The sheet did not capture frequency or intensity within videos; rather, it recorded whether a given feature was employed at all. This approach aligned with the study's descriptive objective, focusing on the mapping of strategy usage across the sample rather than on quantifying repetitions within individual videos.

In addition to the strategy indicators, the coding sheet incorporated metadata fields such as Video ID, URL, Date Posted, Duration, and Notes. These fields provided contextual information necessary for dataset management and verification, while also supporting transparency and potential replication of the study.

The structure of metadata fields employed for dataset management is summarized in Table 3.5, while Table 3.6 illustrates how the strategy indicators were organized in matrix form for systematic coding.

Table 3.5: Metadata Table for Dataset Management

Field	Description
Video ID	Unique code assigned to each video (001-100)
Video URL	Direct link to the TikTok video (stored securely, not reported publicly)
Date Posted	Date on which the video was uploaded
Duration	Length of the video in seconds
Notes	Additional remarks (e.g., unusual features, ambiguities, or contextual observations)

These metadata fields were used solely for dataset management and verification, and were not analyzed as part of the research indicators.

Table 3.6: Example Coding Sheet Structure

Video ID	(VS1)	(VS2)	(VS3)	(VS4)	(VS5)	(IS1)	(IS2)	(IS3)	(IS4)	(IS5)	(IS6)
001	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1

This simplified matrix demonstrates how the presence or absence of indicators was recorded across the dataset. The full version of the coding sheet is provided in the Appendix to ensure transparency and replicability.

### 3. Reliability Testing

Reliability constitutes a core criterion in content analysis because it determines the extent to which coding decisions are applied consistently across repeated measures rather than being influenced by subjective bias.<sup>219</sup> In this study, reliability was assessed through intra-coder testing, since all

<sup>219</sup> Klaus Krippendorff, "Reliability in Content Analysis," *Human Communication Research* 30, no. 3 (July 1, 2004): 411–33, <https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1468-2958.2004.TB00738.X>.

coding was carried out by the researcher. Intra-coder reliability evaluates whether the same coder is able to reach identical coding decisions when analyzing the same content at different points in time, thereby ensuring that the instrument functions with stability.

The reliability procedure was conducted in two stages. Following the initial coding of the entire dataset of one hundred videos, a randomly selected subsample representing 20% of the data (20 videos) was set aside for re-coding. The re-coding was performed after a seven-day interval in order to minimize memory effects and to ensure that the judgments made were based strictly on the operational definitions contained in the codebook rather than on recollection of earlier decisions. This design provided a safeguard against subjective bias and strengthened the credibility of the coding process.

The reliability coefficient was calculated using Cohen's Kappa ( $\kappa$ ), a statistical measure widely recognized in communication and media research for categorical data. Unlike simple percentage agreement, Cohen's Kappa adjusts for the possibility of agreement occurring by chance, thereby offering a more rigorous and reliable assessment. The formula for  $\kappa$  is expressed as:

$$\kappa = \frac{(P_o - P_e)}{(1 - P_e)}$$

Where:

- a.  $P_o$  represents the observed proportion of agreement between the two coding rounds, and;
- b.  $P_e$  represents the proportion of agreement expected by chance.

Interpretation of  $\kappa$  values generally follows the scale proposed by Landis and Koch (1977), where scores between 0.00 and 0.20 indicate slight agreement, 0.21 to 0.40 indicate fair agreement, 0.41 to 0.60 indicate moderate agreement, 0.61 to 0.80 indicate substantial agreement, and 0.81 to 1.00 indicate almost perfect agreement. For this study, a minimum

threshold of 0.70 was adopted as the standard of adequacy, reflecting accepted methodological conventions in communication research.

The general interpretive framework for  $\kappa$  values is presented in Table 3.7, while the specific and detailed intra-coder reliability test results are presented in Chapter IV, with full Jamovi output included in the Appendix.

Table 3.7: Interpretation of Cohen's Kappa (Landis & Koch, 1977)

$\kappa$ Value Range	Interpretation
0.00 – 0.20	Slight agreement
0.21 – 0.40	Fair agreement
0.41 – 0.60	Moderate agreement
0.61 – 0.80	Substantial agreement
0.81 – 1.00	Almost perfect agreement

This interpretive scale provided the benchmark against which the reliability of coding decisions in this study was evaluated, ensuring that all reported results were based on consistent and replicable measures.

### G. Data Collection Techniques

The process of data collection for this study was carefully designed to produce a dataset that was fully aligned with the research objectives, methodologically rigorous, and ethically responsible. All data were drawn from publicly available TikTok videos produced by the purposively selected TikTok account, which has been established as a consistent source of apparel-focused content and as an account that frequently employs AI-enhanced features such as filters, captions, duets, and interactive stickers. Restricting the dataset to this account ensured that the collected material directly reflected the communicative environment under investigation, thereby reducing variability that might arise from stylistic or contextual differences across multiple sources.

At the time of data collection, the account contained more than five hundred videos, which together constituted the population. This population was

first surveyed in order to establish its characteristics and to confirm that it represented a sufficiently rich environment for observing apparel communication practices enhanced by AI features. From this broader corpus, a purposive sample of one hundred videos was selected on the basis of two criteria. First, the video had to focus primarily on the presentation or promotion of apparel, such as product demonstrations, styling, or fashion-related performances. Second, the video had to employ at least one AI-enhanced communicative feature, including augmented reality filters, caption overlays, duet or stitch formats, or interactive stickers. Videos that did not meet these criteria, for example, lifestyle updates unrelated to fashion or clips devoid of AI features, were excluded from the dataset. This selection process ensured that the final sample was directly relevant to the research problem and captured the communicative phenomena under study with precision.

Once the sample was determined, the videos were systematically archived and catalogued in order to create a stable dataset. Each video was assigned a unique identification code, ranging from 001 to 100, and paired with its corresponding TikTok link. Metadata such as posting date and video duration were recorded alongside the identifier. To safeguard against alterations on the platform, the videos were also downloaded using secure archiving methods, thereby ensuring that the dataset remained intact even in the event that individual posts were deleted or modified after collection. This procedure established a consistent corpus that could be reliably cross-referenced with the coding sheet during subsequent analysis.

The process of data collection was carried out in full compliance with ethical principles of digital research. Only content that was publicly accessible was included, and no attempts were made to retrieve private, restricted, or deleted material. Furthermore, the analysis focused exclusively on the communicative features of videos as media artifacts rather than on the identities of content creators or individuals depicted within the footage. No additional personal identifiers beyond those already visible in the videos were recorded.

Through this sequence of surveying the population, applying strict inclusion criteria, and archiving the selected content with metadata, the study established a dataset that was both methodologically robust and ethically sound. The resulting corpus of one hundred videos provides a stable and replicable foundation for the subsequent phases of coding, reliability testing, and analysis.

Upon completing the collection, cataloguing, and archiving of the dataset, the analysis stage was undertaken to document the prevalence and patterns of AI-enhanced communication strategies in the selected TikTok apparel videos.

## **H. Data Analysis Techniques**

The analysis of data in this study followed a structured process consistent with its design as a descriptive quantitative content analysis. The primary objective of the analysis was to map and categorize the use of AI-enhanced visual and interactive strategies in TikTok apparel videos, without seeking to establish causal relationships or predictive models. Accordingly, the analytic focus remained on descriptive statistics, specifically frequencies, percentages, and cross-tabulations, which were used to identify both the prevalence of individual features and the co-occurrence of multiple features within the same video. All results were subsequently interpreted through the theoretical lenses of Media Richness Theory (MRT) and Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which provided conceptual depth to the descriptive findings.

The analytical process unfolded in a sequential series of stages, each contributing to the transparency and replicability of the study.

1. Stage 1: Coding Completion. The first step involved coding all one hundred videos in the sample using the finalized codebook and coding sheet. Each indicator was recorded using the binary scheme (1 = present, 0 = absent), producing the raw dataset that served as the foundation for analysis.
2. Stage 2: Data Entry and Cleaning. The coded data were then systematically entered into a spreadsheet and imported into Jamovi

(Version 2.7.5), an open-source statistical software selected for its accessibility and suitability for binary-coded datasets. During this stage, the entries were reviewed for accuracy, and any inconsistencies were cross-checked against the archived corpus and coder notes to resolve borderline cases. This step produced a validated dataset ready for statistical analysis.

3. Stage 3: Reliability Testing. Prior to full analysis, the dataset was subjected to reliability testing. Cohen's Kappa ( $\kappa$ ) was computed in Jamovi to assess intra-coder consistency across a randomly selected subsample of videos. Indicators were required to meet the adequacy threshold of  $\kappa \geq 0.70$  before inclusion in the final analysis, thereby ensuring that the descriptive results rested on consistently coded data.
4. Stage 4: Frequency Distribution. For each indicator, frequencies were calculated to determine the number of videos in which the feature appeared. These frequency counts established the baseline prevalence of AI-enhanced communicative strategies within the dataset.
5. Stage 5: Percentage Calculation. The raw frequencies were converted into percentages, which allowed proportional comparisons across indicators and highlighted the relative prevalence of visual and interactive strategies within the 100-video sample.
6. Stage 6: Cross-Tabulation for Co-Occurrence. Cross-tabulation techniques were then applied to examine how features appeared together within the same video. For instance, contingency tables revealed whether the use of AR filters coincided with hashtags or whether text-to-speech narration tended to appear alongside calls-to-action. These co-occurrence patterns were not treated as causal relationships but as descriptive insights into the relational structure of communicative strategies.
7. Stage 7: Theoretical Interpretation. Finally, the descriptive results were interpreted through the theoretical framework introduced in Chapter II. MRT provided an analytical lens for understanding how multimodal

cues enriched message richness, while UGT explained how interactive features addressed audience gratifications such as entertainment, identity expression, and social interaction. In this context, theory functioned strictly as an interpretive guide rather than as a subject of further elaboration, ensuring that the methodological focus remained on analytic procedures.

The orientation of this analytic design reflects the descriptive nature of the research questions. Both questions, how AI-enhanced visual strategies are employed in TikTok apparel videos, and how AI-enhanced interactive strategies are employed in TikTok apparel videos, required systematic documentation rather than inferential testing. As a result, inferential procedures such as correlation, regression, or hypothesis testing were not employed. Instead, the analysis concentrated on generating a transparent descriptive map of prevalence and co-occurrence, supported by statistical summaries and visual outputs.

To ensure clarity and accessibility, the results will be presented in Chapter IV through a combination of frequency and percentage tables, bar and pie charts, and co-occurrence matrices. This mixture of numerical summaries and visual displays enhances interpretability for both academic and practitioner audiences, ensuring that the findings are communicated transparently and effectively.

The complete analytic workflow adopted in this study is summarized in Table 3.8, which outlines the sequential stages of analysis, the tools employed, and the outputs generated.

Table 3.8: Overview of Data Analysis Techniques

<b>Step</b>	<b>Stage</b>	<b>Analytical Tool</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Output</b>
1	Coding Completion	Codebook & Coding Sheet	Record the presence/absence of each indicator	Binary dataset (0/1)

2	Data Entry & Cleaning	Jamovi (import/cleaning)	Ensure accuracy; resolve inconsistencies	Validated dataset
3	Reliability Testing	Jamovi (Cohen's Kappa)	Assess intra-coder consistency	$\kappa$ values ( $\geq 0.70$ accepted)
4	Frequency Distribution	Jamovi (Descriptive Stats)	Determine how often each feature appears	Frequency tables
5	Percentage Calculation	Jamovi (Descriptive Stats)	Show the relative prevalence of each feature	Percentage tables; bar/pie charts
6	Cross-Tabulation (for Co-occurrence)	Jamovi (Cross-Tab Module)	Identify patterns of combined features	Cross-tabulation tables
7	Theoretical Interpretation	MRT & UGT	Link descriptive results to the conceptual framework	Interpretive discussion in Chapter IV

This table provides a consolidated overview of the analytic process, ensuring clarity and replicability of the research design. With the methodological workflow established, the study then turns to the ethical considerations that guided the conduct of the research.

### I. Ethical Considerations

The conduct of this research was guided by established principles of academic integrity and digital research ethics, with particular attention to the distinctive challenges posed by user-generated content on social media platforms. Because TikTok videos are simultaneously cultural artifacts and personal expressions, the study design needed to respect the rights and privacy of content creators while ensuring methodological transparency.

The dataset consisted solely of publicly accessible videos drawn from the selected account. No attempts were made to access private, deleted, or restricted material, and the study relied only on content that was already available in the public domain. This decision minimized the risk of intrusion into user privacy and ensured that the analysis was confined to authentic media artifacts rather than to personal or sensitive data.

To further protect the identities of creators, all videos were anonymized through the use of coded identifiers ranging from 001 to 100. While the original TikTok links were retained in a secure research archive for purposes of verification, these links are not reproduced in the thesis or in any published outputs. The anonymization procedure ensured that findings could be cross-checked for reliability without circulating personal or account-specific details.

The focus of analysis remained on the communicative features of the videos rather than on the personal characteristics of individuals appearing in them. Indicators such as augmented reality filters, captions, stickers, and calls-to-action were coded strictly as functional elements of digital communication. Names, usernames, and other personal identifiers that appeared incidentally within the videos were excluded from analysis, further safeguarding against any unintended exposure of individual identities.

Finally, the presentation of results was designed to avoid any potential harm to participants or creators. Findings are reported in aggregate form through frequencies, percentages, and cross-tabulations, rather than as case studies of individual videos. This ensures that communicative patterns are highlighted without attributing specific practices to identifiable users.

In adopting these procedures, the study complied with the ethical standards of communication research and with the guidelines of the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR),<sup>220</sup> which emphasize respect for context, privacy, and the minimization of harm in digital research. By combining the use

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<sup>220</sup> Ronald E. Rice, "New Media/Internet Research Topics of the Association of Internet Researchers," *The Information Society* 21, no. 4 (September 2005): 285–99, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01972240500189232>.

of publicly accessible data, anonymization of units of analysis, exclusion of personal identifiers, and aggregated reporting, the study ensured that its analysis was conducted with both ethical responsibility and methodological integrity.



## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Research Object Overview

The digital content analyzed in this study is drawn from the TikTok account @alluna.official, an Indonesian modest fashion brand specializing in prayer outfits. As of August 2025, the account had approximately 419,600 followers and more than 2.5 million likes, positioning it among the most visible TikTok accounts in the modest fashion segment.

The brand consistently frames itself as a provider of comfortable yet elegant prayerwear, appealing to audiences seeking modest apparel that combines functionality with contemporary aesthetics. Its cross-platform presence, particularly on Instagram, reinforces this image with premium series such as Yarra, which feature full-length designs in soft, modern hues, thereby aligning fashion sensibilities with religious expression.

On TikTok, this account employs a content strategy that merges visual promotion with thematic inspiration. Representative examples include an Eid collection video of premium prayerwear that attracted significant engagement, a Travel Series highlighting silk velvet and laser-cut designs for mobility and style, and a visual inspiration series titled “Beautiful and aesthetic prayerwear,” which showcases curated, aesthetic product photography.

Captions accompanying these videos frequently contain fashion-related and religiously coded hashtags such as #prayeroutfit, #prayerset, and #premiumprayerset, strengthening brand identity while enhancing discoverability. Seasonal campaigns (e.g., Eid specials and payday promotions) and regular live streaming cues (e.g., “Everyday Live”) further sustain engagement. In addition, collections such as the Bloom Series and Zhafira Series regularly appear in content, often featuring influencers modeling the apparel in promotional contexts.

Taken together, these characteristics establish the selected TikTok profile as an account with a large, engaged audience and a highly consistent apparel-focused posting pattern. Its use of multimodal presentation, AI-enhanced visual effects, and interactive affordances provides a structured and replicable context for examining communicative strategies in short-form media. This makes the account an appropriate and methodologically sound object of analysis for the present study.

## **B. Dataset Overview**

The dataset of this study is composed of one hundred publicly available TikTok videos purposively selected from the official account @alluna.official. As outlined in the methodology chapter, each video functions as a unit of analysis and is regarded as a discrete communicative artifact that can be systematically coded and examined. The purposive sampling strategy was applied to maintain consistency with the research objectives. Two key criteria guided the inclusion of videos: they had to feature apparel-related content consistent with the identity of the brand, and they needed to contain at least one AI-enhanced element relevant to the categories under investigation. By narrowing the scope in this way, the dataset ensures a clear analytical focus and allows the study to remain faithful to its concern with AI-supported communication strategies in fashion content.

For each selected video, metadata were carefully documented in a structured format to guarantee transparency and traceability. Every video was assigned a unique identification code ranging from 001 to 100. In addition, details such as the posting date, duration in seconds, and contextual notes were recorded, together with the video link stored securely for reference. This cataloguing process created a coherent and verifiable dataset, while also providing a stable framework for the descriptive and interpretive analysis presented later in this chapter.

The coding process relied on a binary scheme designed to capture the presence or absence of communicative features that had been defined as the

study's indicators. These indicators were divided into two categories, namely visual strategies and interactive strategies, covering elements such as augmented reality filters, AI captions, green screen effects, emojis and stickers, typography choices, text-to-speech, polls and quizzes, duet or stitch functions, hashtags, mentions, and calls-to-action. Each indicator was marked as present or absent in a given video, producing a data matrix that spans one hundred rows and eleven columns. This binary structure facilitates straightforward statistical treatment, particularly for generating descriptive summaries and for exploring co-occurrence patterns among strategies.

Since the materials used in this research derive entirely from a publicly accessible TikTok account, ethical safeguards were strictly observed. No private or personally identifiable data was collected, and direct video links have been stored for auditability but are not disclosed in the thesis. The presentation of findings is limited to aggregate patterns rather than attributing specific features to individual videos. This ensures that the study remains aligned with accepted ethical practices for the analysis of digital content in the public domain.

With the dataset thus assembled, organized, and ethically secured, the study proceeds to an assessment of its reliability, which is discussed in the next subsection.

### C. Reliability Test Results

Intra-coder reliability was assessed on a 20-video subsample ( $\approx 20\%$  of the dataset). The same coder re-coded the subsample after a seven-day interval using the finalized codebook. Reliability was calculated as Cohen's  $\kappa$  for each indicator by comparing Time-1 and Time-2 codings. Observed agreement ( $P_o$ ), expected agreement ( $P_e$ ), and  $\kappa$  are reported; interpretation follows Landis and Koch (1977). Where both codings contained only a single category across all cases (degenerate distribution),  $\kappa$  is mathematically undefined; in such instances, we report perfect observed agreement ( $P_o = 1.00$ ) and mark  $\kappa$  as "NA".

Table 4.1: Summary of Intra-Coder Reliability (Cohen's  $\kappa$ )

Indicator	N	Po	Pe	$\kappa$	Interpretation
VS1_ARFilter	20	1.00	1.000	NA	Perfect agreement
VS2_AIText	20	0.95	0.560	0.886	Almost Perfect
VS3_GreenScreen	20	1.00	0.545	1.000	Almost Perfect
VS4_EmojisSticker	20	1.00	1.000	NA	Perfect agreement
VS5_Typography	20	1.00	1.000	NA	Perfect agreement
IS1_TTS	20	1.00	0.905	1.000	Almost Perfect
IS2_PollsQuizzes	20	1.00	1.000	NA	Perfect agreement
IS3_DuetStitch	20	1.00	0.820	1.000	Almost Perfect
IS4_Hashtags	20	1.00	1.000	NA	Perfect agreement
IS5_Mentions	20	0.95	0.650	0.857	Almost Perfect
IS6_CTAs	20	1.00	0.905	1.000	Almost Perfect

Note. “NA” indicates  $\kappa$  is undefined in degenerate distributions (all cases coded identically); observed agreement was 1.00. Interpretation scale based on Landis and Koch (1977).

Reliability was consistently high across all indicators, with observed agreement ranging from 0.95 to 1.00. In five instances, namely VS1, VS4, VS5, IS2, and IS4, the coding at Time-1 and Time-2 produced identical distributions containing only a single category for all cases. This resulted in perfect observed agreement ( $P_o = 1.00$ ) but yielded undefined  $\kappa$  values, a common outcome in degenerate distributions (where all cases fall into a single category and no variation exists). For the remaining indicators,  $\kappa$  values fell between 0.857 and 1.000, all of which correspond to the “Almost Perfect” category of agreement as defined by Landis and Koch (1977). Taken together, these results demonstrate that the operational definitions in the codebook were applied with precision and stability across time. The coding process, therefore, provides a robust and trustworthy foundation for the descriptive analyses that follow, ensuring that the patterns reported in subsequent sections reflect the data rather than inconsistencies in coder judgment.

## D. Descriptive Findings

This section presents the empirical findings derived from the coding and analysis of one hundred TikTok videos sampled from the dataset. The results are organized to reflect the two main dimensions of AI-enhanced communication investigated: visual strategies and interactive strategies. Each subsection provides a summary table of frequencies and percentages, followed by a detailed interpretation and analytical discussion. The purpose of this section is to describe the distribution and patterns of these strategies as they appear in the sample, before exploring how they intersect in cross-tabulation and how they are further interpreted within the theoretical discussion.

### 1. AI-Enhanced Visual Strategies

The descriptive analysis of AI-enhanced visual strategies in the selected TikTok account content reveals important insights into the role of visual augmentation in shaping communication. Each of the five coded indicators demonstrates a different level of adoption, reflecting the balance between platform norms, brand identity, and situational storytelling. The summary of frequencies and percentages is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Frequencies and Percentages of AI-Enhanced Visual Strategies

Indicator	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
VS1 - AR Filter/Lenses	100	100.0
VS2 - AI Text Overlays	75	75.0
VS3 - Green Screen	32	32.0
VS4 - Emojis/Stickers	100	100.0
VS5 - Typography/Layout	100	100.0

Note. Percentages are calculated from a total sample size of 100 videos. Additional detailed Jamovi outputs for AI-enhanced visual strategies, presenting full distributions of present and absent cases for each indicator, are provided in Appendix 7.

To complement the tabular summary, Figure 4.1 visualizes the prevalence of each AI-enhanced visual strategy reported in Table 4.2 (N = 100).

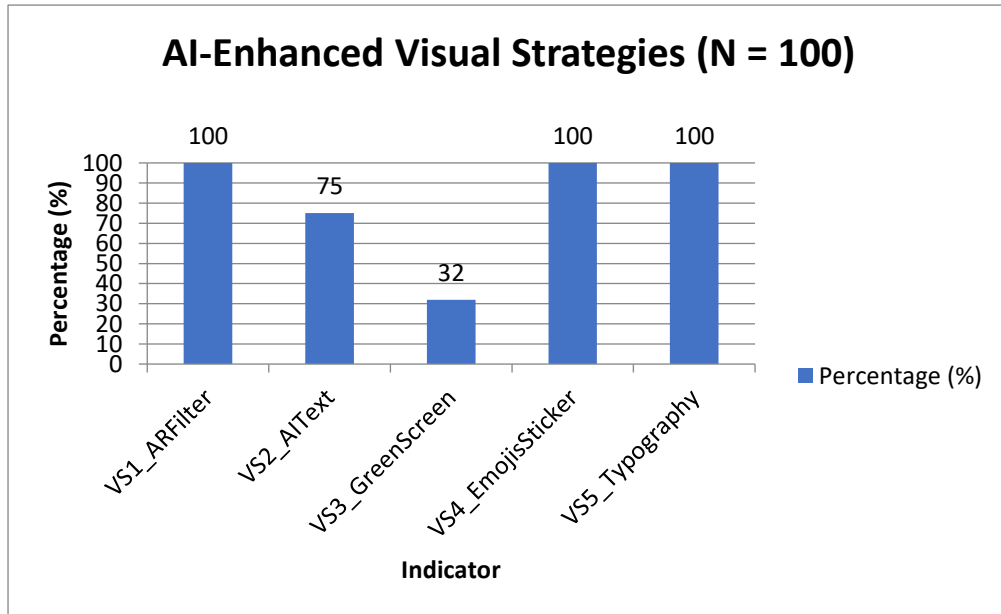


Figure 4.1: Distribution of AI-Enhanced Visual Strategies

Figure 4.1. Distribution of AI-enhanced visual strategies across the sample (N = 100). Data source: Table 4.2; complete Jamovi outputs for present/absent counts for each indicator are provided in Appendix 7.

The results indicate that certain strategies function as non-negotiable visual conventions within the brand's communication, while others are deployed selectively. The first indicator, AR Filters (VS1), was present in every single video (100%). This confirms that augmented reality effects are not simply embellishments but rather a baseline requirement for the TikTok profile presence. The filter used establishes consistency across content, ensuring a polished and recognizable aesthetic.

Similarly, Emojis/Stickers (VS4) and Typography/Layout (VS5) were also observed in 100% of the dataset. Their universal presence suggests that the brand treats these features as part of its core visual grammar. Stickers and emojis align with TikTok's playful interaction

culture, while typography provides clarity for product information and branding messages. Together with AR filters, these strategies constitute a foundational triad that shapes the brand's visual identity.

In contrast, AI Text Overlays (VS2) appeared in 75% of the videos. This relatively high adoption rate demonstrates their central role in directing viewer attention and reinforcing meaning through text. Overlays are particularly important in apparel promotion because they enable the simultaneous presentation of product names, prices, or thematic cues alongside visual imagery. Nevertheless, the absence of text overlays in 25% of the sample indicates that the brand occasionally relies solely on visual storytelling, especially in videos where the clothing design itself carries the communicative weight.

Finally, Green Screen/Background Replacement (VS3) was applied in only 32% of the videos. This finding shows that while powerful, this feature is used selectively to create thematic narratives, such as situating apparel within specific contexts (travel, festive seasons, lifestyle backdrops). Its limited use underscores that the brand considers background transformation as an optional narrative device rather than a constant requirement.

From these findings, two layers of strategy can be distinguished. First, baseline strategies, AR Filters, Emojis/Stickers, and Typography appear in every video, serving as the unifying framework for the brand's communication. They guarantee that each upload conforms to platform conventions and brand consistency. Their universality also suggests that the selected TikTok account views them as essential for securing audience recognition and sustaining engagement.

Second, selective visual strategies, namely AI Text Overlays and Green Screen, are deployed depending on communicative needs. Text overlays appear in most but not all videos, signaling their importance for clarity and persuasion, while green screen is strategically reserved for creative or campaign-driven contexts. This dual pattern reflects the interplay

between standardization (ensuring uniform brand identity) and flexibility (adapting to situational narratives).

These results indicate that AI-enhanced visual strategies in the selected TikTok profile content are not randomly applied but carefully orchestrated. Universal features guarantee that all videos share a consistent semiotic baseline, while selective features allow creative differentiation and highlight specific promotional goals. This balance ensures that the brand's TikTok communication is both coherent and adaptable, a crucial quality in the fast-paced environment of social media fashion promotion.

Having established the descriptive profile of AI-enhanced visual strategies, the analysis now turns to AI-enhanced interactive strategies. This next subsection examines how interactive tools such as text-to-speech, duet/stitch functions, and calls-to-action are used to directly engage viewers and stimulate participatory behavior.

## 2. AI-Enhanced Interactive Strategies

The second part of the descriptive analysis concerns AI-enhanced interactive strategies, which provide mechanisms for stimulating audience participation and guiding user behavior. As with the visual strategies, adoption patterns varied considerably between indicators, with some strategies functioning as universal features and others appearing only rarely. The summary is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Frequencies and Percentages of AI-Enhanced Interactive Strategies

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Frequency (N)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
IS1 - Text-to-Speech (TTS)	14	14.0
IS2 - Polls/Quizzes Stickers	11	11.0
IS3 - Duet/Stitch	11	11.0
IS4 - Hashtags	100	100.0
IS5 - Mentions	17	17.0
IS6 - Calls-to-Action (CTAs)	89	89.0

Note. Percentages are calculated from a total sample size of 100 videos. The expanded Jamovi frequency tables for AI-enhanced interactive strategies, with complete breakdowns of present and absent values, can be found in Appendix 8.

“Figure 4.2 provides a visual overview of the distribution of AI-enhanced interactive strategies listed in Table 4.3 (N = 100).

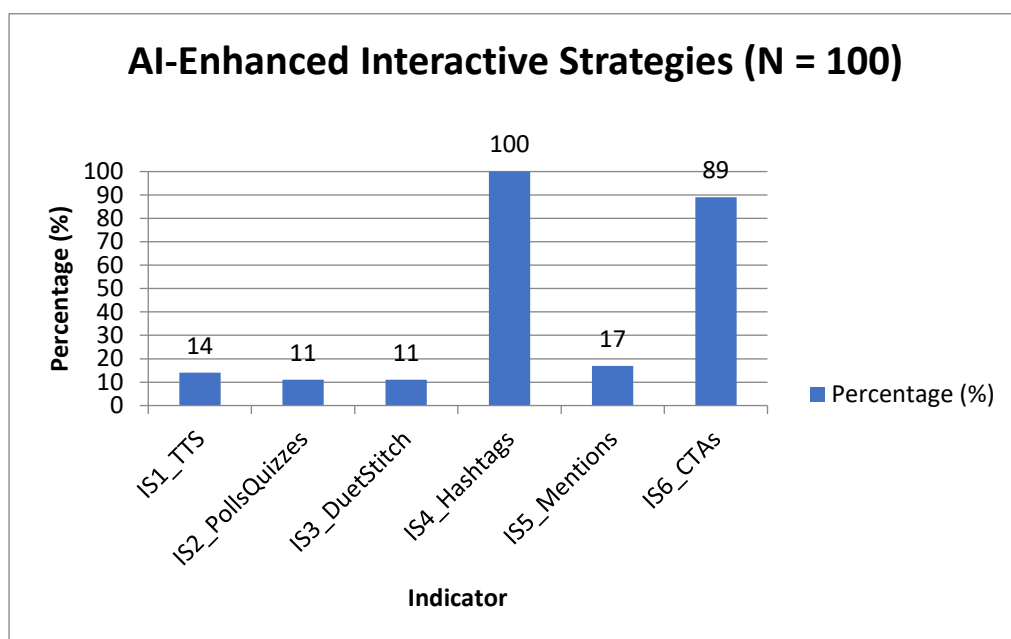


Figure 4.2: Distribution of AI-Enhanced Interactive Strategies

Figure 4.2. Distribution of AI-enhanced interactive strategies across the sample (N = 100). Data source: Table 4.3; extended Jamovi frequency tables are provided in Appendix 8.

The most striking finding is the ubiquity of hashtags (IS4), which appeared in 100% of the videos. This confirms hashtags as a fundamental, non-negotiable component of TikTok apparel communication. Their universality indicates that they are not perceived as optional interaction tools but rather as a baseline convention for categorizing content, enhancing discoverability, and aligning videos with broader platform trends.

Calls-to-Action (IS6) also demonstrate a very high presence, with 89% of the videos encouraging viewers to act (e.g., follow, like, share, or

purchase). This strong adoption rate underscores the commercial imperative behind the selected TikTok account communication: while hashtags support visibility, CTAs ensure that visibility translates into measurable engagement behaviors.

In contrast, Mentions (IS5) appear in only 17% of videos, suggesting a more selective strategy. Mentions are typically used to highlight collaborators, tag influencers, or directly reference other accounts. Their relatively limited use indicates that the TikTok account relies more on general visibility mechanisms than on direct interpersonal tagging.

The remaining indicators, Text-to-Speech (IS1), Polls/Quizzes (IS2), and Duet/Stitch (IS3), all show low frequencies, ranging from 11% to 14%. These findings suggest that while interactive features beyond hashtags and CTAs exist within TikTok's affordances, they are not widely exploited by the brand. Their infrequent use implies that the brand prioritizes stable engagement tools over experimental or user-dependent features, perhaps to maintain control over the brand narrative.

Overall, the interactive strategies reflect a dual structure similar to that observed in the visual domain. On the one hand, certain strategies are baseline conventions: hashtags (100%) and calls-to-action (89%) are embedded in nearly all content, forming the backbone of interactive engagement. These strategies guarantee that each video is positioned for maximum visibility and active viewer response.

On the other hand, selective interactive strategies, text-to-speech, polls/quizzes, duet/stitch, and mentions are applied sparingly. Their selective use suggests experimentation or context-specific deployment, but not integration into the brand's core communication pattern. This restrained adoption might be explained by two factors. First, these features often depend on unpredictable user participation (e.g., duets or polls), which may conflict with the brand's preference for polished, controlled presentations. Second, they may not directly support transactional goals, such as driving product inquiries or sales.

The pattern, therefore, suggests that the TikTok account's interactive communication relies on a foundation of universal engagement tools (hashtags and CTAs), reinforced occasionally by context-specific interactive elements. This strategy ensures consistent baseline engagement while retaining flexibility to introduce novelty where appropriate.

Having examined the descriptive findings for both visual and interactive strategies, the analysis now proceeds to explore cross-tabulations (co-occurrence analysis). This next subsection investigates how specific visual and interactive features combine within the same videos, offering insight into how multimodal communication strategies intersect to enhance viewer engagement.

#### **E. Cross Tabulations (Co-Occurrence) Analysis**

Beyond examining visual and interactive strategies separately, this study also analyzed how these strategies co-occurred within the same videos. Cross-tabulation provides insight into whether specific combinations of features are employed together, thereby offering a deeper understanding of the brand's multimodal communication practices. Only indicators with sufficient variability were cross-tabulated. Indicators that showed no variation, such as hashtags (IS4) and several baseline visual strategies, were excluded, as they yielded degenerate tables that could not be meaningfully interpreted. The three pairs selected, (VS2\_AIText and IS6\_CTAs), (VS3\_GreenScreen and IS3\_DuetStitch), and (VS2\_AIText and IS5\_Mentions), represent theoretically significant relationships and are presented in Tables 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6. For transparency, the complete Jamovi output tables for these cross-tabulations, including detailed counts and percentages, are provided in Appendix 9.

Table 4.4: Cross-tabulation of AI Text Overlays (VS2) and Calls-to-Action (IS6)

<b>VS2_AIText</b>	<b>CTA Absent</b>	<b>CTA Present</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% within row (CTA Present)</b>
Absent (0)	2	23	25	92.0%

Present (1)	9	66	75	88.0%
Total	11	89	100	89.0%

To synthesize the patterns reported in Table 4.4, Figure 4.3 presents the co-occurrence rates for the selected pairs of visual and interactive strategies.

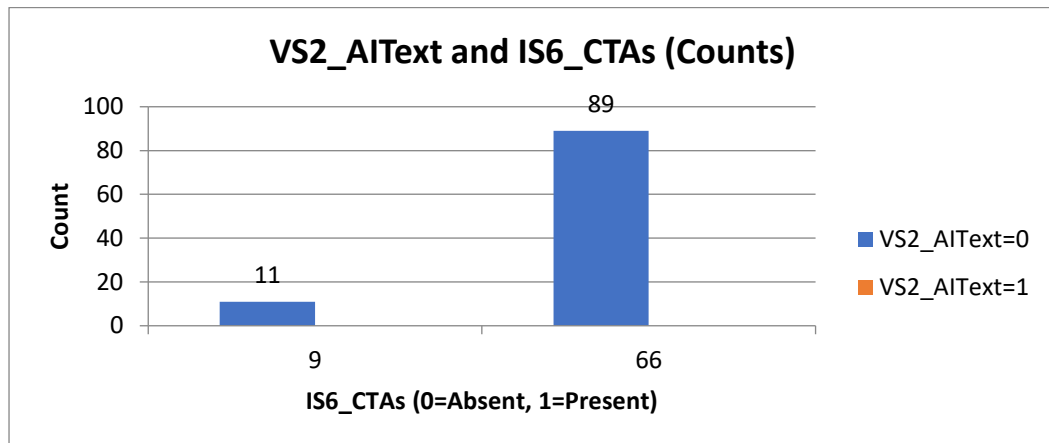


Figure 4.3: Co-Occurrence Rates of Selected Visual and Interactive Strategy Pairs (VS2 and IS6)

Figure 4.3. Co-occurrence rates of AI Text Overlays (VS2) and Calls-to-Action (IS6) in TikTok videos. Data source: Table 4.4; complete Jamovi cross-tabulation outputs are provided in Appendix 9.

The results show a strong co-occurrence between AI Text overlays and Calls-to-Action. Among the 75 videos that used AI text overlays, 66 (88.0%) also contained CTAs. Even in the 25 videos without text overlays, CTAs still appeared in 23 (92.0%) of cases. This indicates that CTAs are deployed almost universally, regardless of whether text overlays are used, underscoring their role as a central engagement mechanism. However, the fact that CTAs remain slightly more consistent in the absence of overlays suggests that when textual reinforcement is missing, the brand compensates by ensuring that explicit calls-to-action remain visible.

Table 4.5: Cross-tabulation of Green Screen (VS3) and Duet/Stitch (IS3)

VS3_GreenScreen	Duet/Stitch Absent	Duet/Stitch Present	Total	% within row (Duet/Stitch Present)
Absent (0)	63	5	68	7.4%
Present (1)	26	6	32	18.8%
Total	89	11	100	11.0%

To synthesize the patterns reported in Table 4.5, Figure 4.4 presents the co-occurrence rates for the selected pairs of visual and interactive strategies.

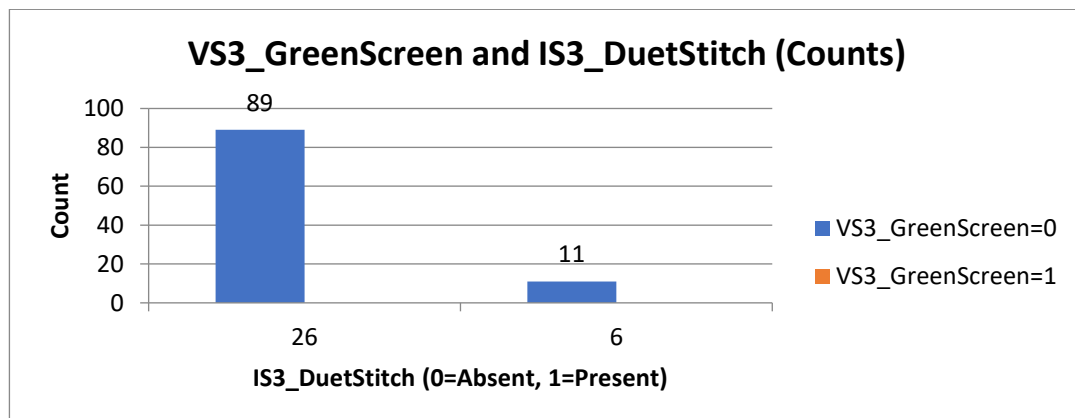


Figure 4.4: Co-Occurrence Rates of Selected Visual and Interactive Strategy Pairs (VS3 and IS3)

Figure 4.4. Co-occurrence rates of Green Screen (VS3) and Duet/Stitch (IS3) in TikTok videos. Data source: Table 4.5; complete Jamovi cross-tabulation outputs are provided in Appendix 9.

This table highlights the limited but notable intersection between creative remixing strategies. When green screen was not used, duet/stitch features were present in only 7.4% of videos. However, when green screen effects were employed, duet/stitch usage increased to 18.8%. Although still a minority, this difference suggests that creative background manipulations may sometimes be paired with participatory remix formats to enhance novelty. The overall low frequency of duet/stitch usage aligns with earlier findings, yet its

relatively higher occurrence in combination with green screen indicates an experimental sub-pattern in the dataset.

Table 4.6: Cross-tabulation of AI Text Overlays (VS2) and Mentions (IS5)

VS2_AIText	Mentions Absent	Mentions Present	Total	% within row (Mentions Present)
Absent (0)	19	6	25	24.0%
Present (1)	64	11	75	14.7%
Total	83	17	100	17.0%

To synthesize the patterns reported in Table 4.6, Figure 4.5 presents the co-occurrence rates for the selected pairs of visual and interactive strategies.

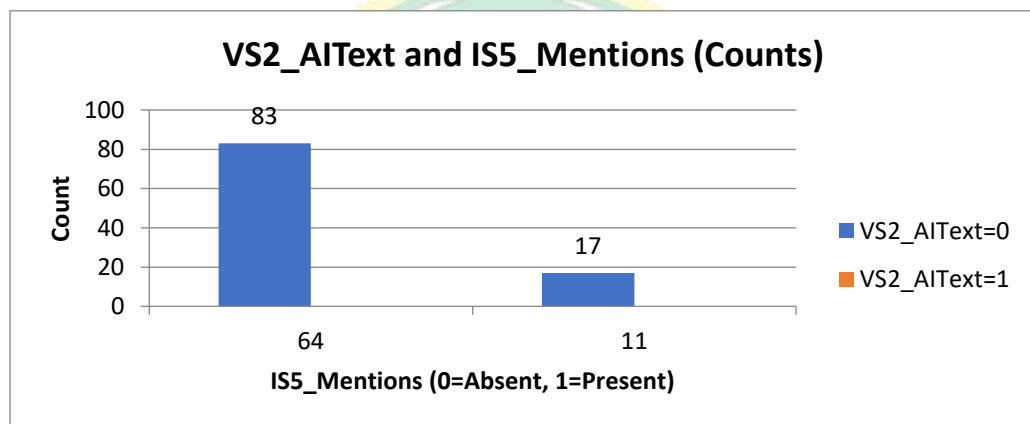


Figure 4.5: Co-Occurrence Rates of Selected Visual and Interactive Strategy Pairs (VS2 and IS5)

Figure 4.5. Co-occurrence rates of AI Text Overlays (VS2) and Mentions (IS5) in TikTok videos. Data source: Table 4.6; complete Jamovi cross-tabulation outputs are provided in Appendix 9.

The combination of AI Text overlays and Mentions reveals a less consistent relationship. Among the 25 videos without text overlays, 24.0% included mentions, while in the 75 videos with overlays, mentions occurred in only 14.7%. This pattern suggests that mentions are not systematically paired with text overlays, but may instead function as compensatory strategies when text overlays are absent. In other words, when explicit on-screen text is lacking,

the brand may occasionally use mentions to anchor the video within a social or collaborative frame.

The cross-tabulation analysis shows that not all features are used in tandem, but certain patterns emerge. Calls-to-action are consistently paired with or without text overlays, highlighting their centrality to the brand's engagement strategy. Green screen effects are more likely to coincide with duet/stitch functions, albeit rarely, suggesting an experimental cluster of creative strategies. Mentions, meanwhile, appear slightly more when text overlays are absent, implying occasional substitution between strategies.

Taken together, these results demonstrate that while some features (e.g., CTAs) operate as universal anchors, others interact in context-specific ways, showing flexibility in how the brand integrates visual and interactive elements.

Having analyzed descriptive frequencies and cross-tabulations, the next section presents the Discussion, where these findings are interpreted through the lenses of Media Richness Theory and Uses & Gratifications Theory, and positioned within the broader literature on social media communication in fashion contexts.

## **F. Discussion**

This discussion section interprets the descriptive findings of the study in line with the stated research questions, theoretical framework, and dataset parameters. The research analyzed 100 purposively selected videos from @alluna.official, a modest fashion brand specializing in prayerwear, using a quantitative descriptive content analysis with binary indicators for both visual and interactive strategies. The intra-coder reliability test confirmed strong stability of coding ( $\kappa$  values reaching "almost perfect" in non-degenerate categories), which provides confidence that the patterns observed in the results reflect the communicative strategies of the account rather than inconsistencies in measurement.

The aim of this section is not to introduce new statistical claims but to interpret how the observed distributions and cross-tabulations answer the

guiding research questions: RQ1: How are AI-enhanced visual strategies employed in TikTok apparel videos? And RQ2: How are AI-enhanced interactive strategies employed in TikTok apparel videos?

The discussion also considers how these strategies work together, how they can be understood through Media Richness Theory (MRT) and Uses & Gratifications Theory (UGT), and what communicative implications they carry for apparel messaging in TikTok's digital environment.

#### 1. Visual Strategies in Context (RQ1)

The results showed that three visual indicators, AR filters/lenses (VS1), emojis and stickers (VS4), and typography/layout styles (VS5), were present in all 100 videos, forming a baseline layer of visual communication. This universality indicates that the selected TikTok account consistently employs platform-native tools and stylistic enhancements to maintain a recognizable and polished brand aesthetic. Such consistency aligns with MRT's principle of providing multiple cues to reduce ambiguity: filters enhance visual quality, emojis and stickers convey affect and playfulness, while typography ensures textual clarity and readability.

Beyond this baseline, two additional strategies appeared with selective frequency: text overlays/auto-captions (VS2) were observed in 75% of the sample, while green screen/background replacement (VS3) appeared in 32%. The distribution suggests that overlays function as a versatile tool to reinforce meaning when clarification or emphasis is needed. For example, overlays were often used to indicate product names, collection themes, or seasonal relevance (e.g., "Eid Collection"), thereby anchoring interpretation. Their absence in one-quarter of the videos implies a reliance on purely visual storytelling where garments and context alone are sufficient.

Green screen usage, by contrast, was reserved for more narrative-driven content such as travel, lifestyle, or aspirational scenes. This selective deployment indicates that the selected TikTok account applies high-effort, immersive visual effects when a communicative task requires situating

products in broader settings. From a UGT perspective, these strategies gratify identity and escapism needs, allowing viewers to imagine themselves wearing prayerwear in different environments, while MRT interprets them as heightened richness cues that contextualize messages more fully.

The discussion of RQ1 shows that the brand balances standardization and variation: it maintains universal visual features to secure brand recognition and accessibility, while deploying overlays and green screens tactically to add nuance, clarity, or narrative depth.

## 2. Interactive Strategies in Context (RQ2)

The second research question examined how AI-enhanced interactive strategies were used in the 100 videos. The findings revealed a clear division between core interactive tools that appeared consistently and supplementary tools that were employed more selectively.

Hashtags were present in every single video (100%). This universality demonstrates that hashtags form the backbone of the selected TikTok account's interactive communication. Their primary role is twofold: (1) to classify content into topical categories such as #mukenapremium or #eidcollection, ensuring discoverability, and (2) to align the brand with platform-wide discourses (e.g., #fyp or #fashiontok). From a Uses & Gratifications Theory perspective, hashtags fulfill informational and social gratifications, helping viewers locate relevant content, identify with communities, and participate in broader conversations.

CTAs were found in 89% of videos, making them the second most common interactive element. These ranged from prompts like “Follow for more” to directives such as “Comment your favorite color.” CTAs function as engagement anchors, guiding audiences toward specific actions. In MRT terms, they increase richness by clarifying the expected response, reducing uncertainty about how viewers should engage. In UGT terms, they gratify the need for direction and participation, providing audiences with clear pathways to extend their interaction with the brand.

Mentions appeared in 17% of videos, usually tagging influencers, collaborators, or related accounts. Their selective use indicates a supporting role rather than a core strategy. Mentions provide social anchoring, embedding the brand within larger networks of influence. For audiences, they gratify social gratifications, signaling connectedness and authenticity by linking the brand to real people and communities.

TTS was present in 14% of videos. Its relatively low frequency shows that while the brand recognizes its value for accessibility and narration, it does not rely on it heavily. When used, TTS reinforced product details or campaign slogans, functioning as an auditory cue that complemented text overlays. From an MRT lens, TTS adds another channel of coding, while from a UGT perspective, it fulfills efficiency and accessibility gratifications by helping audiences consume content quickly and inclusively.

Both appeared in 11% of videos. Polls typically invited preferences between color options or styles, providing participatory choice-making opportunities. Duet and stitch functions were occasionally used to highlight customer reactions or comparisons, introducing dialogic engagement. These features gratify interactional gratifications (UGT) but remain minor due to higher production demands and their dependence on user participation. In MRT terms, they are high-richness tools but are deployed sparingly to avoid overcomplicating the communication flow.

The interactive strategies reveal a tiered structure. On one tier, hashtags and CTAs serve as foundational interactive tools, ensuring discoverability and guiding user response across nearly all videos. On another tier, mentions, TTS, polls/quizzes, and duet/stitch serve as selective supplements, used to enrich content in specific contexts but not relied on universally.

This pattern suggests that the selected TikTok account prioritizes predictable, low-friction interactions (hashtags, CTAs) as the backbone of engagement while maintaining flexibility through occasional deployment of

more experimental or participatory features. The distribution also highlights a cautious approach: the brand emphasizes tools that consistently deliver visibility and engagement while using higher-effort, higher-risk features (e.g., duet/stitch, polls) more sparingly.

### 3. Co-Occurrence Patterns

While the frequency tables revealed which features were most common, the cross-tabulations showed how certain visual and interactive strategies overlapped, forming bundles that reveal the brand's communicative orchestration. These co-occurrence insights highlight not just the use of individual tools but how they function together to shape meaning and engagement.

The pair (AI Text Overlays VS2 and Calls-to-Action - IS6) in Cross-tabulation showed that CTAs remained almost universal regardless of whether text overlays were present. Specifically, CTAs appeared in 88% of videos with overlays and in 92% of videos without overlays. This indicates that CTAs serve as a communicative backbone: even when explanatory overlays are absent, CTAs ensure that audiences are guided toward action. The slight increase in CTA presence when overlays are absent suggests a compensatory mechanism; when textual reinforcement is reduced, CTAs become even more important in directing audience behavior.

Although duet/stitch was rare overall (11%), its use nearly tripled when green screen effects were present, 18.8% with green screen compared to 7.4% without. This pairing suggests that when the brand invests in more immersive or narrative-driven backgrounds, it occasionally experiments with dialogic formats to increase novelty and interactivity. While still a minority strategy, this co-occurrence highlights an experimental sub-pattern where higher-effort visuals are paired with participatory features to amplify communicative impact.

Mentions occurred in 24% of videos without overlays but in only 14.7% of videos with overlays. This inverse relationship indicates pragmatic load management: when overlays make the screen text-heavy, the

brand avoids adding mentions to prevent clutter; when overlays are absent, mentions compensate by anchoring content socially through tagged accounts. This demonstrates a trade-off strategy between informational text and social connection cues.

The co-occurrence results underline a deliberate balancing act. Universal elements like hashtags and CTAs provide a stable spine across all content, while selective pairings reveal adaptive combinations that prevent over-saturation of cues. In MRT terms, this reflects the principle of calibrating richness, ensuring enough cues to reduce ambiguity but avoiding overload. From a UGT perspective, the patterns show that the selected TikTok account simultaneously gratifies informational, social, and interactional needs through different combinations, ensuring that content remains both engaging and legible.

#### 4. Integrated Theoretical Interpretation

The results of this study can be best understood through the combined explanatory power of Media Richness Theory (MRT) and Uses & Gratifications Theory (UGT). Together, they clarify why @alluna.official consistently deployed certain strategies and how these practices served both communicative clarity and audience satisfaction.

Media Richness Theory (MRT) emphasizes the need to match message equivocality with channel richness. The findings demonstrate that the selected TikTok account established a baseline richness floor through universal use of AR filters (VS1), emojis/stickers (VS4), and typography/layout (VS5). These provided stable cues across all videos, ensuring clarity and aesthetic consistency regardless of content type. Overlays (VS2) and green screen (VS3) acted as situationally applied richness boosters, brought in when tasks demanded higher clarification (overlays) or narrative framing (green screen). The strategic layering of these tools reflects deliberate calibration: maintaining legibility through universal elements, while reserving higher-effort effects for moments of greater communicative complexity.

Uses & Gratifications Theory (UGT) emphasizes how audiences actively seek media to satisfy specific needs. Interactive strategies in the dataset illustrate this dynamic. Hashtags (IS4) and CTAs (IS6) satisfied informational and participatory gratifications, giving viewers tools for discovery and clear avenues for action. Mentions (IS5), though less frequent, gratified social gratifications, embedding the brand within relational networks. Features like TTS, polls, and duet/stitch, while limited in frequency, addressed accessibility, involvement, and dialogic gratifications, albeit in a more experimental manner.

Read together, MRT and UGT highlight a two-tier communicative strategy: A reliable backbone of features (hashtags, CTAs, baseline visuals) that guarantees clarity, visibility, and stable engagement. And Contextual enrichments (overlays, green screen, mentions, duet/stitch, polls) that diversify interaction and satisfy situational gratifications without overwhelming the message.

This synthesis shows that AI-enhanced tools are not simply ornamental but functional, serving as communicative resources that both increase message richness and align with audience motivations.

The strategic use of AI-enhanced features must also be read within the context of the account's identity as a modest fashion brand specializing in prayerwear (mukena). Thematic overlays frequently referenced religious seasons (e.g., Ramadan, Eid), aligning products with culturally significant times. Hashtags such as #prayeroutfit and #prayerset embedded the brand in spiritual and identity-oriented discourses. Meanwhile, green screen backgrounds situating products in travel or aspirational contexts reinforced the dual appeal of practicality and lifestyle elevation.

In this sense, the communicative strategies are not just technical choices but also identity performances. They present prayerwear as simultaneously traditional and fashionable, religiously rooted and globally relevant. The calibrated use of AI-enhanced tools ensures that this dual

positioning is communicated with clarity and resonance for audiences seeking both modesty and style.

These findings not only answer the research questions but also highlight broader implications, ethical considerations, and methodological reflections. These aspects will be elaborated in Chapter V.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### A. Conclusion

This study set out to examine how AI-enhanced communication strategies are employed in TikTok apparel videos, with a particular focus on the account @alluna.official, a modest fashion brand specializing in prayerwear. The analysis was guided by two research questions: how visual strategies are utilized through AI-enhanced features, and how interactive strategies are applied to foster engagement. Using a quantitative descriptive content analysis of 100 purposively selected posted videos, the research identified the presence, distribution, and co-occurrence of both visual and interactive indicators. The study relied on binary coding and established strong intra-coder reliability, ensuring that the descriptive findings accurately represented the communicative practices of the account.

The conclusions highlight several central patterns. On the visual side, the findings show that the selected TikTok account consistently integrates a baseline of AR filters, emojis and stickers, and typography or layout features across all its videos. This universal layer establishes a recognizable visual identity and maintains a minimum level of communicative richness. Beyond this foundation, text overlays and auto-captions appeared in three-quarters of the sample, functioning as cognitive anchors that clarified meaning, highlighted product attributes, or contextualized seasonal collections. Green screen effects were less frequent, appearing in about one-third of the videos, but their selective use indicates a strategy of situating apparel within aspirational or lifestyle contexts. These patterns illustrate that the brand adopts a two-tier approach: maintaining a stable baseline of visual enhancement while introducing situationally appropriate effects to address specific communicative needs.

On the interactive side, the account relied heavily on hashtags and calls-to-action, both of which were found in nearly all videos. Hashtags provided

visibility and discoverability, embedding the content in both niche and broad platform discourses, while calls-to-action guided audiences toward explicit forms of engagement such as following, liking, or commenting. Other interactive features, including mentions, text-to-speech, polls, and duet or stitch functions, were used more sparingly. Their presence reflected moments where the brand sought to build relational ties, increase accessibility, or experiment with participatory formats, but they did not constitute the backbone of engagement. This distribution reveals a strategy that prioritizes low-friction, high-consistency tools while selectively employing higher-effort or audience-dependent features when contextually appropriate.

The co-occurrence analysis further reinforced this interpretation. It showed that calls-to-action remained nearly universal regardless of whether overlays were used, indicating their role as a communicative backbone. It also revealed that duet and stitch functions were more likely to appear when green screen effects were present, pointing to experimental bundling of immersive visuals with participatory formats. Similarly, mentions appeared more often when overlays were absent, suggesting a compensatory balance between textual information and social anchoring. These co-occurrence patterns emphasize that the brand carefully calibrates its use of multiple features, ensuring that videos remain engaging and informative without becoming overcrowded.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that AI-enhanced features on TikTok are not mere aesthetic add-ons but form part of a deliberate communication strategy. Through the lens of Media Richness Theory, the account's consistent use of multimodal cues can be understood as a way of reducing ambiguity and increasing clarity. From the perspective of Uses and Gratifications Theory, the deployment of interactive tools satisfies audiences' needs for information, participation, and social connection. The synthesis of these two theoretical frameworks shows that the observed strategies simultaneously enhance the richness of the message and align with the motivations of the audience.

In conclusion, the study affirms that the selected TikTok account employs AI-enhanced communication on TikTok in a structured and intentional manner. By combining universal visual baselines with selective enrichments and by balancing foundational interactive tools with occasional participatory features, the brand successfully communicates clarity, creativity, and community orientation in its apparel messaging. These strategies are deeply tied to the brand's identity as a modest fashion label, situating prayerwear not only as a product but also as an expression of cultural, religious, and aesthetic values. The conclusions provide a comprehensive understanding of how AI-enhanced communication contributes to viewer engagement in the apparel sector and serve as the basis for discussing the broader implications and recommendations in the following sections of this chapter.

## **B. Implications**

The findings of this study carry important implications for both the academic understanding of digital communication and the practical application of TikTok as a platform for apparel branding. By analyzing the structured use of AI-enhanced features in 100 videos from @alluna.official, the research demonstrates that communication on TikTok is not a matter of spontaneous creativity but the result of systematic strategies that combine clarity, engagement, and cultural resonance.

One key implication lies in the role of baseline visual strategies. The consistent use of filters, emojis, and typography across all videos shows that these features function as communicative foundations. For apparel brands, this indicates that achieving a recognizable visual identity on TikTok requires more than product display; it requires the deliberate layering of multimodal cues that ensure every post maintains a minimum level of richness. In academic terms, this reinforces the argument of Media Richness Theory that multiple codes of communication are essential in reducing ambiguity and enhancing clarity, particularly in fast-moving digital environments.

A second implication emerges from the prominence of hashtags and calls-to-action. Their near-universal presence suggests that discoverability and directed engagement are central to sustaining visibility in the TikTok ecosystem. From a practical standpoint, this shows that brands cannot rely solely on appealing visuals to gain traction. Instead, they must consistently integrate platform-native mechanisms that guide audiences toward actions such as liking, sharing, or following. From a theoretical perspective, this finding affirms Uses and Gratifications Theory, illustrating how interactive features are designed to satisfy audience needs for orientation, participation, and community involvement.

The selective use of features such as text overlays, green screen effects, polls, and duet or stitch functions also carries implications. Their distribution reveals that TikTok communication strategies are adaptive rather than uniform. Brands scale up or down their use of advanced features depending on communicative goals, campaign themes, or seasonal contexts. This adaptability suggests that effective digital communication requires a balance between standardization and flexibility: standardization to ensure brand consistency and flexibility to address evolving audience expectations.

Beyond practical messaging strategies, the findings raise implications concerning authenticity and ethics. While AI tools can enhance visual quality and interactivity, their excessive use risks distorting reality or overwhelming audiences. For apparel communication, this is particularly critical, as filters may alter how products appear in terms of color or texture. Brands must therefore exercise caution, using enhancement tools to support clarity without compromising authenticity. The implication here is twofold: practitioners must adopt responsible approaches to digital content creation, and scholars must remain attentive to how ethical considerations intersect with technological affordances in online communication.

The research also offers methodological implications. By employing a descriptive content analysis with binary coding, the study has shown the value of systematic mapping in understanding platform-specific practices. The strong

intra-coder reliability demonstrates that even qualitative elements such as filters, overlays, or CTAs can be operationalized in measurable ways. This methodological approach can be applied in future research on other TikTok accounts or digital platforms, allowing for comparative analyses across genres or cultural contexts. At the same time, the choice of descriptive analysis underscores the importance of aligning methods with research objectives: when the goal is to map communicative practices in depth, descriptive approaches may be more appropriate than inferential testing.

Finally, the implications extend to the question of scope and transferability. Because this study focused on a single account in the modest fashion sector, its conclusions are not generalizable to all TikTok apparel brands. However, the patterns identified—baseline strategies, reliance on hashtags and CTAs, and adaptive use of situational features—are transferable insights that can inform both academic theory and industry practice in similar contexts. This underscores the importance of case-based studies that generate context-sensitive knowledge while also contributing to broader conceptual frameworks.

In simple words, the implications of this study are both practical and theoretical. Practically, they show that apparel brands on TikTok must combine universal baseline features with situational enrichments to achieve effective communication. Theoretically, they reinforce the explanatory value of Media Richness Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory in digital environments, highlighting how AI-enhanced tools both reduce ambiguity and satisfy audience needs. These implications pave the way for the final section of this chapter, which offers recommendations for future research and practice.

### **C. Limitations**

Although this study provides valuable insights into AI-enhanced communication strategies on TikTok apparel videos, several limitations must be acknowledged in order to properly situate the findings. These limitations arise

from the research design, the scope of the dataset, and the methodological choices that framed the analysis.

The first limitation concerns the focus on a single case study. The dataset was restricted to 100 purposively selected videos from one account, @alluna.official, a modest fashion brand. This decision was intentional, as it allowed for in-depth exploration of communicative practices within a coherent brand identity. However, it also narrows the breadth of applicability. Other apparel brands, particularly those outside the modest fashion niche or operating in different cultural contexts, may deploy AI-enhanced strategies differently. As such, the findings cannot be generalized across all of TikTok but should instead be considered context-specific insights with possible transferability to similar accounts.

A second limitation relates to the exclusive focus on posted videos. Livestream content, which is a significant part of TikTok's interactive ecosystem, was excluded from the analysis because it differs structurally from recorded posts in both format and interactivity. This exclusion means that the study does not capture real-time engagement strategies that might involve spontaneous audience interaction, live polling, or improvisational use of filters and effects. The omission was consistent with the research design but restricted the comprehensiveness of the conclusions.

The third limitation is tied to the categories and operationalization of coding. The study deliberately concentrated on front-end AI-enhanced features, such as filters, overlays, stickers, hashtags, and calls-to-action, while excluding back-end dynamics such as algorithmic recommendation systems, platform analytics, or engagement metrics like conversion rates. This choice ensured that the analysis remained communication-centered, but it also means that important aspects of how content is distributed, amplified, or monetized were not considered. Consequently, the findings offer insight into message construction rather than message outcomes.

A further limitation relates to the descriptive methodological approach. By design, the study employed a quantitative descriptive content analysis with

binary coding and did not attempt inferential testing or predictive modeling. This approach was suitable for mapping practices in detail, but it necessarily restricts the analytical depth regarding causal relationships. For example, while the study identified frequent co-occurrences between visual and interactive strategies, it did not establish whether such combinations directly influenced viewer engagement behaviors.

Lastly, there is the issue of temporal scope. The videos analyzed were drawn from a particular time frame, and TikTok as a platform evolves rapidly in terms of features, trends, and user practices. Strategies that were prevalent in the sampled dataset may shift as new AI tools or interactive affordances are introduced. This temporal limitation suggests that the findings capture a snapshot rather than a longitudinal account of communicative practices.

Acknowledging these limitations does not undermine the value of the research; rather, it clarifies the boundaries within which the conclusions should be read. By outlining the constraints of scope, categories, methodological design, and temporality, this section ensures transparency and provides a foundation for future studies to expand, refine, or complement the insights presented here.

#### **D. Recommendations**

Building on the findings, implications, and limitations of this study, several recommendations can be offered for both academic research and professional practice in digital communication.

For future research, one important recommendation is to extend the scope beyond a single case study. While the focus on @alluna.official enabled an in-depth understanding of how a modest fashion brand employs AI-enhanced communication strategies, comparative studies across multiple accounts and fashion niches would help determine whether the observed patterns are unique to this context or represent broader trends in TikTok apparel communication. Future studies could, for example, examine mainstream fashion, luxury brands,

or youth streetwear accounts to explore whether similar baseline strategies and selective enrichments are consistently applied.

A second recommendation is to include additional forms of TikTok content, particularly livestreams, which were excluded from this study. Livestreams present unique opportunities for real-time interaction, spontaneous use of AI features, and immediate audience feedback. By analyzing both posted videos and livestreams, future research could provide a more comprehensive picture of how apparel brands manage engagement across multiple content formats within the same platform.

Methodologically, researchers may wish to move beyond descriptive mapping to incorporate inferential or mixed-method approaches. While this study focused on categorization and distribution, subsequent studies could investigate correlations between specific feature bundles and audience responses such as likes, comments, or shares. Triangulating content analysis with interviews, surveys, or platform analytics could also shed light on the motivations behind feature selection and the perceived effectiveness of different strategies.

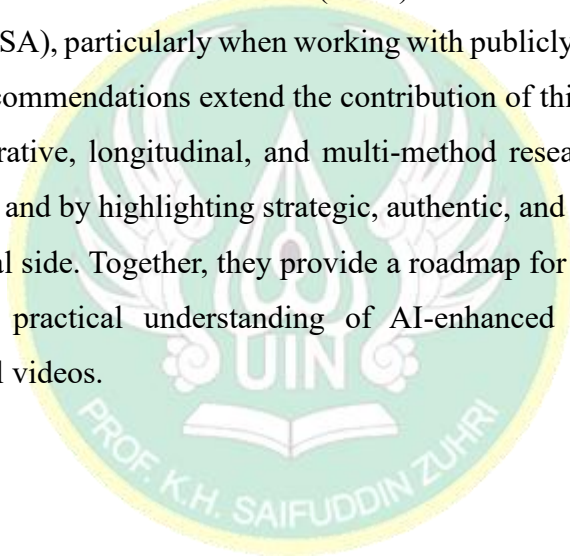
Another recommendation concerns longitudinal analysis. Because TikTok evolves rapidly in terms of features and user practices, a longitudinal design tracking content over several seasons or product cycles would allow researchers to examine how strategies change in response to platform updates, audience preferences, or market conditions. Such an approach would address the temporal limitation of this study and contribute to understanding the adaptability of digital communication practices over time.

For professional practice, the findings suggest that apparel brands should adopt a dual-layer strategy: maintaining universal baseline features such as filters, emojis, and typography to guarantee clarity and brand consistency, while selectively deploying situational features like overlays, green screen, or duet and stitch functions to enrich communication when context demands it. This approach prevents over-saturation while ensuring flexibility and variety in audience engagement.

Practitioners should also remain mindful of authenticity and trust. While AI tools can enhance aesthetics, overuse or misapplication can mislead audiences about the true qualities of apparel. Brands are therefore encouraged to balance enhancement with accurate representation, ensuring that communicative clarity does not come at the expense of credibility.

Finally, both scholars and practitioners must consider the ethical dimensions of AI-enhanced communication. Responsible use of overlays, filters, and interactive tools requires sensitivity to issues of accessibility, cultural representation, and truthful advertising. Future research and practice should continue to align with established ethical guidelines, such as those of the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) and the British Sociological Association (BSA), particularly when working with publicly accessible content.

The recommendations extend the contribution of this study by pointing toward comparative, longitudinal, and multi-method research designs on the academic side, and by highlighting strategic, authentic, and ethical practices on the professional side. Together, they provide a roadmap for advancing both the scholarly and practical understanding of AI-enhanced communication in TikTok apparel videos.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Codebook for Visual Strategies

<b>Indicator Code</b>	<b>Indicator Name</b>	<b>Operational Definition</b>	<b>Coding Rule</b>	<b>Coding Scheme</b>
VS1	AR Filters / Lenses	Use of TikTok's augmented reality tools (e.g., beautification, virtual try-ons, environmental overlays).	Code "1" if any AR effect is applied to clothing, background, or scene; code "0" if absent.	0 = Absent; 1 = Present
VS2	AI Captions / Text Overlays	Auto-generated captions or stylized text overlays created with TikTok's AI or in-app text tools.	Code "1" if captions/text overlays are visible and clearly generated or stylized; "0" if absent.	0 = Absent; 1 = Present
VS3	Green Screen / Background Replacement	Use of TikTok's green screen or AI background replacement features to situate apparel in new contexts.	Code "1" if the background is digitally replaced (image/video); "0" if the background is natural.	0 = Absent; 1 = Present
VS4	Emojis / Stickers	Inclusion of animated/static emojis, stickers, or GIFs layered onto the video.	Code "1" if any emoji, sticker, or GIF appears in the video; "0" if none are present.	0 = Absent; 1 = Present
VS5	Typography / Layout Styles	Use of bold, stylized, or kinetic text layouts to frame or emphasize apparel.	Code "1" if fonts/layouts are clearly stylized beyond default TikTok text; "0" if plain text only.	0 = Absent; 1 = Present

**Appendix 2: Codebook for Interactive Strategies**

<b>Indicator Code</b>	<b>Indicator Name</b>	<b>Operational Definition</b>	<b>Coding Rule</b>	<b>Coding Scheme</b>
IS1	Text-to-Speech (TTS)	TikTok's automated voice narration converts written text into synthetic speech.	Code "1" if AI-generated narration is audible; "0" if not used.	0 = Absent; 1 = Present
IS2	Polls / Quizzes Stickers	Interactive stickers enabling audience votes or quiz responses.	Code "1" if any poll or quiz sticker is visible; "0" if not used.	0 = Absent; 1 = Present
IS3	Duet / Stitch Functions	Use of duet or stitch features incorporating another video/user's content.	Code "1" if the video contains duet/stitch format; "0" otherwise.	0 = Absent; 1 = Present
IS4	Hashtags	Presence of hashtags in captions or overlays to categorize apparel content.	Code "1" if at least one hashtag is visible; "0" if none appear.	0 = Absent; 1 = Present
IS5	Mentions (@Tags)	Direct tagging of other users, influencers, or brands.	Code "1" if any "@username" mention is visible; "0" if absent.	0 = Absent; 1 = Present
IS6	Call-to-Action (CTA) Prompts	Explicit verbal or textual prompts for audience action (e.g., follow, like, shop now).	Code "1" if CTA is explicitly present; "0" if no such prompt is given.	0 = Absent; 1 = Present

### Appendix 3: Coding Scope for Indicators

Indicator	Code	Inside Video	In Description/Caption	Clarification
AR Filters / Lenses	VS1	Yes	No	Beautification, face-change, virtual try-ons, background effects.
AI Captions / Text Overlays	VS2	Yes	No	Auto-generated captions or overlays for clarity.
Green Screen / Background Replacement	VS3	Yes	No	Digital or replaced backdrops.
Emojis / Stickers	VS4	Yes	Yes	Counted if shown in-video or typed in description.
Typography / Layout Styles	VS5	Yes	No	Stylized fonts, layouts, or animated text inside video only.
Text-to-Speech (TTS)	IS1	Yes	No	TikTok's robotic synthetic voice narrates text.
Polls / Quizzes Stickers	IS2	Yes	No	Interactive polls/quizzes must appear in-video.
Duet / Stitch Functions	IS3	Yes	No	Split-screen duet or stitched formats only.
Hashtags	IS4	Yes	Yes	Counted if visible in the video or added in the caption.
Mentions (@tags)	IS5	Yes	Yes	Counted if tagged in-video or in caption.
Call-to-Action (CTA Prompts)	IS6	Yes	Yes	"Follow us," "Shop now," "Click link" - in-video or caption.

#### Appendix 4: Dataset Metadata

Video ID	Video URL	Date Posted	Duration (Second)	Notes
001	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs9GBW/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs9GBW/</a>	29/8/2025	22 Second	N/A
002	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsX7pu/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsX7pu/</a>	29/8/2025	7 Second	N/A
003	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsmFQt/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsmFQt/</a>	27/8/2025	17 Second	N/A
004	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsnsWP/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsnsWP/</a>	26/8/2025	6 Second	N/A
005	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsBWjV/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsBWjV/</a>	23/8/2025	8 Second	N/A
006	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsPnSy/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsPnSy/</a>	22/8/2025	6 Second	N/A
007	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsmDC1/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsmDC1/</a>	16/8/2025	26 Second	N/A
008	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsCvcT/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsCvcT/</a>	11/8/2025	18 Second	N/A
009	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsXHdH/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsXHdH/</a>	10/8/2025	8 Second	N/A
010	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bsto5b/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bsto5b/</a>	9/8/2025	31 Second	N/A
011	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsPCtS/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsPCtS/</a>	8/8/2025	14 Second	N/A
012	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsHLBc/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsHLBc/</a>	7/8/2025	1:10 Minute	N/A
013	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsVY5R/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsVY5R/</a>	23/7/2025	25 Second	N/A
014	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsP3uC/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsP3uC/</a>	13/7/2025	30 Second	N/A
015	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsndGJ/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsndGJ/</a>	11/7/2025	8 Second	N/A
016	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs4xHh/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs4xHh/</a>	9/7/2025	37 Second	N/A
017	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsDekk/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsDekk/</a>	8/7/2025	34 Second	N/A
018	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bsta9E/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bsta9E/</a>	6/7/2025	9 Second	N/A
019	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BspLLb/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BspLLb/</a>	29/6/2025	38 Second	N/A
020	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsqWPb/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsqWPb/</a>	26/6/2025	36 Second	N/A
021	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsVUyA/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsVUyA/</a>	24/6/2025	36 Second	N/A

022	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bsy6JB/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bsy6JB/</a>	14/6/2025	31 Second	N/A
023	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsagAK/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsagAK/</a>	5/6/2025	36 Second	N/A
024	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsXh24/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsXh24/</a>	25/5/2025	36 Second	N/A
025	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs9M9U/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs9M9U/</a>	17/5/2025	28 Second	N/A
026	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsuAMV/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsuAMV/</a>	13/5/2025	9 Second	N/A
027	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsmfUh/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsmfUh/</a>	23/4/2025	11 Second	N/A
028	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BssCE4/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BssCE4/</a>	13/4/2025	27 Second	N/A
029	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsgWQp/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsgWQp/</a>	8/4/2025	13 Second	N/A
030	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bst6HX/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bst6HX/</a>	4/4/2025	16 Second	N/A
031	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsDUse/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsDUse/</a>	26/3/2025	34 Second	N/A
032	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bsbp53/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bsbp53/</a>	25/3/2025	15 Second	N/A
033	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsPSuV/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsPSuV/</a>	24/2/2025	28 Second	N/A
034	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsDcHj/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsDcHj/</a>	20/3/2025	55 Second	N/A
035	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs8Ar/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs8Ar/</a>	19/3/2025	18 Second	N/A
036	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs9ETW/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs9ETW/</a>	17/3/2025	10 Second	N/A
037	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs9XLV/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs9XLV/</a>	16/3/2025	11 Second	N/A
038	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsVRkS/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsVRkS/</a>	11/3/2025	18 Second	N/A
039	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsDRSD/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsDRSD/</a>	8/3/2025	32 Second	N/A
040	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsfjwB/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsfjwB/</a>	7/3/2025	14 Second	N/A
041	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs5PwL/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs5PwL/</a>	6/3/2025	14 Second	N/A
042	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsCHaP/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsCHaP/</a>	2/3/2025	36 Second	N/A
043	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsGvBo/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsGvBo/</a>	25/2/2025	8 Second	N/A
044	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs4US2/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs4US2/</a>	24/2/2025	27 Second	N/A
045	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsXMLM/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsXMLM/</a>	20/2/2025	26 Second	N/A

046	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsGTTn/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsGTTn/</a>	13/2/2025	22 Second	N/A
047	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsahAG/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsahAG/</a>	2/1/2025	49 Second	N/A
048	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsU1Lq/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsU1Lq/</a>	31/1/2025	14 Second	N/A
049	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BssQWP/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BssQWP/</a>	28/1/2025	23 Second	N/A
050	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsbxkY/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsbxkY/</a>	24/1/2025	18 Second	N/A
051	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsmKyN/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsmKyN/</a>	21/1/2025	11 Second	N/A
052	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bsqkqn/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bsqkqn/</a>	17/1/2025	15 Second	N/A
053	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsmKog/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsmKog/</a>	9/1/2025	27 Second	N/A
054	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs9ugd/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs9ugd/</a>	7/1/2025	35 Second	N/A
055	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bsumwr/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bsumwr/</a>	6/1/2025	31 Second	N/A
056	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsAEMH/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsAEMH/</a>	4/1/2025	11 Second	N/A
057	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsqVfa/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsqVfa/</a>	3/1/2025	16 Second	N/A
058	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs5LVJ/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs5LVJ/</a>	31/12/2024	1:48 Minute	N/A
059	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsG6eS/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsG6eS/</a>	25/12/2024	26 Second	N/A
060	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsfWrT/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsfWrT/</a>	24/12/2024	13 Second	N/A
061	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsfN2D/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsfN2D/</a>	21/12/2024	5 Second	N/A
062	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsfF9/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsfF9/</a>	13/12/2024	28 Second	N/A
063	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs9dHT/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs9dHT/</a>	5/12/2024	8 Second	N/A
064	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsDT8J/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsDT8J/</a>	3/12/2024	39 Second	N/A
065	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BstHkQ/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BstHkQ/</a>	30/11/2024	14 Second	N/A
066	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsQnFL/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsQnFL/</a>	25/11/2024	15 Second	N/A
067	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsU1cN/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsU1cN/</a>	24/11/2024	8 Second	N/A
068	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsXxtk/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsXxtk/</a>	22/11/2024	7 Second	N/A
069	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bspoft/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bspoft/</a>	20/11/2024	28 Second	N/A

070	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsVN4S/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsVN4S/</a>	18/11/2024	33 Second	N/A
071	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs5HNM/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs5HNM/</a>	9/11/2024	16 Second	N/A
072	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BspKyV/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BspKyV/</a>	4/11/2024	34 Second	N/A
073	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsUBuS/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsUBuS/</a>	2/11/2024	27 Second	N/A
074	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsVkjJ/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsVkjJ/</a>	29/10/2024	19 Second	N/A
075	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsbEXM/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsbEXM/</a>	28/10/2024	10 Second	N/A
076	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs9YoU/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs9YoU/</a>	26/10/2024	16 Second	N/A
077	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsagDJ/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsagDJ/</a>	23/10/2024	36 Second	N/A
078	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bsmtsw/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bsmtsw/</a>	17/10/2024	11 Second	N/A
079	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs4uNF/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs4uNF/</a>	12/10/2024	16 Second	N/A
080	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsxaBQ/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsxaBQ/</a>	11/10/2024	24 Second	N/A
081	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsxaBQ/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsxaBQ/</a>	7/10/2024	24 Second	N/A
082	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs7Mtx/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs7Mtx/</a>	4/10/2024	33 Second	N/A
083	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BswwFm/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BswwFm/</a>	3/10/2024	1:23 Minute	N/A
084	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BG8bQ3/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BG8bQ3/</a>	2/10/2024	10 Second	N/A
085	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsoJaa/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsoJaa/</a>	27/9/2024	27 Second	N/A
086	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsW3vL/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsW3vL/</a>	24/9/2024	19 Second	N/A
087	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs7KFM/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs7KFM/</a>	21/9/2024	15 Second	N/A
088	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BGj4w8/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BGj4w8/</a>	20/9/2024	34 Second	N/A
089	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsceW/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsceW/</a>	13/9/2024	10 Second	N/A
090	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsTs1R/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BsTs1R/</a>	11/9/2024	31 Second	N/A
091	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BGR3wp/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BGR3wp/</a>	10/9/2024	14 Second	N/A
092	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BGRCGg/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BGRCGg/</a>	6/9/2024	7 Second	N/A
093	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BGeeFS/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BGeeFS/</a>	31/8/2024	22 Second	N/A

094	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BGRREg/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BGRREg/</a>	29/8/2024	6 Second	N/A
095	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BGYS68/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BGYS68/</a>	28/8/2024	15 Second	N/A
096	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bsct8M/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bsct8M/</a>	21/8/2024	14 Second	N/A
097	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs3j8L/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs3j8L/</a>	15/8/2024	11 Second	N/A
098	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BGMjNA/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BGMjNA/</a>	16/8/2024	12 Second	N/A
099	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs7txH/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8Bs7txH/</a>	7/8/2024	16 Second	N/A
100	<a href="https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BGFv8P/">https://vm.tiktok.com/ZP8BGFv8P/</a>	6/8/2024	15 Second	N/A



Appendix 5: Complete Coding Sheet (Dataset)

Video ID	(VS1) AR Filter / Lenses	(VS2) AI Captions/Text Overlays	(VS3) Green Screen/Background	(VS4) Emojis/Stickers	(VS5) Typography/ Layout Styles	(IS1) Text- to- Speech (TTS)	(IS2) Polls/Quizzes Stickers	(IS3) Duet/Stitch	(IS4) Hashtags	(IS5) Mentions	(IS6) Call- to- Action (CTA)
001	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
002	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
003	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
004	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
005	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
006	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
007	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
008	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
009	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
010	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
011	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
012	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
013	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
014	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
015	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
016	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
017	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
018	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1

019	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
020	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
021	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
022	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
023	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
024	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
025	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
026	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
027	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
028	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
029	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
030	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
031	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
032	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
033	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
034	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
035	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
036	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
037	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
038	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
039	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
040	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
041	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
042	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
043	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
044	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1

045	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
046	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
047	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
048	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
049	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
050	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
051	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
052	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
053	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
054	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
055	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
056	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
057	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
058	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
059	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
060	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
061	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
062	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
063	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
064	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
065	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
066	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
067	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
068	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
069	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
070	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1

071	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
072	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
073	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
074	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
075	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
076	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
077	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
078	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
079	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
080	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
081	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
082	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
083	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
084	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
085	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
086	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
087	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
088	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
089	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
090	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
091	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
092	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
093	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
094	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
095	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
096	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1

097	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
098	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
099	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
100	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1



## Appendix 6: Jamovi Output: Full Intra-Coder Reliability

Agreement Analysis Summary

Indicator	Cases	Raters	Categories	Overall Agreement %	Primary Method
VS1	20	2	1	100.000	Cohen's Kappa
VS2	20	2	1	100.000	Cohen's Kappa
VS3	20	2	2	100.000	Cohen's Kappa
VS4	20	2	1	100.000	Cohen's Kappa
VS5	20	2	1	100.000	Cohen's Kappa
IS1	20	2	2	100.000	Cohen's Kappa
IS2	20	2	1	100.000	Cohen's Kappa
IS3	20	2	2	100.000	Cohen's Kappa
IS4	20	2	1	100.000	Cohen's Kappa
IS5	20	2	2	95.000	Cohen's Kappa
IS6	20	2	2	100.000	Cohen's Kappa

Kappa Statistics

Indicator	Method	Kappa	Standard Error	CI Lower	CI Upper	z-value	p-value	Interpretation
VS1	Cohen's Kappa	NaN	.	.	.	NaN	NaN	Almost Perfect
VS2	Cohen's Kappa	0.886	0.222	0.451	1.322	3.990	<.001	Almost Perfect
VS3	Cohen's Kappa	1.000	0.224	0.562	1.438	4.472	<.001	Almost Perfect
VS4	Cohen's Kappa	NaN	.	.	.	NaN	NaN	Almost Perfect
VS5	Cohen's Kappa	NaN	.	.	.	NaN	NaN	Almost Perfect
IS1	Cohen's Kappa	1.000	0.224	0.562	1.438	4.472	<.001	Almost Perfect
IS2	Cohen's Kappa	NaN	.	.	.	NaN	NaN	Almost Perfect

## Kappa Statistics

Indicator	Method	Kappa	Standard Error	CI Lower	CI Upper	z-value	p-value	Interpretation
IS3	Cohen's Kappa	1.000	0.224	0.562	1.438	4.472	<.001	Almost Perfect
IS4	Cohen's Kappa	NaN	.	.	.	NaN	NaN	Almost Perfect
IS5	Cohen's Kappa	0.857	0.221	0.423	1.291	3.873	<.001	Almost Perfect
IS6	Cohen's Kappa	1.000	0.224	0.562	1.438	4.472	<.001	Almost Perfect



## Appendix 7: Jamovi Output: Visual Strategies (Frequencies & Percentages)

### Tables

Frequencies of VS1\_ARFilter

VS1_ARFilter	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	100	100.0%	100.0%

Frequencies of VS2\_AIText

VS2_AIText	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
0	25	25.0%	25.0%
1	75	75.0%	100.0%

Frequencies of VS3\_GreenScreen

VS3_GreenScreen	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
0	68	68.0%	68.0%
1	32	32.0%	100.0%

Frequencies of VS4\_EmojisSticker

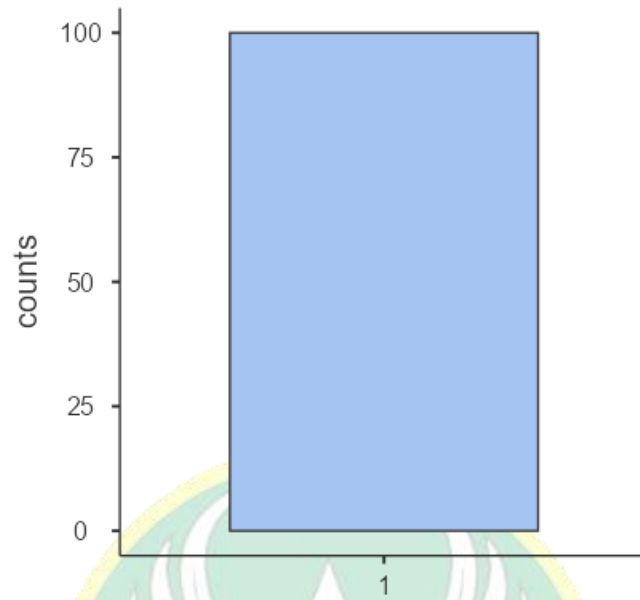
VS4_EmojisSticker	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	100	100.0%	100.0%

Frequencies of VS5\_Typography

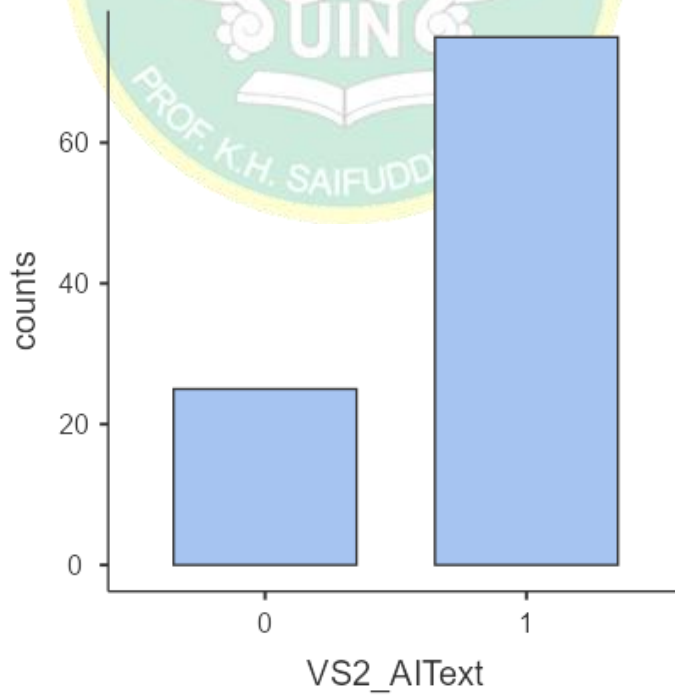
VS5_Typography	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	100	100.0%	100.0%

### Charts

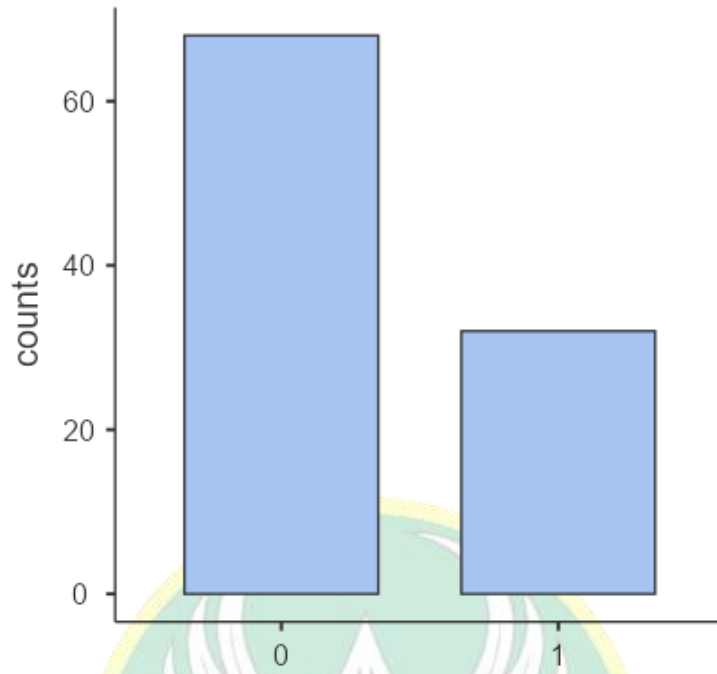
VS1\_ARFilter



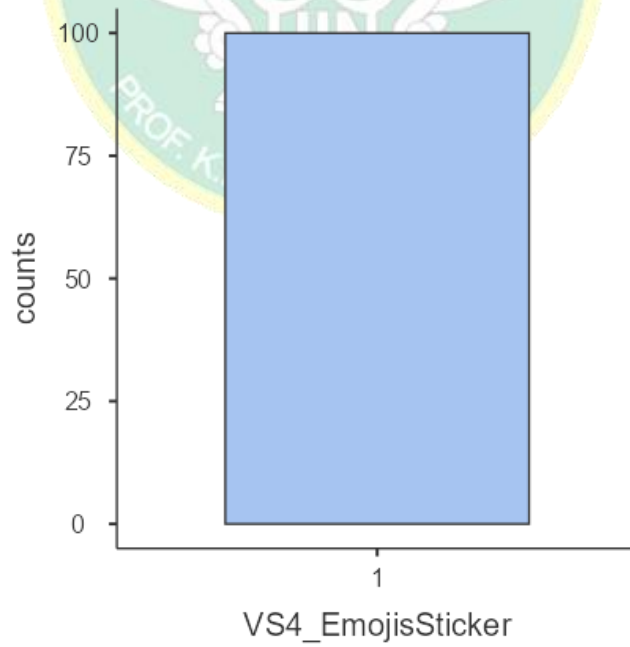
VS2\_AIText



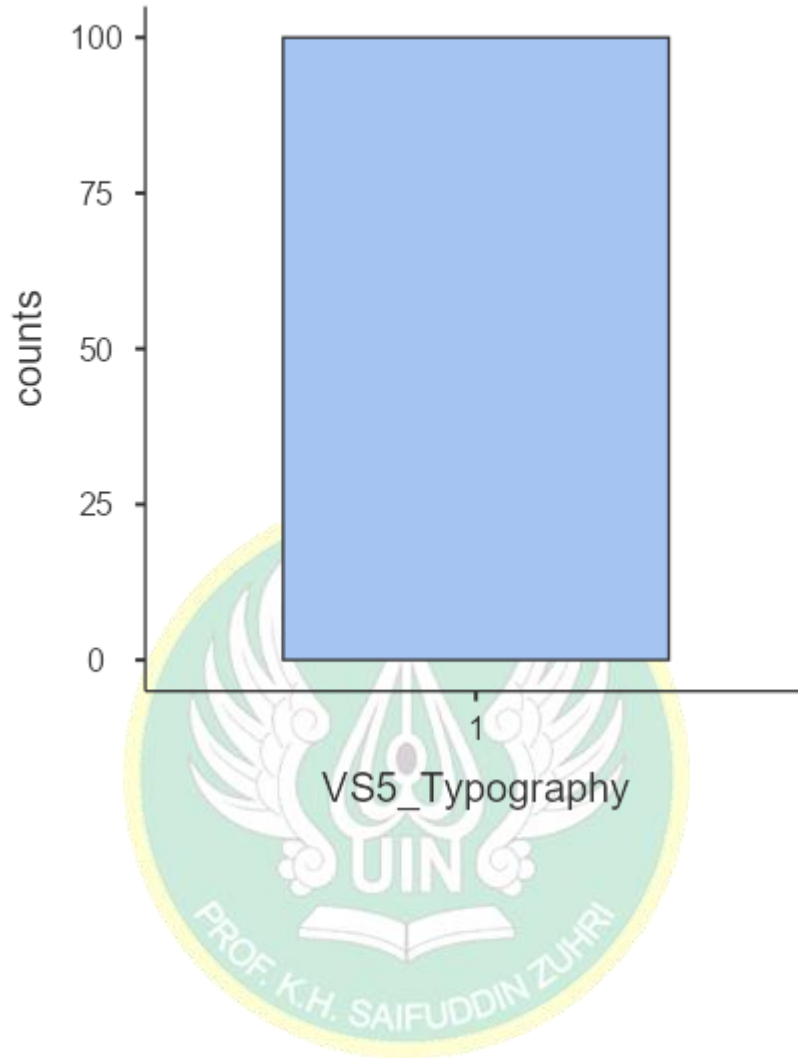
**VS3\_GreenScreen**



**VS4\_EmojisSticker**



**VS5\_Typography**



## Appendix 8: Jamovi Output: Interactive Strategies (Frequencies & Percentages)

### Tables

Frequencies of IS1\_TTS

IS1_TTS	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
0	86	86.0%	86.0%
1	14	14.0%	100.0%

Frequencies of IS2\_PollsQuizzes

IS2_PollsQuizzes	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
0	89	89.0%	89.0%
1	11	11.0%	100.0%

Frequencies of IS3\_DuetStitch

IS3_DuetStitch	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
0	88	88.9%	88.9%
1	11	11.1%	100.0%

Frequencies of IS4\_Hashtags

IS4_Hashtags	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	100	100.0%	100.0%

Frequencies of IS5\_Mentions

IS5_Mentions	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
0	83	83.0%	83.0%
1	17	17.0%	100.0%

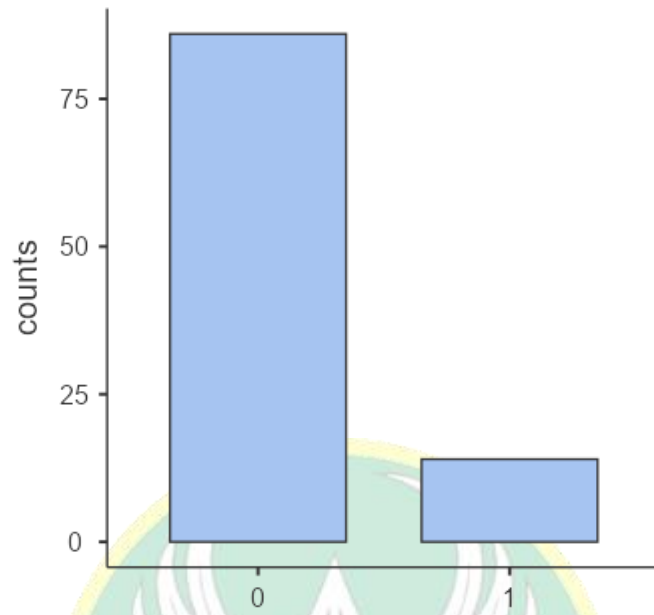
Frequencies of IS6\_CTAs

IS6_CTAs	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
0	11	11.0%	11.0%
1	89	89.0%	100.0%

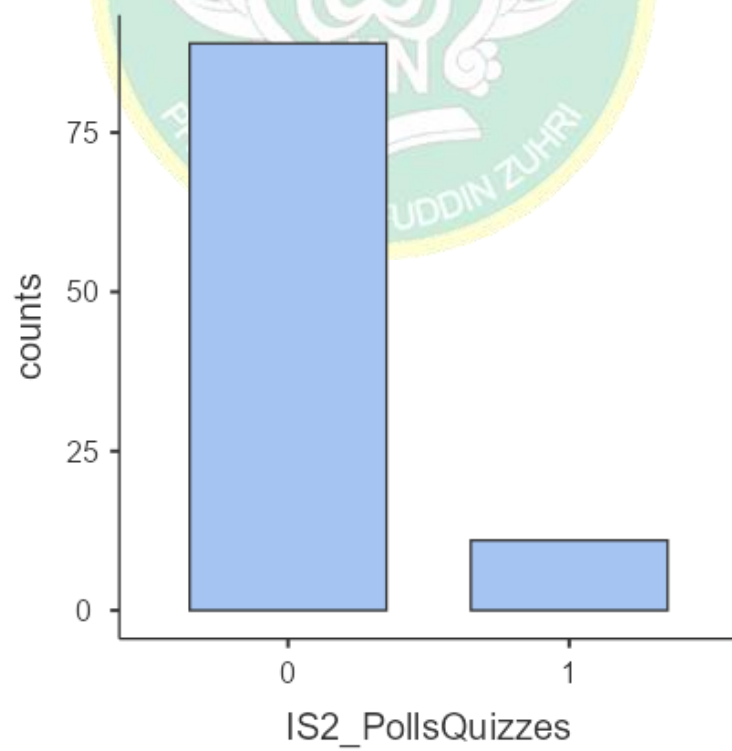


### Charts

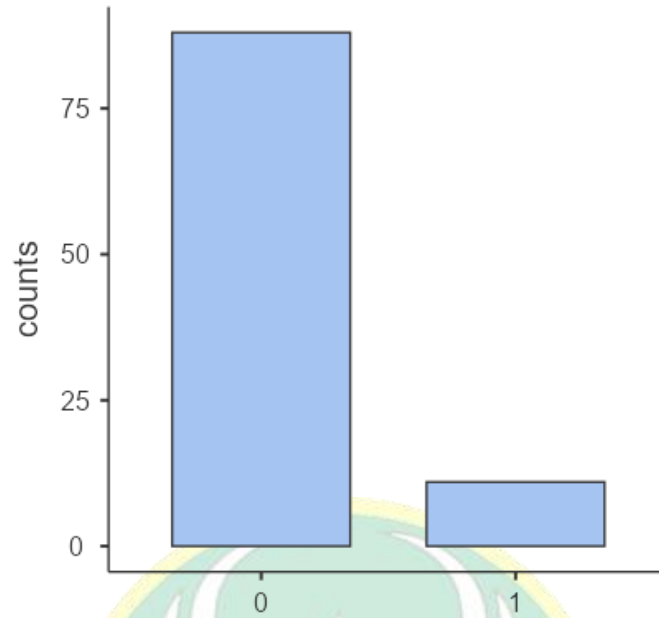
IS1\_TTS



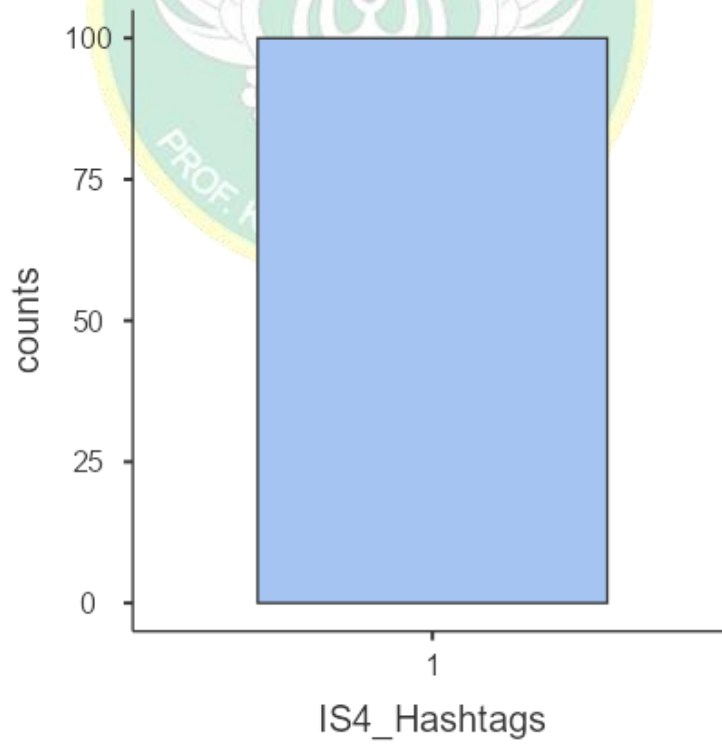
IS2\_PollsQuizzes



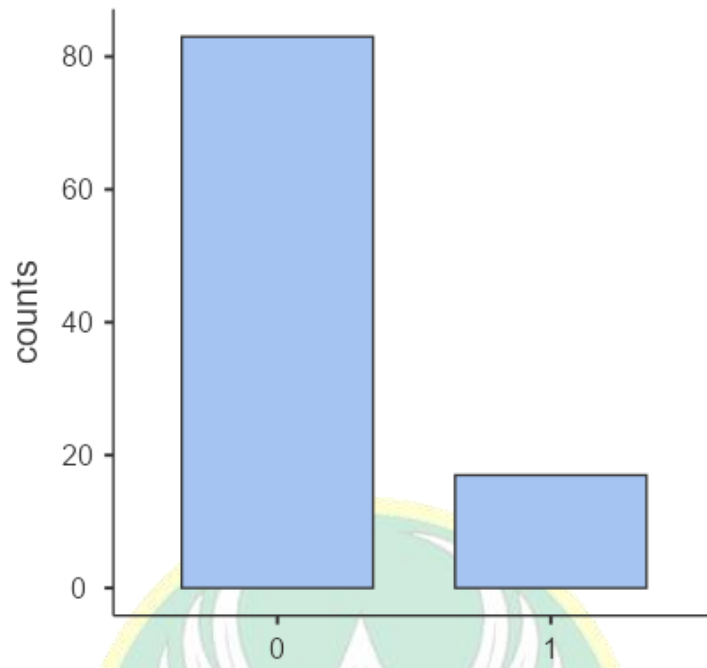
**IS3\_DuetStitch**



**IS4\_Hashtags**

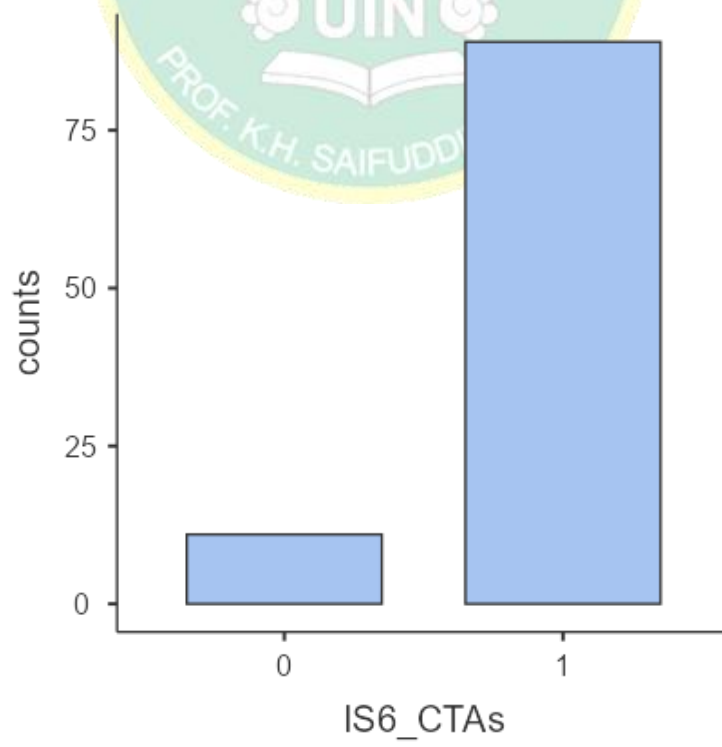


**IS5\_Mentions**



**IS5\_Mentions**

**IS6\_CTAs**



## Appendix 9: Jamovi Output: Cross Tabulations (Co-Occurrence) Analysis

### (VS2\_AIText and IS6\_CTAs)

#### Contingency Tables

VS2_AIText		IS6_CTAs		Total
		0	1	
0	Count	2	23	25
	% within row	8.0%	92.0%	
1	Count	9	66	75
	% within row	12.0%	88.0%	
Total	Count	11	89	100
	% within row	11.0%	89.0%	

### (VS3\_GreenScreen and IS3\_DuetStitch)

#### Contingency Tables

VS3_GreenScreen		IS3_DuetStitch		Total
		0	1	
0	Count	63	5	68
	% within row	92.6%	7.4%	
1	Count	26	6	32
	% within row	81.3%	18.8%	
Total	Count	89	11	100
	% within row	89.0%	11.0%	

### (VS2\_AIText and IS5\_Mentions)

#### Contingency Tables

VS2_AIText		IS5_Mentions		Total
		0	1	
0	Count	19	6	25
	% within row	76.0%	24.0%	
1	Count	64	11	75
	% within row	85.3%	14.7%	
Total	Count	83	17	100

**Contingency Tables**

<b>VS2_AIText</b>	<b>IS5_Mentions</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	
% within row	83.0%	17.0%	





**KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA**  
**UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI**  
**PROFESOR KIAI HAJI SAIFUDDIN ZUHRI PURWOKERTO**  
**PASCASARJANA**

Alamat : Jl. Jend. A. Yani No. 40 A Purwokerto 53126 Telp : 0281-635624, 628250, Fax : 0281-636553  
 Website : [www.pps.uinsaizu.ac.id](http://www.pps.uinsaizu.ac.id) Email : [pps@uinsaizu.ac.id](mailto:pps@uinsaizu.ac.id)

SURAT KEPUTUSAN DIREKTUR PASCASARJANA  
 NOMOR 890 TAHUN 2025  
 Tentang  
 PENETAPAN DOSEN PEMBIMBING TESIS

DIREKTUR PASCASARJANA UNIVERSTAS ISLAM NEGERI PROFESOR KIAI HAJI  
 SAIFUDDIN ZUHRI PURWOKERTO

- Menimbang : a. Bahwa dalam rangka pelaksanaan penelitian dan penulisan tesis, perlu ditetapkan dosen pembimbing.  
 b. Bahwa untuk penetapan dosen pembimbing tesis tersebut perlu diterbitkan surat keputusan.
- Mengingat : 1. Undang-Undang Nomor 20 tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional.  
 2. Undang-Undang Nomor 12 tahun 2012 tentang Perguruan Tinggi.  
 3. Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 19 tahun 2005 tentang Standar Nasional Pendidikan.  
 4. Permenristekdikti Nomor 44 tahun 2015 tentang Standar Nasional Pendidikan Tinggi.  
 5. Peraturan Presiden RI Nomor 41 tahun 2021 tentang Perubahan Institut Agama Islam Negeri Purwokerto menjadi Universitas Islam Negeri Profesor Kiai Haji Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto.

**MEMUTUSKAN:**

- Menetapkan :  
 Pertama : Menunjuk dan mengangkat Saudara **Prof. Dr. H. Sul Khan Chakim, M.M.** sebagai Pembimbing Tesis untuk mahasiswa **Iqbal Hussain Alamyar** NIM **234120400009** Program Studi **Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam**.
- Kedua : Kepada mereka agar bekerja dengan penuh tanggungjawab sesuai bidang tugasnya masing-masing dan melaporkan hasil tertulis kepada pimpinan.
- Ketiga : Proses Pelaksanaan Bimbingan dilaksanakan selama 3 (tiga) semester dan berakhir sampai **28 Oktober 2026**.
- Keempat : Semua biaya yang timbul sebagai akibat keputusan ini, dibebankan pada dana anggaran yang berlaku.
- Kelima : Keputusan ini akan ditinjau kembali apabila dikemudian hari terdapat kekeliruan dalam penetapannya, dan berlaku sejak tanggal ditetapkan.

Ditetapkan di : Purwokerto  
 Pada tanggal : 28 April 2025  
 Direktur,



**Moh. Roqib**

**TEMBUSAN:**

1. Wakil Rektor I
2. Kabirol AUPK



## CURRICULUM VITAE

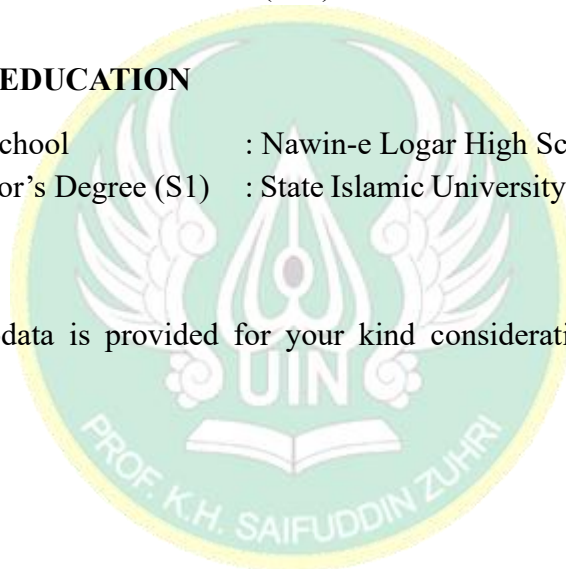
### A. PERSONAL DATA

1. Name : Iqbal Hussain Alamyar
2. Place/Date of Birth : Logar/19 September 1998
3. Religion : Islam
4. Gender : Male
5. Nationality : Afghan
6. Occupation : Student
7. Address : Pol-e Alam, Logar, Afghanistan
8. Email : [i.h.alamyar@gmail.com](mailto:i.h.alamyar@gmail.com)
9. Phone Number : (+93) 0776-423-720

### B. FORMAL EDUCATION

1. High School : Nawin-e Logar High School
2. Bachelor's Degree (S1) : State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta

Thus, this biodata is provided for your kind consideration and to be used accordingly.



Respectfully,

Iqbal Hussain Alamyar