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**The Implications of TikTok Engagement on the Number of Spotify Listeners:
A Study on Independent Artists**

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for completing the Northwest University Honors Program

by

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Abstract

The music industry has encountered a shift from CD sales to stream count. This shift has been reinforced by the rise of social media and short-form video content, particularly through the platform of TikTok. I performed a mixed-method study and explored the content posted to TikTok by five different independent artists – focusing on the 4-month period around the release of each of their singles. The results revealed that independent artists are applying strategies similar to that of mainstream artists, in order to attract followers and convert them into listeners. The artists that encountered the best conversion rate of TikTok followers to Spotify monthly listeners informed people about their music and made it interactive for the fans. The most prominent strategies were applied to a sample 4-month marketing plan that I developed. This developed marketing plan could be applied to my personal music or be used as a guideline for other independent artists who promote their music on TikTok.

Introduction

Within the music industry, artists have almost always needed a label to get their songs heard or played on the radio, however, with the rise of social media, in particular TikTok, independent artists are finding success with their music through creating a following on social media. It is important to note the difference between the mainstream music industry - music that is produced and marketed by labels - and independent artists, who produce and distribute their music on their own through the use of third-party services. Through this thesis, I will be asking the question, “What social media trends, data patterns, and engagement rates can inform the development of a content strategy fit for independent artists?”. In addition to academic literature, this thesis will be relying on social analytics — “the tools used to monitor the effectiveness of social media” (Kingsnorth, 2022) to inform the content strategy that I develop. I will measure the

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engaging content and music promotion of successful upcoming artists who were noticed through social media. Some of the key metrics I will observe are reach (number of users seeing/viewing an account's content), engagement (actions taken by users on an account's content — likes, comments, saves, shares), average engagement rate (the rate of users taking action versus users only viewing content), conversion rate from followers to Spotify listeners, and total followers on all social media and Spotify (Kingsnorth, 2022). All of these metrics will influence the content strategy and calendar that I develop.

Literature Review

The State of The Music Industry in the Digital Age

The digital world is constantly changing, so many industries must adapt in order to continue to generate sales and reach new audiences. Understanding how social media and music streaming platforms intertwine is important to understanding the current state of the music industry. A large segment of the music industry's business model used to be manufacturing physical albums — vinyls, cassettes, CDs — until the rise of digital music in the early 2000s. Spurred by the consequences of digital piracy through peer-to-peer file sharing networks, online music services, such as Apple's iTunes Music Store, were born. Before this shift, record labels were primarily sales-oriented, promoting CDs through advertising and radio play (Margiotta, 2012). The shift to streaming platforms requires a different marketing approach, since music is more widely accessible. Mainstream record labels have always had a chokehold over the music industry, causing independent artists to struggle to get their music heard; however, social media and digital streaming platforms have changed the environment within the industry enough to give more power to artists detached from a label (Suhr, 2012).

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In addition to independent musicians, the digital age invites the adoption of social media within multiple areas of the music industry. Live music venue promoters have turned to social media as a way to engage with the community and promote shows, but they also recognize that certain age demographics respond better to offline promotion, such as posters and print advertising (Henderson & Spracklen, 2018). Artists themselves also have the opportunity to directly communicate with fans, while managers can control the content, timing, and medium as a promotional strategy (Margiotta, 2012). Overall, social media has been proven as a vital, and now widely accepted, tool for promoting music within the current digital age.

Defining Success in the Industry

Herstand (2020) explores how to make a living as an independent musician and defines success through the lens of living off one's income solely from music, not the amount of awards or level of fame. Making a living within the music industry requires dedicated work to create good music, build a fanbase, and funnel fans to one's music through digital platforms and a consistent online presence (Herstand, 2020).

Streams have largely replaced CD sales, due to the digital shift in music; however, streams are not the sole metric of success due to their low payout. Spotify pays rightsholders a portion of their overall net revenue by calculating their streamshare – the proportion of streams in a month that were for a particular rightsholder's music ("Help - Royalties"). Many sources say this means Spotify pays about \$0.003 to \$0.005 per stream. Streaming is one of the lowest income sources for an artist, but the exposure it provides can help develop a fanbase. A larger fanbase leads to more ticket sales for live shows, which is the largest income stream for artists.

This thesis will not highlight the elements of making a living as an independent musician, but it is important to note the primary source of income for musicians in order to understand why

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the music industry has faced a largely digital shift. The key takeaway from how success is defined in the industry is the dedication required to build a fanbase through digital platforms. The information provided creates a realistic expectation for how artists are growing through digital platforms like TikTok and how a developed content strategy can improve social media engagement.

Social Media Strategies - Mainstream Music Analysis

Social media is a prominent marketing tool in the music industry. Developing a content strategy helps markets stay relevant within the digital age, when consumers often turn to the internet. The process of developing a content strategy involves clearly defining objectives, analyzing data from competitors and consumers, search engine optimization, and identifying the audience (Kingsnorth, 2022). Country artists like Brad Paisley, Lady Antebellum, and Eric Church are examples of how social media can be used to promote new albums within the mainstream industry (Thomas, 2015).

All of these artists practiced different digital promotional strategies to generate music sales and largely saw success, or at least achieved wider reach and engagement amongst their fans. The following case studies are merely examples of social media campaigns and are not inherently reflective of the approach I will be taking, due to the nature of the artists' fame prior to their social media activity. As an independent artist, these mainstream industry campaigns would not produce the same results if mimicked; however, similar strategies are present within the platforms of independent artists on TikTok. The resources from which I am collecting data and developing a strategy (i.e. Instagram and TikTok accounts) are non-academic, so they will be addressed outside of the literature review.

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Informality and Relatability

Brad Paisley promoted his album, *Moonshine in the Trunk*, by casually posting previews of the tracks followed by an upset response from management about him diverting from the planned promotional strategy. His album made number one on Billboard charts, but it was during a week when CD sales were historically low; however, he witnessed higher engagement among fans. The informal nature of how he presented himself and his music helped fans relate to him more. Informal and relatable content persuades people to view that content as more authentic, since it lacks a filter and apparent editing. Authenticity is one of the most important elements of fans being able to connect with an artist, and not just their music. Other artists that utilize relatability to connect with their audience on social media include Rihanna, Selena Gomez, and Charlie Puth.

Informative and Sparse

Lady Antebellum posted sporadic informative previews of their album, *747*, to avoid overwhelming fans while still informing them of the upcoming release. The band saw chart success. Providing clear communication to fans regarding music release details, eliminates confusion and establishes a sense of dependability. Lady Antebellum was clear about when their music would release and what it would sound like. Their size of audience also meant they did not need to frequently post to social media. Other artists who have also benefited from an informative social media presence are Khalid and Mimi Webb.

Fan-Generated Content

Eric Church also experienced effective sales, but he waited to announce his album online until the day it was released - directly after he promoted one of his tracks at the CMA Awards. He also sent free copies to members of his fan club, without notice. The publicity from fan's

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social media accounts, rather than his own, allowed him to experience success with that release due to his pre-existing popularity (Thomas, 2015). User-generated content is a marketing tactic within several areas of marketing, to include digital. Content made by fans creates a sense of trustworthiness amongst an audience. People are more likely to purchase music, or any other product, if other people are saying positive things about it. Fan-generated content can range from edited videos to reviews to relevant hashtags. Some artists that implement fan-generated content well are Lizzo and Taylor Swift. Taylor Swift's song, "Anti-Hero" was used in a trend where hundreds of thousands of fans presented a problem and lip-synced Swift's line, "It's me, hi, I'm the problem, it's me." Her song ranked No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 for 8 consecutive weeks (Trust, 2023).

True Fans are Engaged Followers

Engagement is a valuable metric within digital marketing. Engaged followers are easier to convert into active fans and listeners than individuals who randomly see an account's content. Videos that incorporate visual, performance, and storytelling elements can result in positive viewer engagement, and active social media engagement, like commenting, has a greater effect on increasing YouTube channel subscribers than the number of videos (Oh & Choeh, 2022). This statistic likely translates to other platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. Consumers can engage with businesses or individuals in several ways online, in addition to commenting. User-generated content and co-created products between businesses and consumers are other examples of how businesses can increase consumer engagement, and possibly improve their audience targeting (Mou, 2020). One example of user-generated content is a TikTok trend. TikTok trends are defined as "the creative formats, ideas, and behaviors that get a lot of attention on TikTok, and in turn influence what people do on the platform" ("How do trends start on TikTok?," n.d.). Users

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may perform a dance, lip-sync, showcase photos, etc. The audio or song that is used within these trends are a way fans can engage with an artist's music. The frequency in which a user engages with an artist's content is defined as engagement rate. On TikTok, "a good...engagement rate can be anywhere from 4.5% to 18%" (Macready, 2022).

The Shadow of Online Marketing

Social media can be a beneficial tool for musicians, but it can also result in burnout. Chelsea Cutler spoke on the exhausting nature of the digital music industry in a newspaper article regarding her frustration with social media. She spoke of social media's demand for content creation in order to market music, which can sometimes overshadow the "art" of the music itself (Yahr, 2022). Having a visible presence online also promotes fans' immediate perceptions—negative or positive—and the spread of opinions through the influence of other fans. A sudden change in image or behavior, as well as an intentional sound change in pursuit of commercial success, are negatively perceived as an artist "selling out" (Bridson et al., 2016) or not being authentic. A lack of perceived authenticity can drive fans away.

The Independent Artists of TikTok

Independent artists utilize the TikTok platform to promote their new music or share drafted songs to their potential audience. The five female independent artists that were observed through this study all released a song within 2021 or 2022 that is currently their most streamed song on Spotify. These top streamed songs, and the two months before and after their release, will be the subject of my data collection. Abby Cates is a singer-songwriter who posts original songs and renditions of popular music. Taylor Bickett is another singer-songwriter, whose original song "QUARTER LIFE CRISIS" was previously trending as a TikTok audio. Haley Joelle writes with a blend of the pop and singer-songwriter genres. Caroline Dare also blends pop

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and singer-songwriter genres through her music. Rachel Bochner is an indie-pop artist. All of these artists are independent of a record label and have a social media presence, with their largest following on TikTok.

The algorithm of TikTok is the system that determines what content will be recommended to a user. The algorithm is informed by “user interactions, video information, and device and account settings” (Newberry, 2023). Creators on the app, such as independent artists, should be intentional about their captions and hashtags since “video information signals are based on the content [users] tend to seek out through Discover or Search” (Newberry, 2023). Trending topics also influence video information signals, so incorporating relevant trends can be important. If a user currently watches videos from singer-songwriters or regularly searches for new music, artists that include #newmusic, #songwriter, #originalsong, or other relevant and trending hashtags within their captions may appear on that user’s recommended page.

Methodology

My preliminary research, outside of my literature review, consisted of data collection and an analysis of engagement metrics (likes, comments, views, saves, shares, follows) on the TikTok accounts of five independent artists, who have following sizes ranging from 20.5K to 661.5K. Additionally, all of the artists categorized themselves under the genres indie, pop, folk, and/or singer-songwriter. These genres share similarities through their instrumentation and lyrical storytelling, so the observed artists also share similar target audiences. This small data set of artists was intentionally limited in order to highlight significant qualitative data. All of the artists had their largest following size on TikTok when compared to their other social media platforms. This criteria is important because it means the artists’ TikTok platform, over all other social media, had the greatest influence on Spotify. While observing the artists’ TikTok content, I

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recorded the number of posts they posted on the platform from 2 months before to 2 months after the release of their most streamed song. All of the songs analyzed were released in 2021 or 2022, and thus the observed strategies and content were performed within the past two years.

Analyzing recent music and content helps keep the collected data relevant to current trends.

Additionally, I noted how many of the artists' posts related to the song's release, and I detailed the performance metrics (i.e. the number of views, likes, comments, shares, and saves) and the video information signals (i.e. specific hashtags, the use of trending vs original audio, and a description of content) of their top five viewed videos within the 4-month period. After collecting this data, I calculated the amount of engagement (likes, comments, shares, and saves) divided by the number of views for each video in order to find the engagement rate of each of the top viewed videos. I considered any video with an engagement rate of 15% or more as having an engaged audience, as described in my review of prior research. Any videos that had over one million views were marked as viral videos, but virality is difficult to quantify. Other important data points I logged were the number of monthly listeners each artist had on Spotify, the number of streams their top song received, and the total number of followers they had between YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. I used a quantitative method of gathering specific numbers and ratios in order to determine which qualitative data was important and became a pattern. My research was primarily qualitative: analyzing sources and video information signals to understand what social media strategies the independent artists implemented that led to listening audience growth on Spotify. From this collective data, I developed a four month content plan that focused on incorporating trending and original content, engaging with the audience directly through comments and insight into the creative process, and promoting original music. The sample content calendar I created will be discussed later.

Data Analysis & Discussion

TikTok Independent Artists

Figure 1 – Female Independent Artists’ Following & Top Streamed Song

Artist Name	Platform Following	# Total Followers (Instagram, YouTube, TikTok)	# Spotify Monthly Listeners	Σ Follower to Spotify Conversion Rate	Song Name	Date of Release	Song Details	# Current Stream Count	# Amount of Posts (4 mo)	# Related to Song vs Not
Abby Cates	661.5K	870,700	354,446	0.407081658436	Roadtripsong	@June 4, 2021	genre: Singer-Songwriter length: 3min 41s collab: no single	5,947,026	33	2
Taylor Bickett	275.5K	340,000	1,031,018	3.032405882353	QUARTER LIFE CRISIS	@October 14, 2022	genre: Folk length: 3min 18s collab: no single	7,626,557	45	33
Haley Joelle	206.0K	320,250	1,394,298	4.353779859485	Memory Lane	@January 13, 2022	genre: Singer-Songwriter/Pop length: 2min 34s collab: no single	15,521,943	47	31
Caroline Dare	83.7K	218,600	56,172	0.256962488564	Heart Problem	@April 7, 2021	genre: Pop/Singer-Songwriter length: 2min 47s collab: no single	1,529,954	8	1
Rachel Bochner	20.5K	26,462	80,498	3.042022522863	ghosted my therapist	@September 2, 2021	genre: Indie-Pop length: 3min 9s collab: no single	1,411,311	120	29

Rachnel Bochner, one of the artists observed, released her song “ghosted my therapist” on September 2nd, 2021. During the two months leading up to the release, and within the two months following, she posted 120 videos to TikTok - only 29 of which were related to the aforementioned song. All five of her top viewed videos during this time period were about her upcoming release. This poses the question if those other 91 videos, unrelated to the song, were helpful in promoting her music. The other four independent artists I observed posted anywhere from 33 to 47 videos within the four-month span around their own most streamed release. Some of Bochner’s content related to other songs, but some were simply mimicking a trend or utilizing a trending audio – often having no correlation to her music. This category of “trending” content did not seem to perform well on her account, and her overall streams and follower count were less than three of the four other artists observed. Her TikTok followers to Spotify monthly followers ratio is similar to that of Taylor Bickett – with a difference of over 300% – though their audience sizes differ greatly.

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Taylor Bickett, singer and songwriter of “QUARTER LIFE CRISIS,” saw great success with her song reaching over 7.5 million streams to date. A unique factor that likely influenced this success was her song’s audio being turned into a trend; over 200K videos that attached her song as an audio, were posted to the TikTok platform from the point she first showcased the song to the present date. This song is also the most recently released of the five that were analyzed, being available on streaming platforms for nearly three months at the time of data collection. The performance of her song will likely surpass that of “Memory Lane” by Haley Joelle, when comparing their first year of streams.

Taylor Bickett and Haley Joelle’s music received the most streams, despite their songs being the two newest of the five songs selected. Was their success due to a release date around the holidays, a similar number of posts that promoted their song, or their existing fan base? The following section will explore strategic similarities between all of their artists’ music, ranging from each song’s lyrical content to conversations between artist and fan.

One of the most notable pieces of data from this chart is the amount of songs, posted within the 4-month span, that related to the artist’s single. The amount of posts that related to their single, from Cates and Dare, both accounted for less than 15% of the videos they posted within those four months. Bickett and Joelle’s posts about their singles made up over 60% of the videos they posted within this timeframe. This distinction could be one factor contributing to the disparity in conversion rates. Cates and Dare experienced a conversion rate of 40.7% and 25.7%, respectively, of TikTok followers to Spotify monthly listeners. However, Bickett and Joelle both had conversion rates over 300% and 400%, respectively. Bochner is the exception to this general rule, experiencing a conversion rate comparable to Bickett, while only 24% of the videos she posted were related to her upcoming single. She posted the most videos out of any of the artists

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observed, which may indicate that conversion success isn't dependent on the percentage of videos, but rather the number. Bickett, Joelle, and Bochner, all posted 29-33 videos about their single within the span of four months. The qualitative factors that may also have influence over the conversion rate disparity will be analyzed in the following section.

TikTok Strategies

When observing each of the charted artists' top five viewed posts within the four-month period, they had varying content that performed well. Some artists were solely focused on marketing their upcoming single, whereas others posted other videos in the midst of their release varying in topic from covers to other original songs to daily vlogs. The common patterns and successful strategies were comparable to that of the mainstream artists cited previously.

Originals, Covers, and Trending Content

Most artists displayed their vocal talent and songwriting ability through their TikTok videos. Abby Cates' five highest-viewed videos included a few covers and original songs – none of which was her song that was released within the four-month period (see Figure 2). In contrast, Haley Joelle's highest-viewed videos solely focused on her original music – related to her newly released song as well as other projects (see Figure 4). The highest-viewed videos of both Taylor Bickett and Rachel Bochner all related back to their respective new singles, "QUARTER LIFE CRISIS" and "ghosted my therapist." Their content varied in form from duetting other creators who were using the song as a sound, singing along to the song, or showcasing an unheard part of the anticipated song (see Figure 3 and Figure 6).

This raises the argument of entertainment value versus the promotion of personal music. Do trending videos and covers outweigh the importance of promoting original songs? The short answer is no. Those that posted more about their original songs saw a greater conversion rate of

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TikTok followers to Spotify listeners, as discussed earlier. Even so, relevant and trending content could be beneficial when an artist is developing their audience, specifically on TikTok.

Incorporating popular and relevant hashtags seemed to have a positive impact on which videos received the most views – meaning those videos were recommended to the most amount of users.

The observed artists utilized an assortment of popular hashtags that targeted a specific age demographic or those whom listened to music on the platform – i.e. #twenties, #college, #newmusic, #originalsong, #songwriter, #singersongwriter, #songwritersoftiktok. Other video information signals, such as trending topics, were influential on view count as well. Rachel Bochner posted over 90 videos, within the span of four months, that had nothing to do with her upcoming single or music in general. These videos received less views than her music-related content, and her TikTok account also had the smallest following when compared to the other artists. Abby Cates’s most viewed videos did not utilize hashtags about being a songwriter either, but her hashtags and content did reflect trending topics within music. Two of her most viewed videos were creative covers of actively trending songs – Bo Burnham’s song “That Funny Feeling” and Dua Lipa’s song “Levitating” (see Figure 2). This data signifies that while trends in general may not impact an artist’s engagement metrics, relevant trends will help TikTok’s algorithm better categorize an artist’s content, which helps them reach their target audience more often.

Informality and Relatability

The content of the music unites both Bickett and Bochner’s lead songs. Their songs both feature lyrics that discuss the struggles and stressors of being in one’s twenties. Considering the most popular age demographic of TikTok users is 18-19 year olds, followed closely by 20-29

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year olds, (Ceci, 2023) both artists were able to reach their target audience of young adults well by promoting the song on TikTok.

Another way artists were able to create relatable content, outside of simply aligning their content with their audience demographics, was by including the audience. Artists included their audience in many ways, through showcasing behind-the-scenes of the creative process, vlogging their life, and replying to comments or direct messages. Haley Joelle included her audience by showing them the inspiration behind her song, “Memory Lane.” She also replied to the comments of people sharing their stories of grief and how her song brought them comfort.

Informative and Frequent

The amount of content that informed viewers of an upcoming single ranged from 6% to 73% of an artist's total content uploaded to TikTok; however, the artists with higher ratios achieved a higher conversion rate of TikTok followers to Spotify monthly listeners. Frequently informing or reminding their social media of their upcoming music release helped artists increase their fanbase on streaming platforms. This strategy differs from that of mainstream artists. Mainstream artists like Lady Antebellum likely benefited from informative posts in sparse amounts, because they have a larger fanbase and are already well known when compared to the independent artists that were observed. Independent artists benefit from frequent content, because it creates more opportunities for people to find their music.

Other elements of informative content appeared through the editing of an artist’s video. Many displayed the lyrics as a rotating text overlay, allowing the audience to understand what the song was saying. Videos also sometimes displayed hooks or call-to-actions across the video or within the caption.

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Fan-Generated Content

Fan-generated content appeared primarily through commenting or the usage of an artist's song as audio for a video. Both Bickett and Joelle, the artists with the most streams, witnessed fan-generated content in response to their music. Bickett's song, "QUARTER LIFE CRISIS" was used by many TikTok users to showcase how they looked as a teenager compared to now. Fans and celebrities alike, including Drew Barrymore and Brooke Hyland, participated in this trend. Many people responded to Joelle's song, "Memory Lane" by engaging in the comment section of her video – sharing memories of a lost loved one or grieving their passing. The fan-generated content increased the reach of their videos, and likely contributed to the large amount of streams both songs received.

Sample 4-Month TikTok Marketing Plan

Timeline

I plan on posting on social media every week before, during, and after the single release, walking through the process of producing a song, promoting the release of the song, and showcasing myself as an artist and a songwriter through content unrelated to the release. The sample content calendar consists of 4 months. Based on the average number of posts of other independent artists, the amount of content posted during this time will be 3 videos a week, and 50% of the content will be about the upcoming release. Alongside the number of posts, the details of each post are informed by the patterns and trends found through my research. The developed content strategy is broken down into four 28-day phases, each section focused on awareness, anticipation, attention, or retention.

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Month One: Awareness. The goal of this phase of the TikTok marketing plan is to increase reach, making viewers aware of an artist and their upcoming song. The content will be primarily covers or trends that are likely to appear on a viewer's "For You Page".

Month Two: Anticipation. The goal of this phase of the TikTok marketing plan is to increase engagement, getting people excited for the release and increasing pre-saves. Focusing on engagement will drive the conversion of viewers to fans. The content will consist mostly of promotional material for the original song, such as release announcements and revealing the production or creative process for the song.

Music Release. A video will be posted to promote streaming the new song.

Month Three: Attention. The goal of this phase of the TikTok marketing plan is to increase Spotify streams and engagement by creating entertaining content that directs fans to Spotify. The content will focus on highlighting the lyrics or any other unique feature of the song.

Month Four: Retention. The goal of this phase of the TikTok marketing plan is to increase listeners, followers, and engagement in order to retain the audience that has already formed. The content will consist of a blend of covers, videos about the original song, and fan-generated content – recognizing the fan contributions and making them feel seen.

Implemented Patterns & Strategies

The above timeline implements a balance of covers and trending videos with content promoting an original song. Elements of relatable, informative and fan-generated content are also implemented, which were the main strategies observed from mainstream and independent artists alike.

Limitations

The mixed-method approach to this study focused primarily on the best qualitative content strategies, informed by quantitative data, that artists experienced. The data collected for my research was limited to female independent artists, who wrote songs within the indie-pop, folk, or singer-songwriter genres and whose largest following was on TikTok. Every top performing song that was analyzed released within the past two years (2021 and 2022) in order to provide relevant and complete data. My data was intentionally limited to focus on the impact of TikTok and gather information from audiences that would be similar to the genre of music that I write or cover, in order to develop a sample content strategy that would best apply to my own account. The data excludes male independent artists, artists from other genres, and artists who have a larger following on other social media platforms such as Instagram or YouTube. The statistical significance is also minimal, since only five artists were analyzed.

Implications for Further Research

Understanding the limitations present within my research, and the lack of statistical significance, the results and sample strategy are most influential for other independent female artists within one of the listed genres; however, artist managers, producers, and other artists can also benefit from the categories and patterns presented through my qualitative research. The categories and patterns observed can inform what type of music connects with an audience and what kind of content leads to higher engagement – both of which can be applied to any genre or audience. The data also implies that there are opportunities to further research by analyzing a different artist demographic, a different social media platform, or artists attached to a label.

Conclusion

Mainstream and independent artists are applying similar strategies to their social media marketing, despite the difference in audience size. The independent artists experienced streaming success when they posted relatable and informative content with which fans could easily engage. The most influential metric of success measured of the independent artists was the conversion rate of their TikTok followers to Spotify monthly listeners. The artists that experienced the highest conversion rate also had the greatest amount of fan engagement through user-generated content that utilized the artist's song. Social media is only significant to an artist when it is used as a tool to build a fanbase, rather than just a platform to upload music.

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Appendix

Figure 2 – Abby Cates’ Top 5 Viewed Videos (04/04/2021-08/04/2021)

Independent Artists (5)	As Post	Date of Post	Format	Tags & Hashtags	Description of Post	Audio	# Views	Σ Viral Video	# Likes	# Comments	# Saves	# Shares	Σ Engagement	Σ Engagement Rate	Σ Engaged Audience
Abby Cates	Cover - soft version of "Levitating" by Dua Lipa	@May 16, 2021	Short-form Video (10-60s)	@petermcpoland #dulapeepa #wit #dababy	soft acoustic cover of popular pop song (singing, harmonies, & guitar)	Original Audio	1250000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	330000	33800	374900	67400	3776100	0.302088	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Abby Cates	Original song - "Conditionally"	@May 31, 2021	Short-form Video (10-60s)	n/a	song about self-love	Original Audio	918300	<input type="checkbox"/>	202200	3261	27900	6365	239726	0.261054121747	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Abby Cates	Cover - acoustic cover of "That Funny Feeling" by Bo Burnham	@June 26, 2021	Short-form Video (10-60s)	#funnyfeeling #boburnham #inside #fyp	acoustic cover (singing & guitar)	Original Audio	398000	<input type="checkbox"/>	81900	753	7034	1366	91073	0.228826633166	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Abby Cates	Original song - about a dog dying unexpectedly	@May 14, 2021	Short-form Video (10-60s)	replying to a comment	original song based on a prompt from a comment on a different video	Original Audio	315500	<input type="checkbox"/>	19100	315	1653	381	21449	0.06798412139	<input type="checkbox"/>
Abby Cates	Original song - "friendless"	@April 26, 2021	Short-form Video (10-60s)	@rosiemusic	original song that she co-wrote with someone else	Original Audio	290200	<input type="checkbox"/>	32900	678	4989	1272	39839	0.137281185389	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 3 – Taylor Bickett’s Top 5 Viewed Videos (08/14/2022-12/14/2022)

Independent Artists (5)	As Post	Date of Post	Format	Tags & Hashtags	Description of Post	Audio	# Views	Σ Viral Video	# Likes	# Comments	# Saves	# Shares	Σ Engagement	Σ Engagement Rate	Σ Engaged Audience
Taylor Bickett	playdo new song on guitar - "QUARTER LIFE CRISIS"	@September 24, 2022	Short-form Video (10-60s)	#originalsong #newmusic #songwriter #quarterlifecrisis	her singing a portion of her featured song in her room on guitar	Featured Song Original Audio	1100000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	181200	1633	25100	2590	210523	0.191384545455	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Taylor Bickett	Original song - "QUARTER LIFE CRISIS" strapple	@October 7, 2022	Loop Video (<10s)	#quarterlifecrisis #twenties #postgrad #college #highschool #newmusic #originalsong #songwriter	text overlay relating a part of her song to post-grad life	Featured Song	937100	<input type="checkbox"/>	147300	795	10400	1056	159651	0.170260377761	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Taylor Bickett	Duet to Drew Barrymore - she did a trend to bickett's song "QUARTER LIFE CRISIS"	@October 20, 2022	Loop Video (<10s)	#duet with drewbarrymore	reacting to Drew Barrymore making a video to her song	Featured Song	522600	<input type="checkbox"/>	50100	99	660	26	50885	0.097368924608	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taylor Bickett	Original song - "QUARTER LIFE CRISIS" acoustic version	@December 9, 2022	Short-form Video (10-60s)	#formergiftedkid #giftedkidburnout #newmusic #songwriter #quarterlifecrisis	singing along to an acoustic version of her song with lyrics about gifted kid burnout in highschool (in the car)	Featured Song	433100	<input type="checkbox"/>	50500	302	7741	378	58921	0.13604479335	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taylor Bickett	Duet to Brooke Hyland - she did a trend to bickett's song "QUARTER LIFE CRISIS"	@October 14, 2022	Loop Video (<10s)	#duet with brookehyland_1 #quarterlifecrisis #taylorbickett #iswear16wasyesterday	reacting to Brooke Hyland making a video to her song	Featured Song	388500	<input type="checkbox"/>	36400	52	789	9	37250	0.095861595482	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Figure 4 – Haley Joelle’s Top 5 Viewed Videos (11/13/2021-03/13/2022)

Independent Artists (5)	Post	Date of Post	Format	Tags & Hashtags	Description of Post	Audio	# Views	Σ Viral Video	# Likes	# Comments	# Saves	# Shares	Σ Engagement	Σ Engagement Rate	Σ Engaged Audience
Haley Joelle	Showing the song she wrote - "Memory Lane"	@December 17, 2021	Short-form Video (10-60s)	#heartbreak #songwritersoftiktok #grief #fyp #healing	singing the song live with lyrics as text overlay	Featured Song Original Audio	420000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	95190	15700	102000	46300	1115900	0.26569047619	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Haley Joelle	part 1 - showing her friend a song with their name in it	@March 7, 2022	Short-form Video (10-60s)	@wilyilliams	listening to an original song with her friend in the car	Original Audio	981700	<input type="checkbox"/>	95300	553	4503	221	100577	0.102451869206	<input type="checkbox"/>
Haley Joelle	original song - inspired by a poem	@February 23, 2022	Short-form Video (10-60s)	@alizagrace_ #songwritersoftiktok #poetrytok #fyp	singing live an original song with lyrics as text overlay	Original Audio	877500	<input type="checkbox"/>	161900	2167	21700	5895	191662	0.218418233618	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Haley Joelle	part 2 - showing her friend a song with their name in it	@March 9, 2022	Short-form Video (10-60s)	@wilyilliams	listening to an original song with her friend in the car	Original Audio	503400	<input type="checkbox"/>	49100	192	1641	37	50970	0.101251489869	<input type="checkbox"/>
Haley Joelle	"Memory Lane" followers sharing their stories in the comments	@December 20, 2021	Short-form Video (10-60s)	#memorylane #grief #heartbreak	artist overlays several comments over her video - comments of people sharing how they relate to the song	Featured Song	420900	<input type="checkbox"/>	73900	3190	2783	854	80727	0.191796151105	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Figure 5 – Caroline Dare’s Top 5 Viewed Videos (02/07/2021-06/07/2021)

Independent Artists (5)	Post	Date of Post	Format	Tags & Hashtags	Description of Post	Audio	# Views	Σ Viral Video	# Likes	# Comments	# Saves	# Shares	Σ Engagement	Σ Engagement Rate	Σ Engaged Audience
Caroline Dare	Promoting her new song	@May 22, 2021	Short-form Video (10-60s)	#fyp #foryou #foryoupage #originalsong	lip syncing to her song with text overlay and text encouraging to go stream it	Featured Song	2473	<input type="checkbox"/>	245	25	23	34	327	0.132228063081	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caroline Dare	Day in the life - tough day	@May 9, 2021	Short-form Video (10-60s)		several clips (emotional or not) featuring elements of her day, to include playing a gig	Trending	1227	<input type="checkbox"/>	157	8	4	4	173	0.140994295029	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caroline Dare	Day in the life	@April 5, 2021	Short-form Video (10-60s)	#dayinmylife	several clips featuring elements of her day, to include reacting to her spotify streams for another song	Trending	1210	<input type="checkbox"/>	124	2	1	1	128	0.105785123967	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caroline Dare	Driver's license cover	@March 15, 2021	Short-form Video (10-60s)	#fyp #foryou #foryoupage #driverslicense #coversong	singing a cover of driver's license on her acoustic guitar in her room	Original Audio	1401	<input type="checkbox"/>	166	6	3	3	178	0.127052105639	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caroline Dare	Day in the life - first day of march	@March 2, 2021	Short-form Video (10-60s)		several clips featuring elements of her day, to include a clip of her holding her guitar	Trending	1179	<input type="checkbox"/>	132	3	3	1	139	0.117896522477	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Figure 6 – Rachel Bochner’s Top 5 Viewed Videos (07/02/2021-11/02/2021)

Independent Artists (5)	As Post	Date of Post	Format	Tags & Hashtags	Description of Post	Audio	# Views	∑ Viral Video	# Likes	# Comments	# Saves	# Shares	∑ Engagement	∑ Engagement Rate	∑ Engaged Audience
Rachel Bochner	Song Release Reminder - "Ghosted My Therapist"	@September 1, 2021	Short-form Video (10-60s)	#zillennial #indiepop #singer-songwriter #takeyourmeds #ghostedmytherapist	lip syncing to her song; lyrics across the screen in text; out at midnight announcement	Featured Song	183500	<input type="checkbox"/>	40000	397	2847	795	44039	0.239994550409	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rachel Bochner	Song Release Date - "Ghosted My Therapist"	@September 3, 2021	Short-form Video (10-60s)	#indiepop #singersongwriter #zillennial #therapy #mentalillnessinitt	lip syncing to her song with lyrics as text overlay; video transitions with each line	Featured Song	134000	<input type="checkbox"/>	23300	189	1282	292	25063	0.187037313433	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rachel Bochner	Lip Sync	@September 21, 2021	Short-form Video (10-60s)	#twentysomething #zillennial #indiepop #quarterlife crisis #singersongwriter	lip syncing with text overlay	Featured Song	104200	<input type="checkbox"/>	18100	103	797	149	19149	0.18377159309	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rachel Bochner	Twenty something check list	@September 15, 2021	Short-form Video (10-60s)	#twentysomething #zillennial #quarterlife crisis #indiepop #singersongwriter	lip syncing while breaking down a lyric line of her song	Featured Song	96900	<input type="checkbox"/>	10400	62	331	70	10863	0.112105263158	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rachel Bochner	Verse 2 - "Ghosted My Therapist"	@September 4, 2021	Short-form Video (10-60s)	#indiepop #singersongwriter #ghostedmytherapist #zillennial #therapy	lip syncing to her song and lyrics as text overlay; showing off verse two and the video matches the lyrics	Featured Song	28400	<input type="checkbox"/>	4479	53	144	16	4692	0.165211267606	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>