



Effect of Video Type on the Intention to Follow the Influencer's Advice on Tik Tok: Moderating Role of the Need for Humor

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ABSTRACT: In a context characterized by a strong and increasing competitiveness of digital markets, it was essential to understand how humor could increase the intention of followers on Tik Tok. This study fills a gap in previous research by examining the effect of the types of videos (humorous vs non-humorous) on the attitude towards the influencer and the intention to follow the influencer's advice. A quantitative approach was adopted, and an online questionnaire was distributed to Tik Tok followers. The sample, consisting of 120 followers of a popular TikTok influencer, was analyzed using the SPSS and AMOS 23 software. To test the hypotheses, we used means comparison tests, supplemented by a moderation mediation analysis using model 7 of the Hayes macro PROCESS. The results of a quasi-experiment showed that the humorous video increases the attitude towards the influencer more than the non-humorous video. In addition, the results show that the attitude towards the influencer positively influences the intention to follow the influencers' advice. On the other hand, the results revealed that the moderating role of the need for humor is confirmed. These results enrich the understanding of the mechanisms by which humor influences TikTok followers in search of more captivating experiences. It would be relevant for subsequent research to reproduce the study by mobilizing a larger sample, so as to strengthen the reliability and generalization of the conclusions and to integrate additional variables to enrich the current model.

KEYWORDS: TikTok; Humor attitude towards the influencer; need for humor; intention to follow the influencer's advice

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, influencer marketing became a central lever in brand communication strategies [1]. The continuous increase in the number of active users on digital platforms profoundly transformed media consumption patterns, favoring the emergence of new intermediaries such as influencers [2]. In parallel, the influencer market grew significantly alongside the increasing use of social media by consumers [3]. TikTok emerged as the fastest-growing social network of the post-pandemic era, accompanied by a marked increase in

downloads, reaching 1,506 million in 2020 and 2021 and surpassing Instagram's 1,048 million downloads during the same period [4]. TikTok was used by 36.0% of American marketers in 2020, and this proportion increased to 42% in 2021 [5]. The TikTok format was a dynamic audiovisual format that allowed users to share short videos [6]. Influencers on TikTok could present goods and services in an entertaining manner due to the platform's visual and playful focus. Indeed, TikTok advised users "not to make ads" but to "create TikToks" [7], as followers appreciated the experience of watching TikTok videos; such content resembled content published by friends [8].

Influencer marketing research extensively examined platforms such as Twitter [9], Instagram [10], Facebook [11], and YouTube [12], while the role of influencers on TikTok remained relatively underexplored. Only a limited number of studies [13] and [14] focused on the effectiveness of influencers on TikTok, despite the possibility that their effects differed from those observed on other social networks. Consequently, additional studies were needed to better understand how followers reacted to influencers' content [15]. Furthermore, prior literature on humor demonstrated that humor generally enhanced consumer attitudes, although it produced heterogeneous results regarding its influence on consumer intentions. Most existing studies focused either on humor or on video content in general [16], [17], and [18]. To the best of our knowledge, no study investigated a model linking video type (humorous versus non-humorous) to attitude formation and the intention to follow influencers' advice on TikTok.

Another limitation in the existing literature concerned the lack of in-depth investigation into individual moderating variables, particularly the need for humor, a construct widely used in research on humorous persuasion. However, no study had tested this moderating effect within the context of influencer marketing on TikTok, where humor constituted a dominant content format. The absence of this perspective limited the understanding of the conditions under which humor effectively strengthened influencers' persuasive impact. This study sought to address these gaps by analyzing how the type of video content (humorous or non-humorous) produced by influencers influenced subscribers' attitudes toward influencers and their intentions to follow influencers' advice. Accordingly, the study aimed to answer the following research questions: whether humorous videos increased attitudes toward influencers, whether humorous videos enhanced consumers' intention to follow influencers' advice, whether attitudes toward influencers affected the intention to follow their advice, and how the need for humor moderated the relationship between video type and the intention to follow influencers' advice.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Theoretical background.

In this research, we mobilized one theory and three complementary models to inform the conceptual foundation of the study. First, the theory of reasoned action, originating from social psychology and developed by Fishbein and Ajzen in the 1970s, was adopted to explain and predict human behavior. This theory postulated that behavior was primarily determined by behavioral intention, which represented its most accurate predictor. Behavioral intention depended on two key factors: attitude toward the behavior, defined as the individual's personal evaluation of the perceived consequences of the action, and subjective norms, which referred to perceived social pressure and the individual's motivation to comply with others'

expectations. Accordingly, the more an individual perceived a behavior as beneficial and socially supported, the stronger their intention to engage in that behavior.

Second, the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) [19] was employed. This model assumed that attitude formation and change occurred through either central processing, peripheral processing, or a combination of both routes [20]. The selection of one processing route over another depended on the individual's degree of message elaboration. According to the ELM, the processing of incongruent information could take place through either the central or the peripheral route [21]. Aillaud and Piolat [22] further explained that most theories assumed humor to be based on the simultaneous perception of a situation through two autonomous yet coherent frames of reference that were usually incompatible, a phenomenon commonly referred to in marketing as incongruity.

Third, the incongruity–resolution model proposed by Suls [23] was integrated into the framework. This model suggested that humor appreciation occurred in two stages. First, incongruent elements perceived as unexpected or incomprehensible were identified. Second, these elements were cognitively integrated into a coherent mental structure, leading to amusement or laughter. When confronted with humorous situations, individuals either experienced surprise followed by amusement upon resolving the incongruity or felt perplexity when unable to resolve it [22].

In addition to these theoretical perspectives, the stimulus–organism–response (S–O–R) model was used to provide further explanatory power. Widely applied in psychology and marketing, this model proposed that behavior resulted from a sequence involving external stimuli (S), internal processing by the organism (O), and behavioral responses (R). Stimuli referred to environmental elements likely to influence individuals, such as messages, atmosphere, sensory cues, and information. The organism represented the internal cognitive, emotional, and affective processes through which individuals interpreted these stimuli, ultimately leading to behavioral responses.

2.2. Development of hypotheses and conceptual framework.

The integration of the theory and models described above formed the basis for the formulation of the hypotheses and the empirical analysis of this research, which focused on humor as a universal aspect of human experience. Humor was present across civilizations and cultures and affected individuals worldwide [21]. From a developmental perspective, humor evolved as a mode of communication and a universal mechanism of social influence, serving multiple functions. It promoted social cohesion, reduced aggressiveness, diminished status differences and interpersonal conflict, and strengthened sociability, solidarity, and bonding within groups [24]. Murphy et al. [25] defined humor as “a universal language that humanizes advertising and allows brands to reach audiences on a personal level,” suggesting that humor enhanced communication effectiveness [26].

Drawing on the ELM, humorous information perceived as incongruent required both motivation and cognitive ability to be processed effectively, as well as the activation of peripheral cues such as facial expressions, gestures, caricatures, and situational context. In a marketing context, strong congruence between an influencer's image and the promoted product was expected to foster positive attitudes toward the influencer. At the same time, humor played a critical role in capturing users' attention and fostering closer relationships between influencers and their followers, thereby strengthening influencers' persuasive impact [27].

Within the TikTok environment, humor was particularly effective in creating opinion leaders [28], as entertainment and enjoyment constituted core elements of the platform. Emotions were contagious [29], and TikTok influencers conveyed emotions through verbal and non-verbal expressions in short, humorous videos. When followers viewed this content, their emotions tended to synchronize with those of the influencer [30], resulting in stronger attitudes and a perception of the influencer as part of their social circle.

Behavioral intentions were conceptualized as indicators of individuals' willingness to adopt specific behaviors [31] and were closely associated with actual behavior [32]. Consequently, followers were likely to consider and implement the advice shared by influencers [14]. Influencers thus played a decisive role in followers' decision-making processes and could motivate them to adopt recommended behaviors [33]. Humor had been identified as a significant factor influencing behavioral intentions [17], as humorous content was shown to affect consumers' intentions [34]. Based on these arguments, the following hypotheses were proposed: exposure to humorous videos on TikTok increased consumers' attitudes toward influencers more than exposure to non-humorous videos (H1), and exposure to humorous videos on TikTok increased consumers' intentions to follow influencers' advice more than exposure to non-humorous videos (H2).

Attitude was defined as an affective and evaluative predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably toward a target or object. Ajzen [31] argued that attitude represented the primary antecedent of behavioral intention, such that more positive attitudes led to stronger intentions. Accordingly, this study examined the effect of attitudes toward influencers on consumers' intentions to follow their advice within an influencer marketing context. Thus, it was hypothesized that attitudes toward influencers positively influenced consumers' intentions to follow influencers' advice (H3).

Finally, the moderating role of the need for humor was examined. Prior research had used various happiness-related constructs to investigate well-being [35]. Followers often synchronized their emotions with TikTok influencers due to influencers' ability to generate amusement through short, humorous videos, resulting in more positive attitudes and stronger engagement [30]. Followers were more likely to follow individuals who made them laugh [36]. Piccard and Blanc [37] conceptualized the need for humor as an individual trait reflected in the tendency to seek, generate, appreciate, and process humorous content, as well as to engage in fun-oriented interactions. This trait functioned as a psychological factor influencing responses to humorous stimuli. Empirical evidence showed that the effect of advertising humor on attitudes varied according to individuals' need for humor, with those exhibiting a high need for humor responding more positively to humorous messages than those with a low need for humor [38]. These findings suggested that humor effectiveness depended not only on content characteristics but also on individual differences. Therefore, the final hypothesis proposed that the need for humor moderated the relationship between video type (humorous versus non-humorous) and attitudes toward the influencer (H4), as depicted in Figure 1.

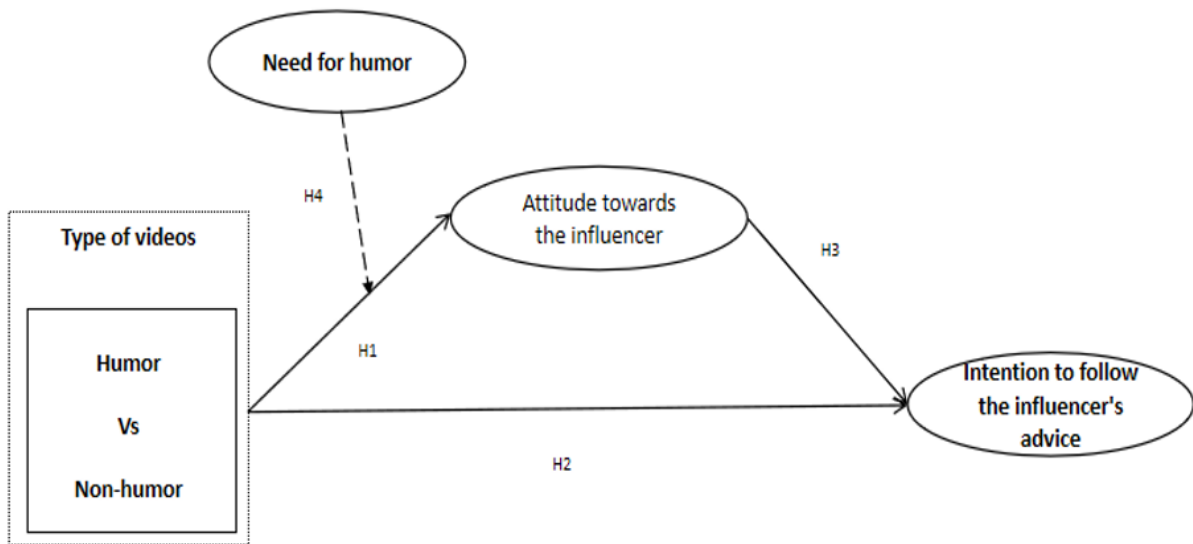


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

2.3. Methodology.

2.3.1. Research design.

For the present study, we conducted an online quasi-experimental study involving 120 TikTok followers of a young and popular influencer. This influencer published entertainment-oriented videos on topics commonly appealing to young audiences, such as fashion and humor. A quasi-experimental design was adopted due to practical constraints associated with social media research, as strict random assignment of participants was not feasible. The use of a quasi-experimental approach nonetheless allowed for the examination of causal relationships while maintaining an acceptable level of methodological control. Cook et al. [39] emphasized that quasi-experiments constituted a robust methodological alternative for inferring causal relationships under such constraints. Two videos were exposed in equal proportions to the sample. Participants were exposed to one of two online videos that differed in type (humorous versus non-humorous). A single independent variable, namely video type, was manipulated. The research adopted a complete factorial design of the 1×2 type, implemented using an inter-subjects design. Two experimental conditions were created, differing only in the type of video to which participants were randomly assigned.

2.3.2. Stimulus development.

A total of twelve videos published by the influencer were initially selected, following recommendations from previous studies. All videos were presented to a panel of humor experts composed of academic staff and postgraduate students. The panel was first asked to identify which videos were humorous and then to evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of the humor. The experts unanimously judged the humorous video to be funny and confirmed that the humorous manipulation was effective. The humorous video incorporated clearly identifiable humorous sequences, whereas the non-humorous video consisted exclusively of neutral, non-humorous content.

2.3.3. *Participants and sampling approach.*

The influencer was asked to disseminate the questionnaire to their TikTok community through posts presenting the study and providing a link to the online survey. This approach enabled rapid access to a targeted population that is typically difficult to reach using conventional sampling methods. After viewing the post, respondents were invited to complete the questionnaire. Upon clicking the link, respondents answered two screening questions to verify that they followed the influencer. After data collection, responses were further checked to confirm that participants followed the influencer’s TikTok account and had read and understood the questionnaire items. The questionnaire focused on the variables included in the research model and collected basic sociodemographic information. This recruitment strategy may have generated self-selection and community-related biases, as respondents were likely to be engaged followers of the influencer. To mitigate these effects, the questionnaire was disseminated over an extended period to diversify respondent profiles. In addition, sociodemographic and behavioral variables were included to allow for statistical control, in line with recent studies highlighting the methodological challenges of sampling via TikTok [40].

2.3.4. *Data collection procedure.*

Data were collected in June 2025. The sample consisted of 45.8% females and 54.2% males. The sample size was comparable to that of previous TikTok-based studies, which highlighted the challenges of data collection on this platform due to its format, content, and audience characteristics [41]. Prior research indicated that young TikTok users were often reluctant to complete formal academic questionnaires [41]. The descriptive statistics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics.

Demographic variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Women	55	45.8
	Men	65	54.2
	Total	120	100
Age	18-20	40	33.3
	21-25	25	20.8
	25-30	55	45.8
	Total	120	100
Education level	Bachelor’s degree	57	47.5
	Master’s degree	40	33.3
	Doctoral degree	23	19.2
	Total	120	100

2.3.5. *Measurement scales.*

To measure the study variables, established scales from the literature were adopted. All items were measured using five-point Likert scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Attitude toward the influencer was measured using the scale developed by Silvera and Austad [42]. Intention to follow the influencer’s advice was measured based on the scale proposed by Belanche et al. [8]. The need for humor was measured using the scale developed by Picard and Blanc [37]. The constructs, measurement items, and corresponding sources are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Scale of measurement of the variables used.

Construct	Items	Reference
Attitude toward the influencer	I think that this influencer is interesting I think that this influencer is pleasant I think that this influencer is likeable I have a favorable opinion about the influencer	[42]
Intention to follow the influencer's advice	If this account gives advice I will take into account its recommendations If this account gives advice I will feel safe following its recommendations If this account gives advice I will follow its recommendations	[8]
Need for humour	People expect me to say amusing things People tell me that I'm quick witted I need to be with people who have a sense of humour I often read jokes and funny stories I enjoy being around quick witted people	[37]

2.3.6. Manipulation check.

Manipulation checks were conducted to ensure the internal validity of the experiment and to verify that the observed effects could be attributed to the manipulated variable rather than alternative explanations [43]. To assess the manipulation of video type (humorous versus non-humorous), an independent-samples t-test was performed. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions in an inter-subject's design ($N = 30$; $n = 15$ per condition). The results indicated a significant difference between conditions. Participants exposed to the humorous video reported higher perceived humor ($M = 5.87$, $SD = 0.64$) than those exposed to the non-humorous video ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.71$), $t(28) = 10.64$, $p < .001$, confirming a strong and successful manipulation. Additional control analyses were conducted to ensure that group differences were attributable to the manipulation rather than confounding factors such as age. The results indicated that control variables had no significant effects on the dependent variables, confirming that observed differences between experimental groups were driven by the manipulation of video type.

2.3.7. Statistical analysis.

The collected data were first analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with IBM SPSS Statistics version 25. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was subsequently conducted using AMOS version 23. Finally, the proposed hypotheses were tested using the PROCESS macro developed by Hayes.

2.3.8. Reliability and validity analysis.

First, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to assess the underlying structure of the measurement items [44]. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50, indicating satisfactory sampling adequacy and an acceptable level of inter-item correlations. In addition, Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), confirming the suitability of the data for factor analysis. The communalities of all variables were greater than 0.50, justifying their retention in the model. Overall, these results indicated that the data were appropriate for factor analysis and that the

measurement scales demonstrated acceptable construct validity. The detailed results of the exploratory factor analysis are reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Exploratory factor analysis.

Items	KMO	Bartlett	Communality
ATI1	0.798	0.000	0.842
ATI2			0.856
ATI3			0.877
ATI4			0.823
INT1	0.896	0.000	0.723
INT2			0.784
INT3			0.753
NU1	0.847	0.000	0.775
NU2			0.734
NU3			0.783
NU4			0.712
NU5			0.674

Secondly, the reliability of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients. In accordance with commonly accepted recommendations, an alpha value greater than 0.70 was considered indicative of acceptable internal consistency [44]. The results presented in Table 4 show that all measurement scales exceeded this threshold, thereby confirming a satisfactory level of reliability for the instruments used.

Table 4. Reliability.

Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Attitude toward the influencer	4	0.879
Intention to follow the influencer's advice	3	0.882
Need for humour	5	0.886

Thirdly, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using AMOS version 23 to further assess the reliability and validity of the measurement model [45]. The results of the CFA are presented in Table 5. Composite reliability was evaluated using the Jöreskog rho coefficient, with the recommended threshold set at 0.70 [46]. All constructs exceeded this threshold, indicating good internal consistency and satisfactory construct reliability (Table 4).

Table 5. Convergent validity.

Item	Factor loadings	CR	AVE
Attitude toward influencer (ATI)		0.878	0.718
ATI1	0.786		
ATI2	0.861		
ATI3	0.863		
ATI4	0.824		
Intention to follow influencer (INT)		0.883	0.772
INT1	0.824		
INT2	0.853		
INT3	0.802		
Need for humour		0.887	0.765
NU1	0.845		
NU2	0.816		
NU3	0.798		
NU4	0.845		
NU5	0.861		

Finally, convergent validity was examined following the criteria proposed by Fornell and Larcker [47]. The results indicated that all average variance extracted (AVE) values were greater than 0.50, reflecting strong convergent validity. These findings supported the adequacy of the measurement model and justified proceeding with hypothesis testing.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results.

The effects of video type on attitudes toward the influencer and on the intention to follow the influencer's advice were examined using independent-samples t-test analyses. The results indicated a significant difference between the groups ($t = 4.122$, $p < 0.001$). Specifically, humorous videos generated a higher level of attitude toward the influencer ($M_{\text{humorous}} = 4.36$) compared with non-humorous videos ($M_{\text{non-humorous}} = 3.83$). These findings supported Hypothesis H1. The detailed results of the independent-samples t-test analyses are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of the independent sample t-test analyses.

	Type of video (TV)		t	Sig.
	Humor Mean	Non- humor Mean		
Attitude towards the influence	4.36	3.83	4.122	0.000

To test Hypotheses H2, H3, and H4, a moderated mediation analysis was conducted using Hayes' PROCESS macro (Model 7) with a bootstrap procedure of 5,000 resamples. The proposed model assumed that video type (humorous versus non-humorous) influenced attitudes toward the influencer, which in turn affected the intention to follow the influencer's advice (H3). The need for humor was introduced as a moderator of the relationship between video type and attitudes toward the influencer (H4). To preserve statistical power, the need-for-humor variable was not dichotomized [48]. The results of the moderated mediation analysis are illustrated in Figure 2.

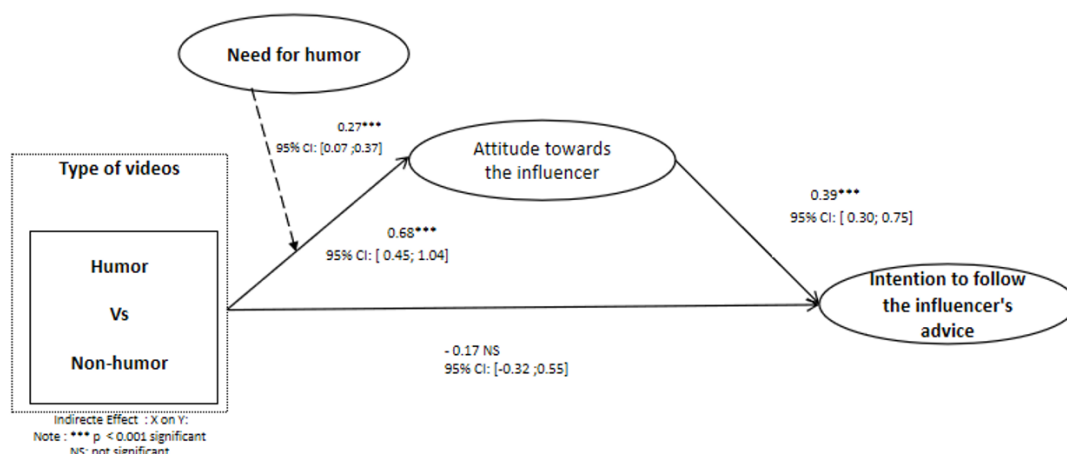


Figure 2. Mediation moderation analysis.

The analysis revealed that video type had a significant and positive effect on attitudes toward the influencer ($\beta = 0.68$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that humorous videos were associated with higher attitudes toward the influencer than non-humorous videos. In turn, attitudes toward

the influencer positively influenced the intention to follow the influencer's advice ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting Hypothesis H3. However, the direct effect of video type on the intention to follow the influencer's advice was not significant ($\beta = -0.17$, $p > 0.05$). These results indicated a full mediation effect, whereby attitudes toward the influencer fully mediated the relationship between video type and intention to follow the influencer's advice. In addition, a significant and positive interaction effect between video type and the need for humor on attitudes toward the influencer was observed ($\beta = 0.27$; 95% CI: 0.07–0.37), supporting Hypothesis H4.

3.2. Discussion.

Hypothesis H1 assumed that individuals exposed to humorous TikTok videos would exhibit more positive attitudes toward the influencer than those exposed to non-humorous content. The comparison of mean values between the two video types revealed a significant difference, thereby validating Hypothesis H1 (Table 5). The findings suggested that humorous videos exerted a strong influence on followers' attitudes toward influencers. Humor, as a communication strategy, appeared to reinforce positive perceptions by increasing sympathy and perceived closeness. This effect could be explained by the ability of humor to reduce social distance between influencers and their followers. However, the effectiveness of humor depended on its congruence with the influencer's overall image and content strategy. These findings were consistent with previous research by Cline et al. [38], which demonstrated that humor promoted positive attitudes. Humorous content tended to enhance emotional engagement, increase memorability, and strengthen perceived proximity between influencers and their audiences.

Hypothesis H2 proposed that exposure to humorous videos would directly increase followers' intentions to follow influencers' recommendations. However, the results did not support this hypothesis, as no significant direct effect of video type on intention was observed. These findings contrasted with those of Al-Emadi and Yahia [27] and Barta et al. [34]. This discrepancy could be explained by the central role of credibility in influencer marketing. When content was perceived as serious and informative, followers were more likely to consider influencers as reliable sources of advice.

Nevertheless, the results showed that humorous videos indirectly influenced behavioral intentions through attitudes toward the influencer. In line with prior studies conducted on Instagram [32], humor appeared to affect intentions indirectly by first enhancing attitudes toward the influencer. Humor did not directly trigger intentions to follow or adopt recommendations; instead, it fostered sympathy and emotional closeness, which subsequently facilitated favorable behavioral intentions. This mechanism highlighted the mediating role of attitude in translating emotional responses into behavioral outcomes.

Finally, the findings confirmed the moderating role of the need for humor in the relationship between video type and attitudes toward the influencer (Figure 2). The effect of humorous videos on attitudes was not uniform across followers but depended on individual differences in the need for humor. For followers with a high need for humor, humorous videos significantly strengthened positive attitudes by enhancing enjoyment, sympathy, and perceived closeness. In this context, humor functioned as a powerful emotional lever that fostered affective bonds and indirectly promoted intentions to follow influencers' advice.

4. Conclusion

This study highlighted the central role of social media and influencers in shaping users' attitudes and intentions. It shed important light on the current dynamics of online influence, while emphasizing the importance of humor as a key communication lever in digital environments, particularly on TikTok. This research contributed to the existing literature by going beyond the simple effects of humorous videos on brands and exploring their impact on the relationship between influencers and their followers. It therefore offered a more comprehensive view of influencer–audience dynamics. Moreover, the distinction between humorous and non-humorous stimuli made it possible to demonstrate that humor is not merely a stylistic element, but a genuine cognitive lever influencing underlying psychological processes. Humorous stimuli appeared to activate specific attentional and emotional mechanisms, fostering deeper information processing and a more positive attitude toward the influencer. The study also highlighted the mediating role of a key psychological variable, namely attitude toward the influencer. This mediating role showed that humor does not operate directly; rather, it confirmed the importance of considering humor not as an isolated stimulus, but as a trigger for internal psychological dynamics that shape message reception. In addition, the findings emphasized the moderating role of the need for humor in the relationship between video type and attitude toward the influencer. Followers' responses to influencer marketing strategies were not uniform and depended on individual differences in their appreciation of humor. This finding enriched the influencer marketing literature by introducing individual psychological variables as critical determinants of effectiveness. From a managerial perspective, companies should be aware of the specific characteristics of TikTok particularly its emphasis on short and entertaining videos, when designing influencer marketing campaigns. The results suggested that influencer marketing on TikTok should prioritize humorous content to attract a wider audience and enhance influencers' persuasive power. These observations highlighted the importance for brands and influencers to consider content style beyond simple promotional messages. Humorous videos are not only an entertainment tool but also a strategic lever that can influence followers' intentions to follow influencers' advice. Influencers should also take into account their audience profiles, particularly followers' need for humor. Humorous videos are especially effective for audiences seeking entertainment, whereas more serious content may enhance credibility among followers who are more rational or less sensitive to humor. Understanding individual preferences, such as the need for humor, allows for audience segmentation and the adaptation of communication strategies. Campaigns can thus be customized to optimize followers' attitudes and intentions, ultimately increasing the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Finally, this study was conducted with a limited sample of TikTok users. Future research should replicate the study using a larger sample size. Moreover, as this research focused exclusively on TikTok and its generally young audience, future studies could compare the effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns across different social media platforms and among other target audiences.

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Author Contribution

Khouloud Chaabane and Rym Bouzaabia contributed to the conceptualization of the study. Khouloud Chaabane was responsible for the methodology, data collection, and data analysis, and drafted the manuscript. Supervision was provided by Rym Bouzaabia. Funding for the study was secured by Khouloud Chaabane.

Competing Interest

All authors declare that there are no financial, personal, or professional relationships that might influence or appear to influence their research

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