



Gender-Based Violence and Misogyny TikTok Analytics and Narrative Update in South Africa

1 January 2024 - 30 November 2024

Overview

This report provides an analysis of the online discourse surrounding misogyny and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) on Tik Tok in South Africa for the period 1 January to 30 November 2024. Key metrics, including conversation volume and engagement, were examined to understand the evolving nature of the conversation. Additionally, the report dives into the dominant themes, topics, influential accounts, and trends shaping the conversation.

The CABC's investigation into TikTok content is in its exploratory phase and what is reflected below, represents a sample of the total conversation around our HeCareZA focus area, which include Gender-Based Violence, Misogyny and Technology Facilitated GBV. HeCareZa is the CABC's multi-channel campaign aimed at reducing the prevalence of GBV in South African society through a dialogue based approach focussed mainly on boys and men to help them understand the problem with some of the harmful norms and stereotypes that circulate online.

Conversation Volume

From January to November, the Centre for Analytics and Behavioural Change (CABC) identified approximately 34 407 total mentions. (see *Figure 1*).

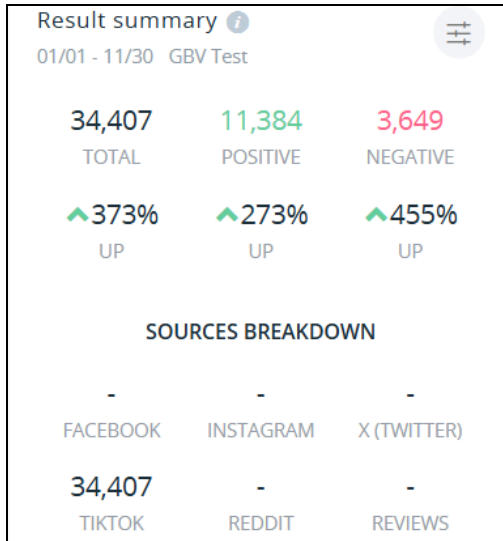


Figure 1: Key volume metrics

Mentions in Time:

Below is a breakdown of the conversation volume over the reporting period. A prominent and sustained spike in activity is observed in April, as well as between August and September 2024 (see Figure 2).

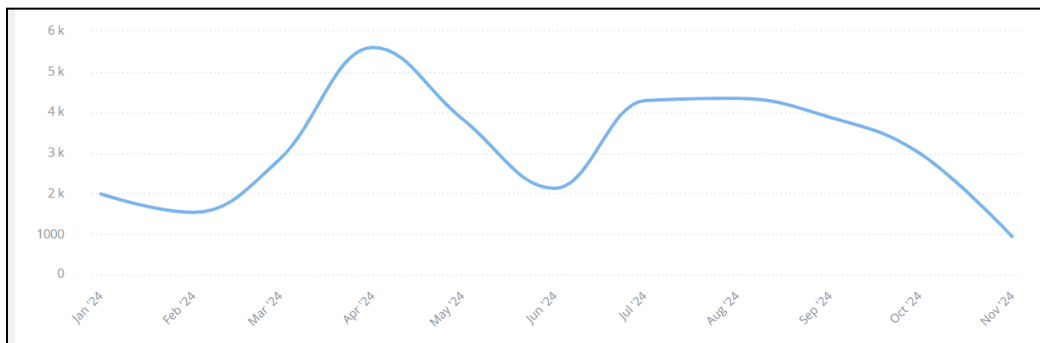


Figure 2: Mention Volume per day

The mention volume can be seen to correlate with the Anomaly strength graph, which indicates days where conversation volume was higher than the average (see Figure 3). These spikes are analysed further below and are filtered for posts that are still active.

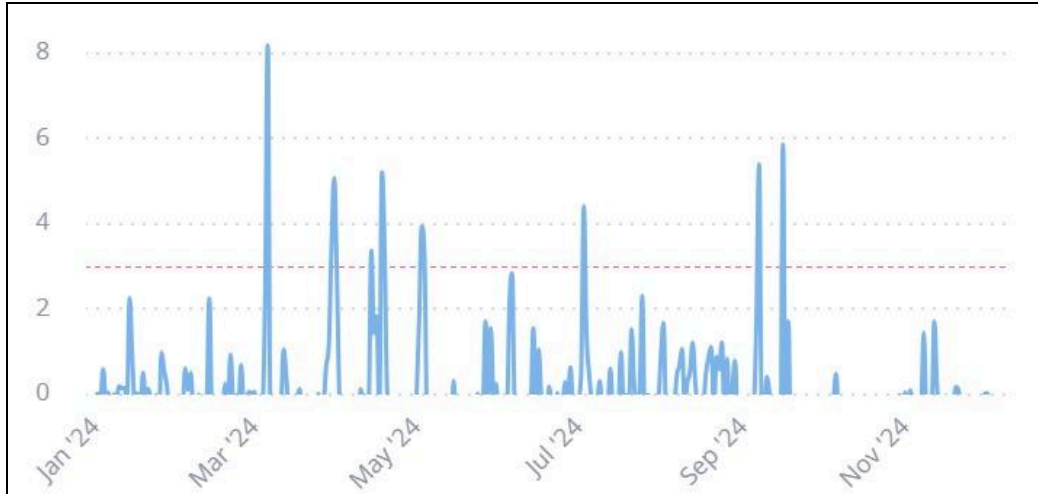


Figure 3: Anomaly Strength in time

Anomaly Strength in time shows number of standard deviations from the average number of mentions over a time period. This graph, in tandem with the mention volume per day, allows us to evaluate the days and/or periods with the highest mentions, and what drove the increase in posts.

Mention Volume Over Time

- **Women’s Month:** August represents Women’s Month in South Africa and the post with the highest influencer score¹ of 9 out of 10, concerned a clip of a woman recounting her experience of abuse on the YouTube Channel [Forum For Marginalised](#) (1). During the same month, reports emerged of a farmer, Zachariah Johannes Olivier, allegedly murdering Locadia Ndlovu and Maria Makgatho and feeding their bodies to his pigs (1) ; (2) .
- **King Mswati Marriage:** In September, it was reported by TRT Afrika that King Mswati III, sovereign of Eswatini, was engaged to Nomcebo Zuma, the daughter of former South African President Jacob Zuma (1). This post garnered more than 1800 comments, 5897 reposts and more than 67 000 likes.

Anomaly Strength in Time

- **6 March 2024:** The engagement on the date in question was largely driven by an interview with a man, where the influencer [posed](#) the question “What would you say to

¹ Influencer scores are based on reach - Reach is defined as 'unique Impressions', which means it looks at the amount of people that have seen a piece of content at least once.

anyone cheating right now in South Africa?”. The individual responded in a very sincere and earnest tone that individuals should reflect on their actions, cheating in this case, by considering how they would feel if the other person did the same to them. Responses to the post largely appreciated the sincerity of the individual in a humorous manner, supporting his message.

- **31 March 2024:** The engagement on 31 March 2024 was driven by a popular [post](#) of a couple dancing to the hit song Tswala Bam.
- **April 2024:** The engagement was higher than average in April due to the post concerning cheating, referred to above, acquiring several more comments as well as a [post](#) of a couple at an ATM machine with the caption ‘imama must know all your bank pins’.
- **September 2024:** No single topic drove the higher than average engagement rate during September and instead, the content was varied ranging from [relationships](#), [baby](#) [momma](#)’s, [marriage](#) and [motherhood](#).

Top Mentions

The top mentions concerned a variety of different topics and the top 5 posts, filtered for relevance, are reflected in Figure 4 below.

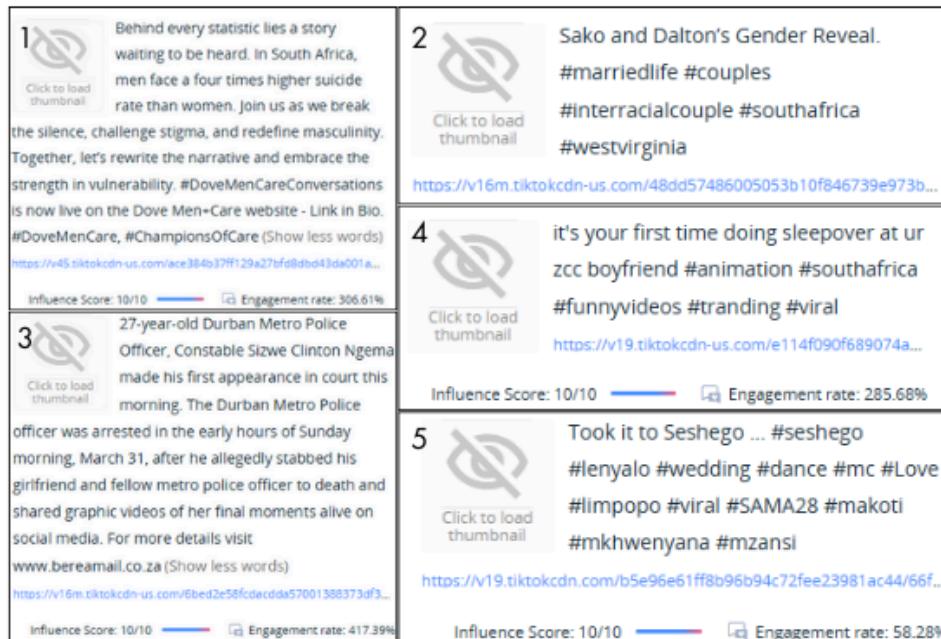


Figure 4: Top Mentions on TikTok within the dataset

Men's Care: The mention with the highest reach was a post directing individuals to a campaign by Dove to address the higher rates of suicide in men and initiate discussions around men's mental health. While comments on the TikTok video were disabled, comments to the videos on YouTube suggested that it is important to open these spaces for men to talk as well as seeing the strength in vulnerability (1) ; (2).

Gender Reveal: The second post was about the gender reveal by a couple where one partner is from South Africa and the other is from America, with the video referencing their families sending messages to the unborn baby, guessing their sex. Responses to the post were supportive and endearing, as well as appreciating the child's Venda name, Tshifiwa, which translates to gift (1).

Femicide: The third mention is by an account stylised as a news reporting account which reported on a story of a police officer who stabbed his partner and a fellow police officer to death and thereafter, shared his partner's final moments on social media. Responses to the post varied, with some condemning the Act and calling for harsh sentencing while others posted in support of the Constable (1).

Zion Christian Church: The fourth post is a humorous jab at the Zion Christian Church, in the context of relationships, where the male partner is singing loudly while his partner is attempting to sleep. The comments took the post in a humorous manner, noting the church members' faith in and adherence to Christianity as well as raising other interesting behaviours of members of the church (1).

Marriage & Culture: The final post reflected above showcases the country's beautiful and rich culture, with a groom and bride dancing with their groomsmen and bridesmaids as they enter a venue with their master of ceremonies. Comments appreciated the energy that everyone brought while noting the rich culture of South Africa (1).

Overview of Content by Keywords

Reflected below are the top keywords in the conversation during the reporting period. The larger the word, the more often it was used in captions to the post. As illustrated in Figure X below,

woman/women, love, married and beautiful were used more frequently than other keywords reflected in the list.

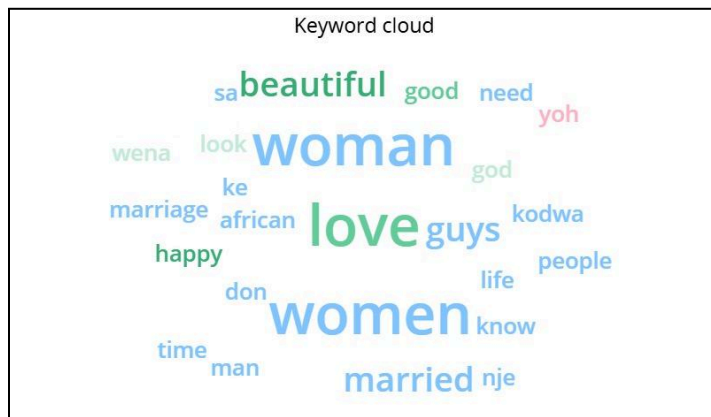


Figure 5: Keyword List

Women: Under this keyword, posts concerned Gender-Based Violence and femicide in the country. One post has the caption “Maturing is realizing that all South African women are constantly on (sic) survival mode. You’re constantly watching your back, clinging your purse (sic) and in your house at a certain time so you’re not next.” Responses to the post largely shared the sentiment of the poster and noted how exhausting it is to constantly be hypervigilant. A separate post showed a video of a woman allegedly being stabbed 24 times. Responses to this post largely indicated dismay at the poster recording the incident and the lack of anyone assisting the lady while she was being assaulted and stabbed (1); (2).

Love: The conversation under the keyword love was varied ranging from age gaps, marriage, relationships as well as political posts focused on the care economy. In respect of age gaps, individuals shared their own experiences with their older or younger partners. Concerning relationships, a comedic post was found titled the ‘State of the Relationship Address’ wherein the poster discusses numerous issues relationships may have faced during the year such as infidelity, break-ups and the like. Responses largely appreciated the humorous tone of the video as well as the creativity in articulating the difficulties faced in relationships. Furthermore, our analytics tool found a post by Rise Mzansi which focused on the care economy wherein a party spokesperson addresses the norms and values of society both holding women within care roles as well as preventing men from entering care roles (1); (2); (3).

Married: Posts about marriage indicate a split view of the institution. In one post, an account discusses the difference in social standing and legal protection for ex-wives and widows with children compared to that of a 'baby mama', noting that the institution of marriage affords women higher social status in certain cultures as well as legal protection such as spousal maintenance, half share of the estate and child maintenance whereas a 'baby mama' only has access to child maintenance. On the other hand, a popular post by comedian Trevor Noah questioned societal marriage bias indicating that married partners have a higher social status in society by virtue of the institution solely and not based on the relationship between the partners (1) ; (2).

Beautiful: Posts found under the keyword beautiful involved a comparison in beauty between Cape Verde women and South African women following an AFCON match between South Africa and Cape Verde on the 3rd of February 2024. Responses to the post largely objectified both Cape Verdean and South African women, as well as posting negative stereotypes around South African women. Under this topic, the CABC further found Gender-Based Violence content as well as content related to femicide in the country (1) ; (2) ; (3) ; (4) ; (5).

ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

TikTok differentiates itself from traditional social media platforms, which historically were text-based, due to its focus on short-form video content as well as through its 'challenges'. Trends and challenges allow users to participate in activities with others worldwide by creating videos centred on a specific prompt or theme. In more recent years, and as the platform has evolved, societal issues have become more prominent on the platform.

Additionally, the platform often blurs the line between societal issues and humour, sometimes to an inappropriate extent as our previous [report](#) indicated. A large proportion of the posts do seem to indicate a higher level of humour and/or feel-good content such as the marriage celebration posts above as well as the posts concerning relationships. However, given the platform's significant growth over the past years, spaces are being carved out for the discussion of important societal issues.

As noted above, even political parties are realizing the importance of using the platform for messaging such as Rise Mzansi's post about the care economy. Uncoordinated conversations

on similar topics were also found such as marital bias. On the one end, a commentator noted the variety of different legal protections afforded to married partners whereas Trevor Noah focused on the social bias attached to marriage. These posts showcase a burgeoning research space on the TikTok platform, one which may provide prompt, to-the-point insight into the perspectives held by individuals on differing topics.



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