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# The Impact of TikTok on Students: A Literature Review

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## Abstract

This literature review aims to explore and summarize the existing research on the impact of TikTok on students. The literature surrounding the impact of TikTok on students is relatively limited but provides valuable insights into several relevant areas. This review examines the effects of TikTok on various aspects of students' lives and life, including academic performance, mental health, social interactions and overall well-being. The findings from this review highlight both the positive and negative impacts of TikTok and provide insights into its risk full potential influence on students.

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## 1. Introduction

TikTok is a social network launched in the Chinese market 2016 (as Douyin) and internationally in 2017 (as TikTok). In 2018, it was the most widely downloaded mobile app in the United States and other countries, and is currently available in more than 150 countries and has more than 800 million monthly active users <sup>[1]</sup>.

TikTok is a platform that, in addition to entertaining videos, gives a young and global audience access to a new format of short educational videos created by expert authors. This perspective presents several opportunities for the dissemination of knowledge in various fields of science concisely and effectively. TikTok is a video-sharing social networking service that is rapidly growing in popularity. It was the second most downloaded app in the app world in 2020. While the platform is known for having users post videos of themselves dancing, lip-syncing, or showing off other talents, videos of users

sharing specific knowledge have increased because of initiatives such as learn on TikTok [2].

Social media is an internet-based community created visually to build profiles individually and socially [3]. Social media platforms are created around the concept of personal profiles that resembles a homepage that serves to describe each site. It is also used to make communication easy between people through digital devices [4]. Over 80% of adolescents own one form of new media technology, including cell phones or computers, and use it frequently to text or message their friends or other people online. Most adults use these platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. In today's society, the media plays an important role in guiding the values of young people [5].

Social media has become an integral portion of society, with rising usage and prevalence since its creation and further expansion during the COVID-19 pandemic. The marked growth in social media was fueled by a large shift to all virtual platforms for human interactions. This is driven by increased public safety measures through widespread business and school closures, as well as lockdowns restricting public travel and large gatherings. These strict physical distancing measures caused people to be heavily reliant on virtual media, especially social media, for the latest pandemic news and to remain connected to each other [6].

TikTok is one of the most popular music video social platforms through the world, which currently has 800 million active users in 155 countries. This video app was launched in 2017 by a Chinese company named Byte Dance and within one and half years, it has become the most popular short music video app in the world. Ranking as the most frequently downloaded app in the world, TikTok has shown over 2 billion times on the app store and Google play. The special feature of this app is that the users can create short videos up to 60 seconds adding background sound clips from the apps' vast music library, and share the created videos with millions of TikTok users. As global web index reveals, only a small fraction of each platform's user base is unique, and many of the platforms' audiences overlap. As an example, 95% of Facebook users claim to utilize at least one more social media site. In Sri Lanka, an incredible development in the internet usage can be seen in comparison with many other countries. There were 10.10 million internet users and 6.40 million social media users by January 2020 [7].

According to C. Diol, the use of application TikTok has had a very little negative impact on teenagers and young adult students. In his study titled, TikTok Influence on Teenagers and Young Adult Students: The Common Usages of the Application TikTok, C. Diol has also been able to map out the spread of TikTok over the past 3 years and how it has become a significant participant in the role of influencers, creating an entrepreneurial possibility with its growth [8]. In a research on TikTok based on user centric theory, Jiang Xiao Yu has discussed the reasons behind the huge success of TikTok. From the perspective of user centric theory, TikTok optimizes the user experience in the aspects of UCD design, content production and form innovation, personalized service and so on. It satisfies the user's needs and achieves the user's goals. In terms of user experience, TikTok has optimized the experience in terms of interface design, human-computer interactive, UGC, PGC and OGC content production model, content micro narrative modes and recommended algorithm technology based on big data, which enhanced user loyalty [9].

Overall, studying the impact of TikTok on students is crucial in order to understand the potential advantages and

disadvantages of this popular platform. This knowledge can inform educators, parents, and policymakers in effectively addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities TikTok presents for students' well-being and development.

## 2. TikTok and Academic Performance

Young people feel the constant need to be productive, disregarding the counter productivity these distractions bring. These simple, three-minute videos on TikTok can distract its users from completing other necessary tasks, such as finishing homework or completing chores and the sample consisted of 110 female and 130 male students, aged between 23-27, the results showed that 31.25% of students were addicted to TikTok, and 87.5% of students spent more than two hours per day on social media <sup>[10]</sup>.

According to a study conducted by <sup>[11]</sup> shown that TikTok is causing various issues, including addiction, in kids and teenagers. Some of the adverse effects of TikTok addiction include inferiority complexes, superiority complexes, and complexes of attractiveness and an increased usage of social media platforms by students is associated with a notable shift in their study habits, resulting in reduced attention towards scholarly works and This is particularly evident when there is an imbalance between excessive TikTok use and limited focus during study time. Consequently, such changes in study habits may adversely impact the academic prospects of students. The popularity of social media platforms offers several advantages, including improved communication, easier information access, and platforms for artistic expression. However, social media's addictive nature and capacity to draw in and hold users' attention can have a negative impact on study habits and academic achievement. When students spend excessive time on TikTok or other social media platforms, their focus on studying can diminish significantly. Constant distractions, such as receiving notifications, scrolling through endless feeds, and watching short videos, can break their concentration and hinder their ability to engage in deep and meaningful learning.

## 3. TikTok and Mental Health

Indeed, TikTok is just one of many social media platforms that have faced scrutiny from lawmakers and mental health experts regarding its impact on teenagers. The concern stems from various studies and reports that highlight the potential for harmful content, such as promoting suicide and eating disorders, to quickly reach vulnerable users on the platform. This issue is not exclusive to TikTok and has been a broader concern across different social media platforms. A total of 795 requests by the Safety commissioner to remove alleged bullying of children from various platforms were made since the beginning of 2022. For TikTok alone, 209 requests were made in 2022, and 100 in 2023 <sup>[12]</sup>.

As the social media platform TikTok continues its exponential growth, many people have begun to question its potential impacts on society particularly surrounding mental health. According to a first-of-its-kind study from University of Minnesota computer science researchers, the social media platform and its unique algorithm can serve as both a haven and a hindrance for users struggling with their mental health. "TikTok is a huge platform for mental health content," said Ashlee Milton, first author of the paper and a University of Minnesota computer science and engineering Ph.D. student.

“People tend to gravitate toward social media to find information and other people who are going through similar situations. A lot of our participants talked about how helpful this mental health information was. But at some point, because of the way the feed works, it’s just going to keep giving you more and more of the same content. And that’s when it can go from being helpful to being distressing and triggering” [13].

## 4. TikTok and Social Interactions

TikTok is mainly used for creating and sharing short videos, typically set to music. These videos can be anything from funny skits and memes to educational content, dance and lip sync videos, and more. The app's algorithm were designed to keep users engaged by showing them more of the content they like, which can lead to a cycle of addictive behavior. This has led to concerns that TikTok could be contributing to the rise of mental health problems among young people, including anxiety and depression [14].

TikTok influence and impact on the entertainment industry and individuals cannot be ignored. With millions of active users worldwide, the platform has the power to propel someone's career to new heights or bring it crashing down. For aspiring musicians, comedians, and content creators, TikTok has become a powerful tool for gaining exposure and recognition. Catchy songs, dance routines, and comedic skits can go viral within hours, allowing talented individuals to attract a substantial following and even get noticed by record labels, casting directors, or sponsors. This has resulted in the success of various artists who were discovered through TikTok, launching their music careers to global popularity [15].

TikTok is considered a social network because it offers great potential for making new friends and forming new connections. This platform has millions of users worldwide, so it can also be great for inclusiveness. Some teens are naturally shy, so making in-person friends can be difficult.

Also known as the "choking challenge" or the "pass-out challenge," this fad encouraged kids in asphyxiation to the point of temporary unconsciousness. The blackout challenge has been linked to the deaths of about 20 minors in recent months and there are many benefits that TikTok brings to society. For one, it allows human to connect with each other and share ideas and creativity. It also provides self-expression and can be a great outlet for creative energy [10].

## 5. TikTok and Well-being

Published on March 14, 2023. TikTok promotes harmful content including eating disorders and self-harm to teen user feeds, according to a new NGO report. Key takeaways: A new report shows that TikTok pushes harmful content promoting eating disorders and self-harm to teens every 39 seconds and TikTok addiction can lead to a variety of physical, mental, and emotional health issues such as fatigue, irritability, and depression. It is important for users to recognize TikTok addiction symptoms before it becomes an issue

A lot of teens describe the experience of going on TikTok and intending to spend 15 minutes and then they spend two

hours and or more and concerning to hear that many teens are experiencing difficulties managing their time on TikTok, leading to excessive usage. Teenagers must strike a balance between their online activities and other aspects of their lives. In reality, studies have connected overuse of social media to a number of negative consequences on mental health, including depression. The sharing of explicit content related to suicide must also be avoided because it could potentially injure vulnerable people and help the spread of dangerous ideas. Avoid sharing details and photographs concerning suicide tools, techniques, locations, notes, or messages. To address these concerns, TikTok has policies in place to remove content that promotes self-harm, suicide, or sharing explicit details about methods. By implementing these rules, TikTok hopes to make its users feel safer and more supported, especially those who might be experiencing mental health issues. It is critical that parents, teachers, and the society at large assist youngsters in comprehending and responsibly using social media. Encouraging open conversations about mental health, providing resources, and promoting healthy coping mechanisms can also contribute to safeguarding the well-being of teenagers in the digital world and Such content can be distressing and/or accidentally give new ideas to struggling community members. Sharing details about suicide tools and methods is highly harmful, and such content will be removed from TikTok <sup>[16]</sup>.

The study conducted on TikTok use and well-being indicated that both active and passive uses of the platform were not linked to overall well-being. This suggests those individuals who frequently engage in TikTok activities, whether by posting their own content (active use) or simply scrolling through others' videos (passive use), did not experience a noticeable improvement or decline in their well-being. Furthermore, the study found that two factors commonly associated with social media use, namely social support and upward social comparison, did not act as mediators in the relationship between TikTok use and well-being. Social support refers to the perception of being cared for and having a network of people to rely on, while upward social comparison involves comparing oneself to others who are perceived to have superior qualities or achievements. These findings imply that despite the social nature and comparative aspects of TikTok, neither seeking support nor comparing one to others on the platform appeared to significantly influence users' well-being. The potential impacts of TikTok on well-being may therefore be influenced by other factors not examined in this study, or there may not be a connection at all between the platform and general well-being. It's crucial to note that this study only looked at TikTok and wellbeing, therefore more research may be required to examine how other social media platforms affect wellbeing <sup>[16]</sup>.

TikTok strives to provide a secure environment where users may engage with a worldwide community and share their individual, personal tales about mental health. We aim to continue raising awareness about the importance of mental wellness as we cultivate a community that feels empowered to connect and share perspectives on mental well-being. Our platform has over 45 billion views of mental health, 10 billion views of mental health awareness, and 1 billion views of wellbeing. We recently partnered with Market Research Company you Gov't to better understand cross-generational and global consumer attitudes on mental well-being, including people's comfort levels in talking about their own mental health and what can make them feel more supported. As we strive to maintain fostering an inclusive environment for our community.

Around 75% of individuals worldwide, including respondents from South Africa (90%), Brazil (85%), and the United Arab Emirates (83%) are comfortable discussing their mental health, according to the poll. Over generations, individuals feel

more at ease discussing their mental health as they become older, with persons in the 18-24 age range feeling the least at ease<sup>[17]</sup>.

### *The Effects of TikTok Use on College Student Learning*

TikTok has become an increasingly popular app for people of many different ages to use. Users can create whatever types of videos they want on this app and post it for anyone to see, despite a large majority of posts being people dancing to music. This app has attracted college students who are in the stage of emerging adulthood. College students enjoy having fun and this app allows them to do just that. They can dance around to the top rated songs and then gain followers from their posts. But along with having fun, college students still have to be able to focus on their schoolwork, and distractions have the ability to pose a big challenge to getting schoolwork done. Anyone using TikTok can become engrossed in the app and experience something like to addiction, where they are unable to leave it. People get increasingly dependent on social media as they use it more frequently each week<sup>[18]</sup>. How much time do students actually spend on TikTok and what impact does that have on college students paying attention in class and getting their schoolwork done? By finding answers to this question, we can see if this app does have the ability to keep college students from paying attention and completing their schoolwork.

Unfortunately, TikTok can also have a negative impact on teens by encouraging them to participate in dangerous social media challenges, connecting them with bullies or predators, or encouraging screen time addiction. Parents should learn what TikTok is and then talk with their kids about properly using the app<sup>[19]</sup>.

## 6. Conclusion

The conclusion summarizes the key findings from the literature review and provides an overview of the overall impact of TikTok on students. It highlights the need for further research and suggests potential areas of exploration to better understand the complex relationship between TikTok and students' lives.

In conclusion, this literature review provides a comprehensive analysis of the impact of TikTok on students. It sheds light on various dimensions of this social media platform and its effects on academic performance, mental health, social interactions, and overall well-being. The findings from this review can inform educators, parents, and policymakers in developing strategies to promote responsible TikTok usage and mitigate any potential negative consequences for students.

## 7. Recommendation

When it comes to the impact of TikTok on students, it is essential to consider both the positive and negative aspects. Here are some recommendations to navigate and mitigate any potential adverse effects while maximizing the benefits:

1. Digital Well-being Awareness: -Educate disciplines about the importance of responsible digital usage and maintaining a healthy balance between online and offline activities. Promote the concept of mindfully online engagement, encouraging students to set limits on their TikTok usage and prioritize their academic and personal development.
2. Creative Expression and Learning: -Encourage students to leverage the creative potential of TikTok to develop their skills and interests. TikTok provides a platform for self-expression, creativity, and even educational content. Encourage students to explore and produce educational or informative content on TikTok that aligns with their academic pursuits.
3. Privacy and Online Safety: -Raise awareness about online safety practices and privacy settings on TikTok. Help students understand the importance of safeguarding personal information and encourage them to use privacy features, such as setting their accounts to private and being cautious when sharing personal details.
4. Open Communication: Foster an environment of open communication and dialogue about TikTok and its impact. Encourage students to share their experiences, concerns, and insights. This allows educators, parents, and guardians to provide guidance and support, addressing any issues that may arise from TikTok usage.
5. Time Management and Productivity: -Teach students effective time management strategies and help those set goals for their TikTok usage. Encourage them to put their academic obligations, extracurricular pursuits, and personal development first. Stress the value of utilizing TikTok for leisure rather than as a time-consuming diversion.
6. Media Literacy Education: -Incorporate media literacy education into the curriculum to equip students with critical thinking skills. Teach them to analyze and evaluate the content they consume on TikTok, helping them to distinguish between misinformation, harmful trends, and valuable educational or creative content.
7. Responsible Role Models: -Encourage students to follow and engage with positive role models and content creators who promote educational, wholesome, and ethical values on TikTok. By curating their TikTok feed with informative and inspirational content, students can minimize exposure to potentially negative or harmful content. It is crucial to approach TikTok usage in a constructive and educational manner, empowering students to make informed decisions and navigate the platform responsibly

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