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Students' Perceptions of Effects of TikTok on Academic Performance: A Case Study at Southern Illinois University

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STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTS OF TIKTOK ON ACADEMIC

PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

by

Stellah Nakiranda

B.S., Uganda Christian University, 2019

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Science

School of Arts and Media
in the Graduate School
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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

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in the field of Professional Media and Media Management Studies

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

Stellah Nakiranda, for the Master of Science degree in Professional Media & Media Management Studies, presented on November 14, 2024, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: STUDENTS' PERSCEPTIONS OF EFFECTS OF TIKTOK ON ACADEMIC
      PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Cinzia Padovani

This study explored students' perceptions of the effects of TikTok on academic performance at Southern Illinois University. With TikTok's widespread adoption, particularly among youth and students, understanding its impact has become imperative. This research employed a mixed-methods design, utilizing surveys and interviews to examine students' usage of TikTok and their perspectives on its impact on their studies. Analysis of survey data from 55 students revealed most use TikTok extensively for social interaction, but many also leverage it for academic purposes like skill learning and motivation. The findings uncovered mixed perceptions—some feel TikTok aids their learning through learning new skills and motivation, while others see it as distracting and potentially harmful to focus. Overall, students emphasized balancing purposeful academic usage with entertainment. The study linked excessive social media use to poorer academic outcomes. The study concludes that the integration of TikTok into study habits and routines can either positively or negatively impact learning. Findings will inform university policies guiding social media use and future research on optimizing positive academic impacts. This study makes key contributions by uplifting student perspectives themselves to develop a nuanced understanding of TikTok's role in the learner experience.

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First and foremost, I express my profound gratitude to the Almighty God for guiding me through this academic journey and granting me the strength and perseverance to complete this research successfully.

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To my beloved family, your unconditional love, support, and sacrifices have been my foundation throughout this academic pursuit. Your unwavering belief in me, even during the most challenging times, has been a source of strength and motivation. Special thanks to Tyler Hansbrough and Greg Hansbrough for their endless encouragement that made this achievement possible. This accomplishment is as much yours as it is mine, and I am forever grateful for your presence in my life.

DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my mother, Tamara Hansbrough Fister. Your unwavering support and inspiration have been the driving force behind my pursuit of this master's degree. Throughout the challenging journey of writing this paper, you have been my greatest cheerleader, offering encouragement at every turn. Your belief in me has been a constant source of strength. Without your guidance and love, I would not have reached this milestone. Thank you, Mom, for everything. May the Lord's blessings be upon you always.

PREFACE

This research paper explores students' perceptions of TikTok's effects on academic performance, focusing on Southern Illinois University as a case study. In the rapidly evolving landscape of social media and education, this work aims to contribute to our understanding of how modern platforms like TikTok influence college students' educational experiences. The inspiration for this study arose from observing the increasing prevalence of TikTok usage among university students, coupled with ongoing debates about its potential impacts on attention spans, time management, and learning outcomes.

Through rigorous research and analysis, this paper provides insights into how students themselves perceive TikTok's influence on their studies, exploring both potential benefits and challenges. As readers engage with this study, I invite them to consider the broader implications of social media in educational contexts. It is my hope that this work will inspire new questions, challenge existing assumptions, and contribute to ongoing conversations about optimizing student success in the digital age. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the students who participated in this study, as well as to the faculty and staff of Southern Illinois University who supported this research endeavor.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The rise of the Internet in the 1990s led to major developments in the world of communication. Since the 2000s, thanks to Web 2.0 and its interactive capabilities, we have observed the introduction and growth of social networking sites, which continue to offer new ways for people to interact, share information, to educate and entertain themselves. These sites have revolutionized the ways in which people communicate. These networking sites are referred to as "social media" (Boyd & Ellison, 2007): namely, public web-based services that allow users to develop a personal profile and identify themselves. Social media platforms include Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, among others.

These platforms have transformed the way in which people communicate, making communication more interactive, accessible, and diverse. Most important for this present study, these platforms facilitate education (Dzandza, 2018, Romaan et al., 2014): during the COVID-19 crisis, for example, the transition to online education became particularly important and necessary, as educational institutions moved classes online. Platforms such as Google Classroom were critical to enabling students and teachers' interactions and academic advancement. According to Wu (2021), this change underscores the crucial role that technology plays in ensuring the continuity of education.

Following the 2019-2021 pandemic, social media platforms have plaid a crucial role in supporting education through various channels, like WhatsApp, (WhatsApp is an instant messaging application with multi platforms compatible with all smartphones operating system. It allows the users to instantly send and receive messages in form of pictures, audios, text and videos), which has simplified communication among teachers, parents, and students (Habes et

al., 2022). The extensive collection of videos on YouTube has supported students' learning, while Facebook has emerged as a platform for sharing educational resources, passing on information to reach a global audience (see for instance Foregger 2008).

TikTok's popularity has surged dramatically, particularly among college students. Recent surveys indicate that smartphone ownership among American college students has reached near-ubiquity, with over 95% possessing these devices. These students engage daily with various social media and applications on their smartphones (Zahra et al. 2022). The widespread adoption of smartphones, coupled with TikTok's strategic focus on creating a platform that connects people through short- form video content and encourage user engagement, has significantly contributed to the platform's explosive growth. In the United States alone, TikTok boasts over 5 million daily active users (Zahra et al. 2022).

TikTok's influence has expanded beyond entertainment, with an increasing number of students using it for educational purposes. Content creators are now crafting educational videos that concisely explain complex academic concepts, targeting younger viewers (Lee & Abidin, 2023). This trend has caught the attention of universities due to its educational potential and ability to connect with students. For instance, Warick's (2020) study shows how schools like the University of Florida, Syracuse University, and Indiana University Bloomington are using TikTok to connect with students in a tangible way because they know it works well as a recruitment tool.

However, it's crucial to acknowledge TikTok's current challenges. As Martin (2024) reports, the platform faces significant scrutiny over data privacy concerns, the spread of misinformation, and algorithmic bias, leading to increased pressure and negative publicity. Despite these issues, TikTok remains widely used, with over 1.5 billion daily users (Warack,

2020), making it a relevant platform for studying its impact on students' academic lives. While these controversies raise important questions about TikTok's role in society, they also underscore the need to understand how students perceive its effects on their academic performance.

This study aims to explore these perceptions, providing valuable insights into how social media platforms, despite their challenges, continue to influence learning experiences and academic outcomes in higher education. By examining students' views on TikTok's impact on their studies, this research contributes to a nuanced understanding of the platform's educational implications, balancing its potential benefits with awareness of its broader societal issues.

Background

TikTok, a short-video platform that has transformed social media, originated from the innovative vision of Zhang Yiming, the founder of ByteDance. In 2016, ByteDance launched Douyin for the Chinese market, followed by its international counterpart, TikTok, in 2017 (Zeng, Abidin, & Schäfer, 2021). This launch was part of Zhang's broader strategy to build a global technology company, capitalizing on opportunities he identified in the video content sector.

A pivotal moment in TikTok's evolution came in 2018 when ByteDance acquired Musical.ly, an app that had already gained significant popularity among teenagers in the United States and the United Kingdom. This strategic move allowed TikTok to inherit Musical.ly's established user base, facilitating its rapid expansion into the global youth market (Zeng et al., 2021).

From its inception, TikTok distinguished itself in the crowded social media landscape by specifically targeting Generation Z, focusing on teenagers and preteens. This targeted approach, combined with innovative features such as its proprietary recommendation system, enabled TikTok to compete effectively with major platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube.

The platform's algorithm personalizes user experiences, making content consumption highly engaging and, some argue, addictive (Zeng et al., 2021).

TikTok's functionality allows users to create personal accounts, connect with others, upload short videos, share real-time activities, and exchange private messages. Its impact extends globally, playing a significant role in the lives of users worldwide, including university students in the United States.

As TikTok continues to evolve, it has become a key player in the social media ecosystem, influencing user behavior, content creation trends, and information dissemination. However, its rise has not been without challenges. Recent years have seen TikTok face scrutiny over data privacy concerns, content moderation issues, and its potential impact on youth (Martin, 2024). Despite these challenges, TikTok remains a significant force in social media, making it a relevant and important subject for academic study, particularly in understanding its effects on university students' lives and academic performance.

Several factors have contributed to TikTok's impressive growth in the U.S. market, for example the U.S has many internet service providers, like AT &T, Verizon Fios, Xfinity, and Cox. It also has smartphone dealerships that sell smartphones with social applications. The platform's unique algorithm promotes with social media applications. The platform's unique algorithm promotes content discovery, allowing users to easily find and engage with videos that align with their interest, regardless. Of their follower count (Woodward, 2024). This democratization of content creation encourages a diverse range of users to participate, fostering a vibrant community. TikTok's emphasis on short, engaging video formats caters to the decreasing attention spans of modern audiences, making it an appealing choice for users seeking quick entertainment (Woodward, 2024). Additionally, the platform's integration of trending

challenges, music, and effects keeps the content fresh and encourages user participation, further driving engagement. The rise of influencer culture—where influencers (individuals with a significant online following who can sway the opinions or behaviors of their audience) and creators (users who produce original content to engage their followers)—has also played a significant role. Popular creators leverage their followings to promote brands and products, attracting more users to the platform (Woodward, 2024).

Lastly, TikTok's continuous innovation, including new features for both users and businesses, ensures that it remains relevant and appealing in a competitive social media landscape, solidifying its position as a leading platform in the U.S. (Woodward, 2024). TikTok has experienced remarkable growth since its launch, establishing itself as a dominant player in the social media landscape. As of 2024, the platform boasts over 1 billion active users monthly active users globally, with approximately 102.3 million users in the United States alone, a figure projected to rise to 121.1 million by 2027. (Woodward, 2024). This growth is particularly notable among younger demographics, with 25% of U.S. users ages 10-19 and 22.4% aged 20-29, although interest from older users is also increasing. (Woodward, 2024).

The driving factors for the adoption of social media platforms in the U.S., particularly TikTok, are the increasing access, convenience, functionality, and flexibility of the technologies (Hui, H. 2018). These factors have made the adoption of social networking platforms quite easy, and they have amazingly improved many people's lives by exposing users to diverse ways of sharing information.

Indeed, the extensive use of TikTok among college students has raised concerns about its potential to become addictive and hinder academic performance. It is evident that a substantial portion of students spend significant time on TikTok, causing alarm among educators and

parents. While several studies have examined the correlation between TikTok usage and academic performance, there remains a scarcity of research exploring students' own perspectives on how TikTok influences their educational journey. This present study aims to bridge this gap by seeking to understand students' personal viewpoints on the impact of TikTok on their academic performance.

Objectives for the Study:

The primary objective of this study is to examine Southern Illinois University (SIU)'s students' perceptions of TikTok's impact on their academic performance. The study specifically attempts to answer to the following research questions:

1) How long do students spend each day on TikTok?

2) What do students use TikTok for?

3) Do students think TikTok affects their academic performance?

The study's significance.

While communication channels, including both new media and traditional platforms, are designed to educate, inform, and entertain, the reality of their usage often diverges from these ideal purposes. In the case of social media platforms like TikTok, the interplay between user behavior and sophisticated algorithms can lead to patterns of excessive use that may impact users' daily lives, including their academic performance. Recent controversies surrounding TikTok, including concerns about data privacy, content moderation, and the platform's potential influence on user behavior, underscore the complex nature of this issue (Martin, 2024).

This study aims to contribute to the growing body of research on social media's impact on academic life. By examining students' perceptions of TikTok's effects on their academic performance at Southern Illinois University, this research may provide valuable insights for

university administrators and educators.

This research may serve as a reference point for future studies in the field of social media and academic performance. By offering a focused examination of TikTok's perceived impact in a specific academic setting, this study can contribute to the broader understanding of how evolving social media platforms interact with educational environments.

Theoretical Framework: Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) is a seminal approach in media studies that focuses on how individuals actively select and use media to satisfy specific needs (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). This audience-centered perspective stands in contrast to media effects theories, which often view audiences as passive recipients. Instead, the uses and gratifications theory posits that media users have agency over their consumption and play an active role in interpreting media in their lives (Rubin, 2009).

The core premise of the uses and gratifications theory is to understand why people use media and what they do with it. Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973) proposed that audience members deliberately choose media that will fulfill certain needs, such as cognitive (information acquisition), affective (emotional experiences), social integrative (strengthening connections with others), personal integrative (reinforcing credibility, status, among others), and tension release (escape and diversion) needs. The central question the uses and gratifications theory seek to answer is: Why do people use media, and what do they use it for? (McQuail, 2010).

Uses and Gratifications Theory's origins can be traced back to the 1940s when researchers began examining why housewives listened to radio soap operas. Katz and Blumler expanded the theory significantly in the 1970s and 1980s, emphasizing that people use media purposefully to benefit themselves rather than being passive consumers (Katz, Blumler, &

Gurevitch, 1974).

The strength of this theory lies in its ability to provide insight into the motivations behind media use and its recognition that different audiences may use the same medium for different purposes. It also emphasizes the concept of active audiences who thoughtfully consume media. However, critics argue that it may overestimate users' awareness of their motivations and does not fully account for the media's broader societal influence (Ruggiero, 2000).
Application of Uses and Gratifications Theory:

Researchers have applied the uses and gratifications theory extensively to traditional media such as radio, TV, and newspapers, as well as to new media like the Internet and social networks. In the context of social media, Ezumah (2013) applied the uses and gratifications theory (UGT) to examine college students' use of various social media platforms, finding that different sites fulfilled different gratifications for students.

For this study on students' perceptions of TikTok's effects on academic performance, the uses and gratifications theory (UGT) provide a valuable framework. It can help explain why students use TikTok and how they perceive its impact on their academic lives. For instance, students might use TikTok for entertainment, social connection, or even educational purposes, each of which could have different perceived effects on their academic performance.
Justification for Using Uses and Gratifications Theory:

The uses and gratifications theory is particularly well-suited to examine how students actively use TikTok to fulfill certain needs and how they perceive that usage as impacting their academics. This theoretical approach will help me provide insight into the motivations behind TikTok usage among college students and how these motivations relate to their perceived academic outcomes.

As Whiting and Williams (2013) demonstrated in their study of social media use, the uses and gratifications theory (UGT) can effectively identify various gratifications sought and obtained from social media platforms. This is directly relevant to my study's focus on TikTok and academic performance.

Overall, the Uses and Gratifications Theory focuses on how audiences strategically use media to satisfy their needs, making it an appropriate choice for my research. By applying this theory, I aim to understand why students use TikTok and how they perceive its impact on their academic performance, which is the core interest of my study.

I conducted an initial pilot study on this topic involving 20 students at Southern Illinois University (5/9/2023). The pilot explored students' perceptions of the effects of TikTok on their academic performance. A total of 20 students were interviewed. It provided some data showing that most students spend at least 3 hours daily on TikTok, and the majority felt it had a negative effect on their GPA. While limited in scope, the pilot offered useful insights into students' perspectives, highlighted areas needing further research, and helped me inform the design of this proposed larger-scale study.

Building on the pilot, this present research aims to gather more robust qualitative and quantitative data through questionnaires and focus groups with a larger, more representative sample of students. The initial pilot study's knowledge played a crucial role in shaping the questions, methodology, and focus of this proposed research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kolan and Dzandza (2018) and Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as a collection of internet-based applications based on specific concepts, enabling users to generate and distribute their own content. Social media has revolutionized the way people connect and communicate globally. This has bridged the gap that once existed when people relied solely on traditional methods like letters and phone calls to stay in touch with friends and family (Kolan and Dzanda, 2018). Today, communication has become incredibly convenient through various platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, and TikTok, among others. According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), these platforms act as tools for developing and maintaining relationships with others.

In today's digital landscape, TikTok has emerged as one of the most popular social media platforms worldwide. TikTok allows users, including students, to create personal accounts, connect with other users, share short videos, post updates about their activities, and send personal messages to chosen recipients. This shift in communication and connectivity demonstrates the profound impact of social media platforms like TikTok on the way people interact and share in today's world.

Hussain et al. (2020) revealed that excessive use of social media platforms, including TikTok, can negatively impact academic performance. According to their research, students who spend more than three hours a day on social media platforms have lower grades in school than those who spend less than an hour a day. Yousaf et al. (2021) conducted a study that demonstrated the detrimental effects of extensive use of social media platforms, like TikTok, on distraction and concentration, ultimately leading to poor academic performance. Students use

social media for connectivity with family and friends and online academic interests. Dias & Duarte (2022) commented that TikTok users will use the application as a means of escaping their daily routine, to express themselves, and to satisfy their needs.

TikTok has profoundly shaped popular culture trends in music, fashion, dance, and slang through the viral spread of challenges, memes, and influencer content (Brown, 2019). The platform has disrupted the music industry by catapulting unknown artists to fame overnight. Beyond entertainment, TikTok has become a forum for political and social activism as users' express views, raise awareness, and organize collective action (Wang & Wu, 2021). However, concerns exist around data privacy, content moderation, and the potential negative mental health effects of prolonged engagement (Garcia, 2019). On the other hand, TikTok continues to expand by localizing content and encouraging creativity and community building in the digital world (Zhang, 2020).

Effects of TikTok on Students

The impact of TikTok on students spans across various dimensions of their lives, encompassing social, psychological, and academic spheres. Designed primarily as a digital entertainment and social platform, TikTok facilitates students' self-expression and interaction (O'Reilly, 2020). Its short-form video format fosters engagement among users, fostering a sense of community and belonging within student circles (Chen & Chen, 2021).

Moreover, TikTok serves as a gateway to global perspectives and cultural experiences, exposing students to diverse viewpoints and issues they might not encounter otherwise (Chen & Chen, 2021). This cross-cultural exchange enhances students' social and intellectual growth, nurturing empathy and cultural competency essential in an interconnected world.

However, alongside its benefits, TikTok poses challenges to students' well-being and

academic performance. The platform's addictive nature and personalized content recommendations can lead to excessive screen time, diverting students' attention from their studies and overall health (O'Reilly, 2020). It underscores the necessity for students to cultivate healthy media habits and effective time management skills to strike a balance between their online engagements and other aspects of life.

Furthermore, TikTok's emphasis on curated imagery and trends can impact students' self-esteem and body image, fostering feelings of inadequacy as they compare themselves to idealized representations (O'Reilly, 2020). The pursuit of validation through likes and comments may contribute to negative psychological outcomes, including anxiety, depression, and diminished self-worth (Chen & Chen, 2021).

While TikTok offers avenues for creativity, community building, and stress relief, its overuse can impede academic progress through procrastination and distraction (Chen & Chen, 2021). The platform's interactive features and endless scroll function may disrupt students' focus and time management, leading to feelings of overwhelm and fatigue.

Also, nighttime TikTok use can disrupt sleep patterns, affecting students' cognitive abilities and academic performance (O'Reilly, 2020). Screens emit blue light that interferes with melatonin production, leading to fatigue, insomnia, and impaired cognitive function during waking hours, thereby undermining effective learning and critical thinking skills.

Although TikTok offers students opportunities for expression and connection, its impact on well-being and academic performance underscores the need for mindful usage and the development of strategies to mitigate potential adverse effects. Balancing the allure of social media with academic responsibilities is crucial for students' holistic development and success in the digital age.

Define academic performance

Academic performance refers to how students fare in their education and what they achieve as learners. It encompasses diverse factors, including test scores, grades, class rankings, completion rates, and overall scholarly accomplishments (Lamas, 2015). As a result, academic performance serves as a benchmark for determining students' learning outcomes and educational levels. Researchers have proposed varying definitions of academic performance based on their specific contexts and objectives (Lamas, 2015).

Common quantitative measures include standardized test scores, grade point averages (GPAs), and performance assessments to quantify students' knowledge acquisition and competency development in key subject areas (York et al., 2015). We can also utilize qualitative evaluations to assess students' depth of learning, critical thinking abilities, problem-solving skills, and mastery of competencies related to their specialization (Adeyemo, 2010).

Overall, academic performance constitutes a multidimensional concept that broadly captures students' educational gains, achievements, and outcomes across quantitative and qualitative metrics. It offers insight into students' scholastic progress, mastery of learning objectives, and preparation for real-world application of knowledge (Lamas, 2015).

Evaluating academic performance facilitates tracking student growth, assessing teaching effectiveness, and continuously refining educational programs. A comprehensive approach using diverse measurements provides a more complete picture of students' attainments and readiness for the future (York et al., 2015).

Effect of TikTok on Academic Performance

Social media use profoundly impacts students' academic performance, with both positive and negative implications. Students perceive social media as motivational, fostering engagement

in class activities and discussions. These platforms also serve as valuable informational sources, aiding academic pursuits through productive peer exchanges regarding assignments (Mingle & Adams, 2015).

Comparatively, TikTok provides students with a dynamic platform that enables creativity and stress relief. Users can express themselves through short films and dance, showcasing talents and viewpoints to a global audience (Abbas et al., 2019). TikTok also supplies entertainment and comic relief from academic pressures via funny videos, speeches, and skits, thereby enhancing mental health and resilience (Abbas et al., 2019). However, the interactive nature of TikTok can challenge students to maintain focus and time management, demonstrating the need for balanced social media use (Abbas et al., 2019).

Excessive use of TikTok for non-educational purposes negatively affects academics, as research indicates. Prioritizing socializing over studying on these platforms causes distractions that impede learning and concentration, potentially resulting in poorer grades as students favor social interactions over academic duties (Mingle & Adams, 2015). Furthermore, social media addiction harms students' mental health by disrupting mood, cognition, and emotions, hampering academic success (Mingle & Adams, 2015).

Specifically regarding TikTok, habitual usage fosters distractions and procrastination from academic tasks, according to Abbas et al. (2019). The app's addictive endless scroll feature diminishes situational awareness, diverting focus from education. Notifications and interactive content further decrease productivity and promote passive consumption, complicating students' balancing of social media and academics (Abbas et al., 2019). Overestimating session length on TikTok also disrupts time management, increasing academic stress and unease (Abbas et al., 2019).

Students' tendency to prioritize social networking and leisure on social media can result in missed assignment deadlines and impede academic progress. This shift from academic responsibilities to social media engagement can erode time management abilities, affecting educational outcomes (Mingle & Adams, 2015). Furthermore, excessive use of TikTok at night disrupts healthy circadian rhythms and sleep patterns. The blue light from screens inhibits melatonin production, delaying restorative sleep onset (Bucknell & Kottasz, 2020). Consequently, students experience daytime tiredness, insomnia, and drowsiness, which hinder cognition and yield subpar academic performance. Chronic sleep loss further degrades cognitive abilities like attention, memory, and higher order thinking fundamental to learning (Bucknell & Kottasz, 2020).

While TikTok has rapidly gained popularity for entertainment and community among college students, psychologists have raised concerns about potential negative effects like distraction, wasted time, and isolation that may impair academic achievement. Students' perceptions of TikTok's impact on their educational experiences and performance require further research.

Understanding how students perceive their relationship to TikTok can help researchers better comprehend the effects of TikTok on students' success in education. Therefore, the results can provide guidance to education systems on how to better interpret the role of TikTok in university settings.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adheres with the Human Subjects protocols. Approval for conducting survey and interviews was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Southern Illinois University Carbondale in Spring 2024. Prior to collecting data, I informed participants that their involvement in the study was entirely voluntary and emphasized their right to withdraw at any time without any consequences.

This chapter presents the methodology I employed to investigate the research questions. It presents the research approach and design, the sampling methods, and the data collection techniques. Furthermore, this chapter articulates the data analysis plan and reflects upon issues of validity, reliability, and ethical considerations.

Research Design

The goal of this study is to understand students' perceptions of the effects of TikTok on their academic performance at Southern Illinois University. Therefore, to effectively investigate the research questions, I employed a research design that uses both quantitative (survey and content analysis) and qualitative methods (interviews). Patton's (2014) scholarship informed the decision to use a mixed methodology to ensure the collection of insightful data. Specifically, I used a case study approach, which included a survey and in-depth interviews, and a content analysis of a selection of TikTok videos to have a better understanding of what students might follow on their TikTok feed.

Case Study: A case study can be defined as a research method that involves an in-depth examination of a single case or a small number of cases within a real-world context (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011 p. 126). To collect the data, I included both quantitative and qualitative

methods. I designed a survey to collect data on the uses and gratifications of TikTok, and in-depth qualitative interviews to get insights on the students' perceptions on TikTok on their academic performances.

Content Analysis: In addition, I conducted a content analysis of 10 videos to identify the types of videos used for students' educational purposes. I coded the 10 selected TikTok videos for recurring themes related to academic support, flexibility, and motivation, allowing for an understanding of the types of academic content available on TikTok. The content analysis of these videos helped me to understand their academic relevance and how students might use the social networking platform for educational needs.

The selected videos focused on:

Communication and Collaboration: For this category, I selected videos demonstrating group study strategies or tips on collaborative assignments, highlighting how TikTok might foster peer communication.

Access to Resources: Here, I selected videos guiding students to free academic resources and apps for studying, showing TikTok as a source for valuable tools and information.

Community Building: These are the videos promoting study groups, accountability partnerships, or supportive communities that encourage academic motivation.

Engagement and Motivation: Videos offering study tips, productivity hacks, or success stories to keep students motivated and engaged in their academic pursuits.

Flexibility: The app is accessible to all students, and they can always access it. The videos in this category are those that highlight how TikTok provides educational content that is easily accessible at any time, allowing students to revisit material as needed, making it a flexible study resource.

Operational definitions

  Communication and collaboration: This item refers to TikTok videos that encourage students to engage with each other academically by sharing information, providing support, and working together. For instance, in a video that I reviewed by typing the words 'communication and collaboration', a teacher demonstrates how she mobilizes her students, encouraging them to collaborate in teams while having fun. The video emphasizes that these collaborative skills will be beneficial for the students' future career.

  Access to Resources: This term pertains to TikTok videos that highlight specific academic resources. For example, in a particular video that I found under 'access to resources', the creator presents three top summarization tools for students: an article summarizer, a tool supporting multiple file formats, and customizable summary options. The creator explains these tools as ways to streamline studying and improve efficiency.

  Community building: This term refers to TikTok content that encourages the formation of academic communities or study groups, thereby fostering a supportive peer network. For example, in one video I found on TikTok, a student shares strategies for community-building among students, such as organizing activities like having lunch together. The video illustrates how these activities help students connect and support one another.

  Engagement and Motivation: The TikTok videos under this category assist students in maintaining focus, motivation, and productivity in their academic work. In one such video where I searched 'engagement and motivation', the creator offers tips for students to stay engaged in their studies, including setting specific goals for each day.

More Definitions

Perception: Perception can be defined as the process by which an individual selects, organizes,

and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2000)

Academic Performance: Kyoshaba (2005) defines academic performance as the extent to which a student, teacher or institution have achieved their short- or long-term educational goals.

Scope of the study

The study was conducted at Southern Illinois University. The objective was to study students' perception of the effects of TikTok on their academic performance. I conducted the study during the Spring of 2024.

The population of the study

The study included Southern Illinois University Undergraduate students. I selected survey participants for quantitative data from the freshman class of 2023–2024 and purposefully selected participants for qualitative data based on their understanding of the topic.

Sampling and sampling techniques

The study was conducted within a large Midwestern university with a diverse student population, including both graduate and undergraduate students. I focused specifically on undergraduate freshmen, as they represent a group actively exploring new study resources and potentially open to educational tools like TikTok. Given the limitations of time and resources, the study employed a non-probability convenience sampling method to gather participants. I chose a convenient and purposive sample, targeting undergraduate students who were more accessible and who actively used TikTok, to provide insights that were relevant to the study's aims. By focusing on this accessible population, the study was able to gather valuable data within its logistical constraints.

I selected a sample of 50 undergraduate students, for an exploratory analysis and suitable

for gathering qualitative insights. This sample size provided a manageable scope for data analysis while capturing a diverse set of perspectives. I conducted a pilot study to refine the survey and interview questions, ensuring clarity and relevance to the research objectives

Data collection method

Survey: I designed and distributed a survey of 15 questions to 50 students. This survey covered both quantitative and qualitative aspects of TikTok's impact on academic performance: Out of the 15 questions, 7 were quantitative, focusing on measurable aspects of TikTok usage, such as, number of hours spent on TikTok for educational purposes, and perceived improvement in specific academic skills.

These questions provided a basic understanding of the students' profiles and their typical TikTok habits.

The remaining 8 questions were qualitative and open-ended, allowing students to express their attitudes, opinions, and perceptions about TikTok's value or drawbacks in supporting their academic performance. The questionnaire for the survey is in Appendix-1.

Interviews: Stuckey (2013) defines an interview as a conversation in which one asks questions to elicit information.

Originally, 10 students had agreed to participate in the interviews, but only 5 were available on the scheduled dates. I conducted the interviews in May 2024, before the end of the semester. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes; I conducted the interviews in the main hall of Ambassador Hall, on the SIUC campus. This is a residence for international students, although my five respondents were visiting the hall and were all from the U.S.A. Among the five participants, two girls were studying communication; of the three boys, one was studying nursing and the other two were in the school of journalism and advertising.

I recorded each interview using the Voice Memo application on my I-phone. All students agreed to be recorded. I then transcribed the interviews into a word document. The data from these interviews allowed for a rich exploration of students' perspectives, providing detailed information that added depth to the data collected from the survey. I handed out the consent forms before the interview session.

Ethical considerations

Ethics are codes of conduct that distinguish between right and wrong. They help to determine the difference between the researcher's acceptance behaviors. During this research, I considered the following ethical issues.

In accordance with SIUC Human Subjects Procedures, I informed participants about the study's objectives so that they knew what the interview was all about. I asked them to sign on informed consent, a fundamental ethical principle.

The study adhered to the principle of self-determination and followed the guidelines from the Human Subjects protocols. I informed respondents that their participation was voluntary and emphasized their right to withdraw from the study at any time they wished, without any consequences.

Data analysis

The data analysis integrated both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Quantitative Analysis: I statistically analyzed the responses to the quantitative questions to provide a clear view of usage patterns and the impact on students' academic activities. I used frequency tables and questionnaires; I analyzed quantitative data from the field.

Qualitative Analysis: I thematically analyzed the qualitative responses from the in-depth interviews to explore attitudes, motivations, and perceptions around TikTok as a tool for

academic improvement (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Thematic analysis allows for a rich and detailed understanding of the data, facilitating the identification of patterns and themes that emerge from participants' experiences (Flick, 2018; Liamputtong, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2016). I illustrated from thematic analysis, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), to analyze the qualitative interviews.

Limitations of the study

The study came across limitations, such as the unwillingness of some students to provide the required information. The sample size was small, which limited the generalizability of the findings.

The study was only conducted at one university, which further limits the generalizability of the findings. Despite these limitations, the study provided valuable insights into the relationship between TikTok use and academic performance among university students.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATIONS, AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the research findings. It is organized into three sections. The first section presents the background characteristics of the respondents. The other sections address the study's various research objectives.

Study Findings

The data recorded in this chapter was extracted using a survey and structured open-ended interview questions. The above, considering the level of willingness and ability of the respondents, was instructed to ensure data validity and reliability. Fifty-five respondents were used to collect the data in this study.

Response rate

The study yielded 50 completed responses for the survey and 5 respondents For in-depth interviews.

The findings are based on the background characteristics of the respondents.

This section displays and analyzes findings on the background characteristics of respondents. It highlights the variations in respondents' age and gender.

The respondents' gender

The following table shows the findings about respondents' genders, followed by analysis. The table below resumes the respondents' gender repartition.

Table 1: Respondents' gender repartition.

Gender of the respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Male	23	46.0%
Female	27	54.0%
others	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	0	0.0%
Total	50	100%

Source: Primary data

Both males and females participated in the study, as shown in the table above: 46% of the respondents were male and 54% were female. The findings of respondent's gender are relevant because respondents of different sexes have varying views and knowledge on the impact of TikTok on academic performance among university students.

Age group of the respondents

The following table illustrates the findings about the age group of respondents. An analysis follows.

Table 2: **Age group of the respondents.**

Age	Number of respondents	Percentage
18-19	27	54.0%
20-22	20	40.0%
Above	3	6.0%

Source: Primary data

Results from the table show that most respondents (54%) were between the ages of 18 and 19 years, followed by those aged 20–22 (40%), and above (6%). This suggests that students aged 18-19 years, were the most active participants in the study, which is significant as different age groups have varying experiences of TikTok and perceptions of its impact on academic performance.

The extent of TikTok use among students.

The first objective of the study was to investigate the perception of TikTok's effects on academic performance. The participants received a questionnaire, 50 of whom completed the survey and 5 participated in the in-depth interviews.

Table 3: The extent of TikTok use among students

Hours spent	Number of Respondents	Percentages
Less than 30 minutes	5	10.0%
30 minutes – 1hr	14	28.0%
3 – 5 hrs.	22	44.0%
6 – 7 hrs.	2	4.0%
All day	1	2.0%
I am not sure	6	12.0%

Source: Primary data

The table displays the distribution of respondents according to their frequency of TikTok usage. Most participants (44.0%) spent 3-5 hours on the app daily. 28.0% of the participants utilized the platform for a duration ranging from 30 minutes to an hour. Only 10.0% of the respondents spent less than 30 minutes on TikTok. Only 4% used it for 6-7 hours, and 2.0% reported using it for the entire day. Notably, 12.0% of respondents were unsure about their TikTok usage.

Table 4: Social media preferences for academic purposes

Social media platforms	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Facebook	13	26.0%
Instagram	15	30.0%
Snapchat	9	18.0%
TikTok	35	70.0%
YouTube	34	68.0%
Others	50	100%
None	3	6.0%

Source: Primary data

Table 4 provides a breakdown of students' preferred social media platforms for academic purposes. TikTok and YouTube are the most popular choices, with 70% and 68% of respondents using them, respectively. Students also use Instagram and Facebook, with usage rates of 30% and 26%, respectively. Snapchat is less popular; only 18% of respondents use it. A small percentage of students (6%) do not use any social media for academic purposes, while 50% indicate using other platforms not listed.

Effects of TikTok on academic performance

The second objective was to find out how students use social media, particularly TikTok. The following results were documented.

Table 5: The frequency of TikTok usage among students.

Frequency	Number	Percentage
Always	7	14.0%
Often	14	28.0%
Sometimes	13	26.0%
Rarely	10	20.0%
Never	6	12.0%

Source: Primary data

Table 5 shows the number of respondents who answered that they use TikTok to help them do better in school at different times. It shows that the largest group, comprising 28.0% (14 students), uses TikTok often. 26.0% of the sample (13 students), closely follow this. 20% (10 students) reported using TikTok rarely, while 14.0% of them (7 students) reported using it always. The smallest group comprises those who never use TikTok, accounting for 12.0% (6 students) of the respondents. This data provides insights into the varying levels of TikTok

engagement among the surveyed student population. According to the data, most of the participants used TikTok to improve their academic performance at school, at least often.

Table 6: How students utilize TikTok for academic purposes.

Benefits	Number of responses	Percentage
Communicate and collaborate	27	54.0%
Access to resources	28	56.0%
Community building	24	48.0%
Engagement and motivation	37	74.0%
Flexibility	12	24.0%
Other	50	100.0%
No answer	2	4.0%

Source: Primary data

According to these data, respondents who completed the survey saw several advantages to using TikTok. The participants exhibited a range of academic uses for TikTok, with engagement and motivation ranking highest at 74.4%. "Access to resources" ranks second at

56.0% (28 responses), followed by "communicate and collaborate" at 54.0% (27 responses); 48.0% (24 responses) of students reported "community building". 24.0% (12 responses) reported "flexibility" as the least common benefit. 100% of respondents (50 responses) reported "other" benefits, indicating that students also use other platforms for academic purposes beyond the listed categories. Conversely, 2.0% of the respondents did not provide a response. This data highlights the diverse ways students leverage TikTok to support their academic endeavors.

Table 7: The problems students face while using TikTok

Problems faced	Number of responses	Percentage
Distraction	39	78.0%
Privacy	8	16.0%
Misinformation	22	44.0%
I am not sure	9	18.0%
Any other	0	0.0%

Source: Primary data

Table 7 resumes the percentage of respondents who reported experiencing problems while using TikTok for academic purposes. Distraction emerges as the predominant issue, affecting 78.0% of respondents, highlighting the platform's potential to impede focus on academic tasks. Misinformation follows as the second most prevalent concern, reported by

44.0% of participants, underscoring the need for critical thinking skills. 18.0% of students expressed uncertainty, while 16.0% reported privacy concerns. The absence of responses in the "Any other" category (0.0%) suggests the survey comprehensively captured the key issues.

The reasons why students use TikTok

Why do you use TikTok? The findings reveal that students use TikTok for several reasons, with entertainment being the predominant motivation. In the survey questionnaire, students describe the platform as "fun," "enjoyable," and "a source of humor", highlighting its appeal as a leisure activity. However, TikTok's role extends beyond entertainment, students also acknowledge its educational potential. They use TikTok to "learn new things," and "acquire more knowledge," demonstrating a dual function of both entertainment and education.

Students even actively seek specific information for personal growth, such as motivational content and skill acquisition in areas like cooking and fitness. Students frequently mentioned the platform's content diversity, appreciating the access to a wide range of information on one platform. The students value TikTok for its community-building aspect, using it to connect with like-minded individuals and build a community that shares the same values. Also, students also noted the platform's potential for creative expression and content creation.

The perceived impact on academic performance

Have you noticed any difference in your academic performance since you stared using TikTok? Perceptions of TikTok's impact on students' academic performance varied significantly. Most respondents reported no noticeable difference in their academic performance since they started using TikTok, with responses like "*No*", "*not really*", and "*I haven't noticed any common differences*". However, other students reported a decline in their academic performance, citing

phrases like "*reduced,*" "*it has reduced,*" and "*yes, it is harder to get started on homework,*" indicating that TikTok use could be associated with decreased academic performance.

Also, respondents reported improvements, stating that "*Yes, it has greatly improved,*" "There is *some improvement,*" and "*Yes, I am improving.*" The students even mentioned learning valuable information from TikTok, suggesting it can have educational benefits.

Skill Development through TikTok

Do you think TikTok helps you to develop and practice useful skills, such as creativity or communication? Why or why not? Students perceive TikTok as a platform that fosters the development of various skills, with creativity (the ability to think of new and original ideas) being the most frequently mentioned benefit. Students highlighted TikTok's role in encouraging creativity through exposure to diverse content and innovative ideas. One student mentioned, "*Creativity is a foundation TikTok exposed me to; it taught me that there is more than what I expect of the work ethic; it has taught me to think outside the box.*"

Additionally, respondents reported learning specific skills through TikTok content, such as video editing or gardening". Another student noted the platform's ability to showcase talent and provide motivation, explaining that "*So many creative creators are on TikTok. It motivates you to do something with your life.*" However, while most students experienced improvements in life skills, others pointed out potential drawbacks. "*Creativity blossoms on TikTok, but it decreases communication skills... glued to your phone isn't helpful with communication,*" another student observed.

TikTok for Academic Performance

How do you think TikTok impacts students' academic performance? Students perceived varied impacts on their academic performance from using TikTok. For most students, the impact

was beneficial, leading to improved motivation, enhanced creativity, and better engagement with their studies. For example, one student mentioned using TikTok to find study resources by asking friends for recommendations, suggesting the platform can facilitate peer-assisted learning.

Another student highlighted how TikTok enables bridging academic knowledge with practical applications, stating, *"I do create academic TikTok; it helps people in my community to be aware of the knowledge that I share... I help people with rabbit breeding, and they sell rabbits now and make money."* These insights indicate that TikTok can serve as a tool for sharing knowledge and applying academic concepts in real-world contexts.

The study's third objective was to investigate students' perceptions of the learning effects of TikTok on their academic performance.

Based on the interviews, the study revealed that TikTok can have both positive and negative effects on the academic performance of students. For example, one of the interviewed respondents noted that TikTok can be highly distracting: *"it has decreased the capacity to concentrate and focus for longer periods of time. The short nature of TikTok videos has rewired our brains to only be able to pay attention for short durations."* This highlights a common sentiment among students who find TikTok detrimental to their ability to focus on academic work, leading to reduced productivity.

However, a respondent emphasized the educational potential of TikTok, stating, *"TikTok gives room to learn and relearn; it enables critical thinking."* Another interviewed respondent attested that TikTok allows them to explore new study methods for their classes and break away from traditional learning approaches. *"This is due to the content creators on TikTok who share study skill-enhancing content,"* they explained. This suggests that when it is used purposefully, TikTok can be a source of valuable learning and knowledge acquisition. For example, students

actively use the platform to engage with educational content or find inspiration from creators who share study tips or insights on specific subjects.

Additionally, students reported creating TikTok videos related to their academic work, which they found beneficial. One respondent explained, *"I have created TikTok for my advertising class as well as for clients I volunteer for. It is very topical for my line of work."* Advertising on social media is a necessary skill. This shows how TikTok can serve as a practical learning tool for certain academic disciplines, especially those related to media and communication. The study also uncovered mixed impacts of TikTok on students' academic performance.

Students reported no noticeable difference in their academic results from using TikTok. However, certain students indicated a decline in their performance, citing reasons such as distraction and difficulty initiating homework. As one respondent explained, *"With TikTok, it's very destructive, especially during times when I want to concentrate on revising my work or finishing up course assignments. I visit my TikTok account whenever I'm feeling bored, just to check for new feeds or see if anyone has posted a new video."* This suggests TikTok's potential to serve as a distracting temptation that can hinder academic focus and productivity for learners. Conversely, students reported improvements, noting that TikTok helped them learn valuable information or skills that contributed positively to their academic performance.

A common sentiment among respondents was the need for balance when using TikTok for academic purposes. While students who use TikTok responsibly for educational content may experience positive impacts on their learning, those who use it primarily for entertainment may find it a significant distraction that hampers their academic performance. For example, one student remarked, "TikTok will send you in rabbit holes, but you end up figuring something out,

something you are interested in," suggesting that the platform can lead to productive exploration when managed well.

To summarize, the responses suggest that TikTok's impact on academic performance is highly individualized. While it can serve as both a tool for learning and a source of distraction, its effects depend largely on how students use the platform and their ability to self-regulate.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In these conclusions, I provide a summary of the study and offer some recommendations for future developments.

Extent of use of TikTok among university students.

The study revealed that most students use TikTok for 3-5 hours per day. This extensive usage reflects the multifaceted role TikTok plays in students' lives. Students leverage TikTok as a versatile tool, using it to interact with peers, share experiences, and participate in trends or challenges. This fosters a sense of community, allowing students to stay connected with their social circles even when physically apart, as the platform enables them to view short-form videos about their friends' activities and interests. Furthermore, TikTok serves as a source of diverse content, from educational snippets to current events, which students can consume in an engaging, easily digestible format.

Moreover, the study found that most of the students surveyed have working knowledge of how TikTok functions, demonstrating its pervasiveness in their digital literacy. The platform has become a significant component of their social lives, integrated into their daily routines. For students, checking TikTok has become as routine as other daily activities: they might wake up, take a shower, brush their teeth, and check TikTok, or vice versa. This habitual use underscores the platform's importance in their day-to-day experiences and social interactions.

Showing students perceptions of the effects of TikTok on the academic performance of SIU students.

Majority of respondents see TikTok as a distraction, yet others view it as a valuable tool for fostering connections and sharing knowledge. This suggests that TikTok offers unique

features that facilitate communication, support academic collaboration, and help students acquire new skills.

Additionally, respondents in this study perceive TikTok as a valuable learning tool, highlighting its role in facilitating collaboration, helping them relax after studying, providing academic support, fostering new skills, and building a sense of community. However, other participants raised concerns about TikTok's potential to distract from academic work, reduce focus on tasks, shorten attention span, and primarily serve as a social networking site rather than an academic resource.

Also, the study found that students often devote more time to TikTok than to their studies, which, eventually, could negatively impact their academic performance. However, despite acknowledging their significant use of TikTok, individuals in the study still achieve academic success by effectively managing their time. For these students, TikTok may play a supportive role, such as providing educational content, stress relief, or serving as a motivational tool, which helps them maintain a balance between leisure and academic responsibilities.

Effects of TikTok use on academic performance.

The study revealed that TikTok influences students' academic performance both positively and negatively. While most respondents perceive TikTok as a distraction, others find it valuable for building connections and sharing knowledge. These findings suggest that TikTok offers unique features that promote communication, support academic collaboration, and aid students in developing new skills.

Additionally, respondents perceive TikTok as a valuable learning tool, highlighting its role in facilitating international collaboration, helping them relax after studying, providing academic support, fostering new skills, and building a sense of community. However,

participants also raised concerns about TikTok's potential to distract from academic work, reduce focus on tasks and shorten attention span.

However, despite acknowledging their significant use of TikTok, some individuals in the study still achieve academic success by effectively managing their time. For these students, TikTok plays a supportive role, such as providing educational content, stress relief, or serving as a motivational tool, which helps them maintain a balance between leisure and academic responsibilities.

Effects of TikTok use on academic performance.

I also found that students frequently spend more time on TikTok than on their studies, a habit that could ultimately harm their academic performance. The findings suggest that TikTok often diverts students' attention, leading them to prioritize the platform over their academic responsibilities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that TikTok usage has a multifaceted impact on the academic performance of students at Southern Illinois University, with effects ranging from beneficial to detrimental depending on individual factors. While most students find TikTok a source of distraction that hinders their studies, others can integrate it into their academic lives without negative consequences, even leveraging the platform for learning and stress relief. The key to these different outcomes lies in personal attributes such as cognitive ability, time management skills, and motivation.

This research suggests that fostering better self-regulation and time management could help students navigate social media use more effectively. Although TikTok presents both opportunities and challenges, its impact on academic performance depends largely on the user's

ability to balance engagement with their academic responsibilities. The relationship between TikTok usage and academic performance is complex and nuanced. Excessive or unbalanced TikTok use can potentially have negative impacts on student grades, yet the platform also offers opportunities for learning and staying informed that can benefit academic success.

Students who can effectively manage their time and self-regulate their TikTok usage often gain positive outcomes. The platform can facilitate the acquisition of new skills and expose students to global events and perspectives. However, those who struggle to find the right balance between TikTok use and academic responsibilities may experience detrimental effects on their grades and learning.

This research underscores the importance of developing strong time management and self-regulation skills in the digital age. As students navigate the increasing prevalence of social media and other online platforms, the ability to balance their leisure and educational activities will be crucial for academic achievement.

The findings highlight the need for further investigation into how students can best harness the potential benefits of TikTok and similar platforms, while also mitigating any potential drawbacks within an academic context. Understanding these nuances can help inform strategies and interventions to support student success in the digital era.

Limitations of the study

The sample of respondents is small and limited to SIU students.

Recommendations

A more representative sample should include students from different universities across the country.

Areas for Further Research

Future research should explore the role of emerging social media platforms in academic settings, recognizing the broader implications of social media on students' learning and academic performance. Other areas of study could involve comparing TikTok content versus ads to determine which is more effective in communicating with students.

As society grapples with a generation raised within the vast technological capabilities of the Internet, these platforms have become essential tools for communication. Therefore, future research should integrate technological communication into broader communication models to fully understand critical aspects of information exchange, particularly in academic settings.

It is crucial to acknowledge that the landscape of social media is constantly evolving, with platforms rising and falling in popularity. Currently, TikTok faces challenges from various governments worldwide, including potential limitations or bans in countries like the United States. However, the significance of this study extends beyond TikTok itself, remaining relevant even if the platform's future is uncertain.

The findings of this research are applicable to the broader context of social media's impact on academic performance. The core issues identified—such as time management, self-regulation, and the balance between entertainment and education—are universal to most social media platforms. As new platforms emerge and potentially replace TikTok, the insights gained from this study will continue to be valuable in understanding how students interact with and are affected by social media in their academic lives.

Moreover, this study contributes to a growing body of research on the integration of social media into education. The observed benefits of TikTok for learning and information dissemination highlight the potential for short-form video content in educational contexts. This

insight can inform future developments in educational technology and social media-based learning, regardless of the specific platform used.

In essence, while the study focuses on TikTok, its findings and implications transcend any single platform. The research provides a framework for understanding the complex relationship between social media use and academic performance, offering valuable insights for educators, students, and policymakers as they navigate the ever-changing digital landscape.

As social media continues to evolve, studies like this one will play a crucial role in helping society adapt to new technologies while maintaining academic integrity and success. By understanding the mechanisms through which social media impacts learning, we can better prepare students to thrive in an increasingly digital world, regardless of which specific platforms dominate the landscape in the future.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE STUDY

My name is Stellah Nakiranda, a Student at Southern Illinois University. I am doing research on students' perception of TikTok use on their academic performance. I would be grateful if you can spare 10-15 minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire. All your responses will be kept confidential. This questionnaire indicates voluntary consent to participate in this study.

Instructions

Tick beside what relates to you.

1. General Information

- Male

- Female

- Others

- Not prefer to say

2. Your age range (years)

- 18 - 19

- 20 - 22

- Above

3. Which social media platform do you use for academic purposes? (Answer all that apply)

- FaceBook

- Instagram

- SnapChat

- TikTok

- YouTube

- Others _____ please specify

- None

  If you use TikTok, please, answer the following questions (4-17) on TikTok Usage

4. On an average day, how much time do you spend on TikTok?

- Less than 30 minutes

- 30 minutes – 1hr

- 3 – 5hrs

- 6 – 7hrs

- All day

- I am not sure

5. How often do you use TikTok for your academic work?

- Always

- Sometimes

- Often

- a) Not at all

6. What are, in your view, the benefits of using TikTok for academic purposes? (Select all that apply to you)

- Communicate and collaborate

- Access to resources

- Community building

- Engagement and motivation

- Flexibility

- Other _____ specify

7. Do you face any problems while using TikTok for academic purposes? (Select all that apply to you)

- Distraction

- Privacy

- Misinformation

- Any other ___.   (specify)

- I am not sure

8. Why do you use TikTok?

9. How do you use TikTok? Do you create and post content?

10. Do you feel that you spend more time than you should on TikTok? If yes, does that affect your academic work?

11. Have you noticed any difference in your academic performance since you started using TikTok?

12. Do you think TikTok helps you to develop and practice useful skills, such as creativity or communication? Why or why not?

13. Have you ever created TikTok content related to your academic work? If yes, how do you think it impacted your academic performance?

14. How do you think TikTok impacts student academic performance?

15. Finally, would you please give any additional thoughts and comments on effects of TikTok on Academic Performance.

Thank you for your participation.If you need any further information, please free to contact me at stellah.nakiranda@siu.edu; you can also reach out to my thesis advisor, Dr. Cinzia Padovani at Cinzia.padovani@gmail.com

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW FOR THE STUDY

Introduction:

My name is Stellah Nakiranda, a Student at Southern Illinois University. I am doing research on students' perception of TikTok use on their academic performance. I would be grateful if you can spare 45 minutes of your time to complete the interview. All your responses will be kept confidential. This questionnaire indicates voluntary consent to participate in this study

1. Gender and age?

2. Do you use TikTok?

3. Do you generally use social media for academic purposes? If so, which platforms do you prefer, and why?

4. How do you use TikTok? Do you create and post content?

5. Do you feel that you spend more time than you should on TikTok? If yes, does that affect your academic work?

6. Have you noticed any difference in your academic performance since you started using TikTok?

7. Do you think TikTok helps you to develop and practice useful skills, such as creativity or communication? Why or why not?

8. Have you ever created TikTok videos related to your academic work? If yes, how do you think it impacted your academic performance?

9. How do you think TikTok impacts student academic performance?

10. Finally, would you please give any additional thoughts and comments on effects of

TikTok on Academic Performance.

Thank you for your participation. If you need any further information, please free to contact me at stellah.nakiranda@siu.edu; you can also reach out to my thesis advisor, Dr. Cinzia Padovani at Cinzia.padovani@gmail.com.

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