# **Title: Exploring The TikTok's Impact On Today’s Youth**

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## **Acknowledgement:**

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## **Abstract:**

This study looks into the popular TikTok app and its impact on the identity formation and expression of young people. It investigates how TikTok enables young individuals to create, share, and consume diverse and authentic content that reflects their interests, values, and experiences. People on the app can work together, take part in trends, and interact with others. Also, the paper dives into how TikTok gives people a place to chase their dreams and find out what other possibilities their lives could hold. We'll show you how TikTok might have some good and bad effects on how youngsters grow and learn about themselves. These youngsters could be the ones leading in the future.

However, we also need to think about the possible dangers TikTok could pose to young people. This includes the chance that they might come across something damaging, feel like they have to live up to hard to reach standards, have their private information leaked, or fall victim to someone with bad intentions. Because of these risks, it's very important to teach youngsters how to use TikTok in a way that's safe and responsible. The dissertation highlights the need for responsible usage, awareness of potential challenges, and the development of strategies to support the safe and healthy engagement of young people with TikTok and similar platforms.

## **Contents:**

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## **Chapter 1:**

## **Introduction:**

TikTok stands out as a phenomenon, drawing in countless users with its fun, brief videos and unique trends. This introduction begins by looking at the role of social media, specifically TikTok, in how the youth think and act. It shows how TikTok has left a unique mark on the young generation's digital lives.

The overarching research problem addressed in this dissertation is around how TikTok influences teens and their actions, focusing mostly on China and a few other Asian countries. As young individuals increasingly find themselves immersed in the dynamic world of TikTok, questions arise regarding the platform's influence on career aspirations, patterns of engagement, the emergence of trends, and its role in shaping both positive and negative aspects of youth culture. This study aims to untangle TikTok's effects, offering a deep understanding that goes past what's just trendy and uncovers true long term effects for the coming generation.

**1.1 Background:**

Social media, a big part of today's digital world, moulds the actions, dreams, and social life of the younger generation. TikTok is one such platform that has gained huge popularity. It first came on the scene in September 2016 and quickly became a hit in the social media world. Its constant stream of celebrity content attracts teens and young adults from around the globe (Sajid et al., 2022). As of February 2020, the platform enjoyed 800 million daily users. In China, 150 million people use the Chinese version, Douyin. Other countries like Cambodia, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Pakistan, Nepal, and India also report growing use of TikTok (Omar, 2020; Basch, 2020).

ByteDance owns TikTok. According to TikTok's own website, it aims to “inspire creativity” and “bring joy” to its users (TikTok – Real Short Videos, 2020). The app is a User generated content platform (UGC), meaning the users create the content, not the company (Yang, 2020). TikTok can be used on mobile phones, allowing users to create a variety of videos. This covers everything from quick lip syncs and dance routines to gaming, DIY, and food videos. The videos can last from 3 to 15 seconds or 3 to 60 seconds. Users can also watch, share, and comment on others' videos (Yang, 2020). As a short video platform, TikTok provides all sorts of content: music, dance, viral videos, and trending topics. Its interface is easy to navigate, with a scroll feature allowing users to flick between recommended videos. TikTok suggests these based on the users' likes and interaction history, as well as current viral trends. This platform significantly shapes youth culture and behaviour, setting new trends, fostering creativity, and providing a platform for social interaction and self expression.

TikTok allows teens to display their skills and authenticity. Some gain advantages, while others find themselves simply hooked (Ullah et al., 2022). Numerous studies have tackled the topic of TikTok addiction, revealing that social interaction fears and loneliness positively impact usage of short video apps (Zhang et al., 2019). Also, Kumar and Prabha foresee that self love and uncertainty may drive excessive TikTok use (Yang, 2020).

**1.2 Research Objectives:**

I aim to thoroughly study the impact of TikTok on young people in China and other Asian countries in this research. My goal is to understand the good and bad ways TikTok shapes youth behaviour, goals, and interactions in these unique cultures.

In my paper, I delve into how TikTok affects young people's lives. I look at changes in goals, like wanting to create TikTok content. I also see how TikTok's endless scroll changes how they interact with online material. My research also covers new trends and viral content and how they influence things like fashion and education. In the end, I hope to show how TikTok is changing young people's culture and shaping our future.

But, we can't ignore the bad parts. My paper will discuss issues such as internet addiction, cyberbullying, privacy, and safety. Parents, teachers, and everyone else needs to know about these problems and help study young people's behaviour to ensure safe use of TikTok and other social apps.

This paper gives a broad view of how TikTok affects kids' lives and actions. We discuss the good and the bad of TikTok. The goal is to help people talk about what social media does to young people. In the end, it stresses that kids should use it wisely, know the risks, and have plans to make sure TikTok and sites like it are safe and good for them.

**1.3 TikTok's Impact in China and Asian Countries:**

**1.3.1 Emergence and Dominance in China:**

Also recognized as Douyin in China, TikTok has quickly risen to be a big part of pop culture. It has grabbed the focus of numerous youngsters with its special variety of short videos, challenges, and fashionable trends. It has changed the way we understand digital fun. It has also nestled itself deep into our culture. It impacts various parts of young people's lives (Omar, 2020; Basch, 2020).

**1.3.2 Cultural Dynamics in Asian Nations:**

TikTok has expanded its reach well beyond China. Its growth in Asia includes countries like Cambodia, Japan, Malaysia, and others, including Nepal, Pakistan, and India. The platform's success lies in its ability to relate to young users across different cultures, proving its influence in the digital world (Omar, 2020; Basch, 2020).

In today's digital age, social media platforms greatly affect the attitudes, dreams, and social behaviour of young people. Among them, TikTok has become a global giant since its launch in September 2016. It now boasts over 800 million daily users as of February 2020 (Sajid et al., 2022). The platform's meteoric rise is evident in its substantial user base, boasting over 800 million daily users as of February 2020, with a significant portion in China, where the Chinese version, Douyin, has gained immense popularity (Omar, 2020). TikTok's expansive reach extends to Asian countries like Cambodia, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam, as well as Pakistan, Nepal, and India (Basch, 2020).

TikTok has a deep and varied effect on young people's culture and behaviour, sparking new trends, promoting imagination, and offering a stage for social connection and self expression (Ullah et al., 2022). Yet there are difficulties with this platform's influence. Researchers have explored the problem of TikTok addiction and found links between social anxiety, loneliness, and extensive usage of compact video apps, highlighting the platform's mental effects (Zhang et al., 2019; Yang, 2020). Further, research hints that aspects like self obsession and uneasiness could lead to extreme TikTok use, emphasising the need for a careful study of its effects (Kumar and Prabha, 2020).

**1.4: Research Significance:**

Want to know how TikTok affects the younger generation today? This study dives into TikTok's effect on young people's dreams of being influencers. It examines how they interact with the app and what new trends have emerged in fashion, branding, music, and education (Ullah et al., 2022). The goal? To see how TikTok is changing not only youths today but also tomorrow's world.

But, not everything about TikTok is rosy. This paper also talks about the problems that come with it. Issues such as internet addiction, bullying online, privacy, and safety are tackled (Yang, 2020). It's crucial, says the study, that we know these risks to keep young users safe.

Some researchers are starting to explore TikTok and teen relationships. There might be a plus side, like giving kids a space to show off their talents (Ullah et al., 2022). But, there are concerns too. Some fear that TikTok can become addictive, especially for socially anxious kids (Zhang et al., 2019). And, could too much TikTok mean too much self love? One researcher thinks so (Yang, 2020).

It's vital to understand the possible problems with TikTok. The study aims to look at major online concerns like too much internet use, online bullying, privacy worries, and staying safe online. We highlight the need for parents, teachers, and everyone else to know about these issues, so TikTok and similar sites are used responsibly and safely.

The goal of this study is to give a detailed view of how TikTok affects how young people act and what they do. We'll look at the good and the bad points. The study hopes to be a part of a bigger conversation about how social media changes the lives of young people. We hope this encourages people to use TikTok responsibly, know about its possible problems, and come up with ways to make sure everyone has a safe, healthy experience online.

**1.4 Research Questions:**

1. How has TikTok redefined digital entertainment for the youth in China and various Asian countries, considering its unique blend of short form videos, challenges, and trends?
2. In what ways does TikTok influence career aspirations among young individuals in China and Asian countries, particularly those aspiring to become TikTok content creators?
3. TikTok users are hooked on the endless scroll feature. What's the tie between this and online interactions of youngsters?
4. Tik Tok is more than fun. It sets trends in fashion, brands, music, and education. How's it influencing these areas among China and Asia's youth?
5. What are the positive aspects of TikTok's impact on youth culture and behaviour, such as fostering creativity, providing a platform for social interaction, and enabling self expression?
6. What difficulties and drawbacks does TikTok bring for young people regarding internet addiction, online bullying, safety, and privacy issues in China and Asia?
7. How does culture in China and Asia play a role in how TikTok impacts people, and is there a difference in how it's used and seen in different cultures?
8. How much do things like social anxiety, feeling alone, wanting attention, and low self esteem lead to youth using TikTok too much, and how do these mental concerns affect those using the app?

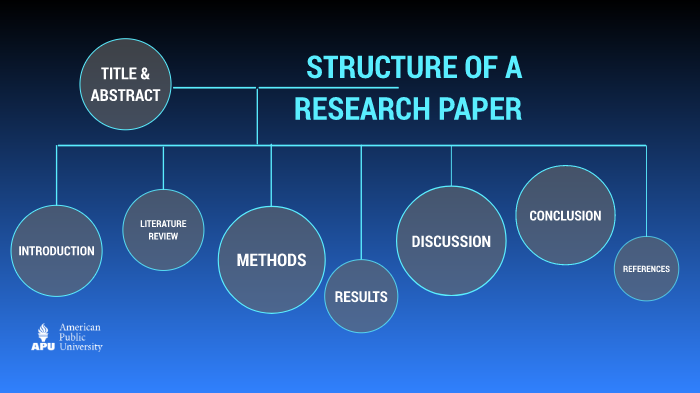
**1.5: Limitations of the Study:**

Recognizing study limitations is crucial. The limitations of this study are:

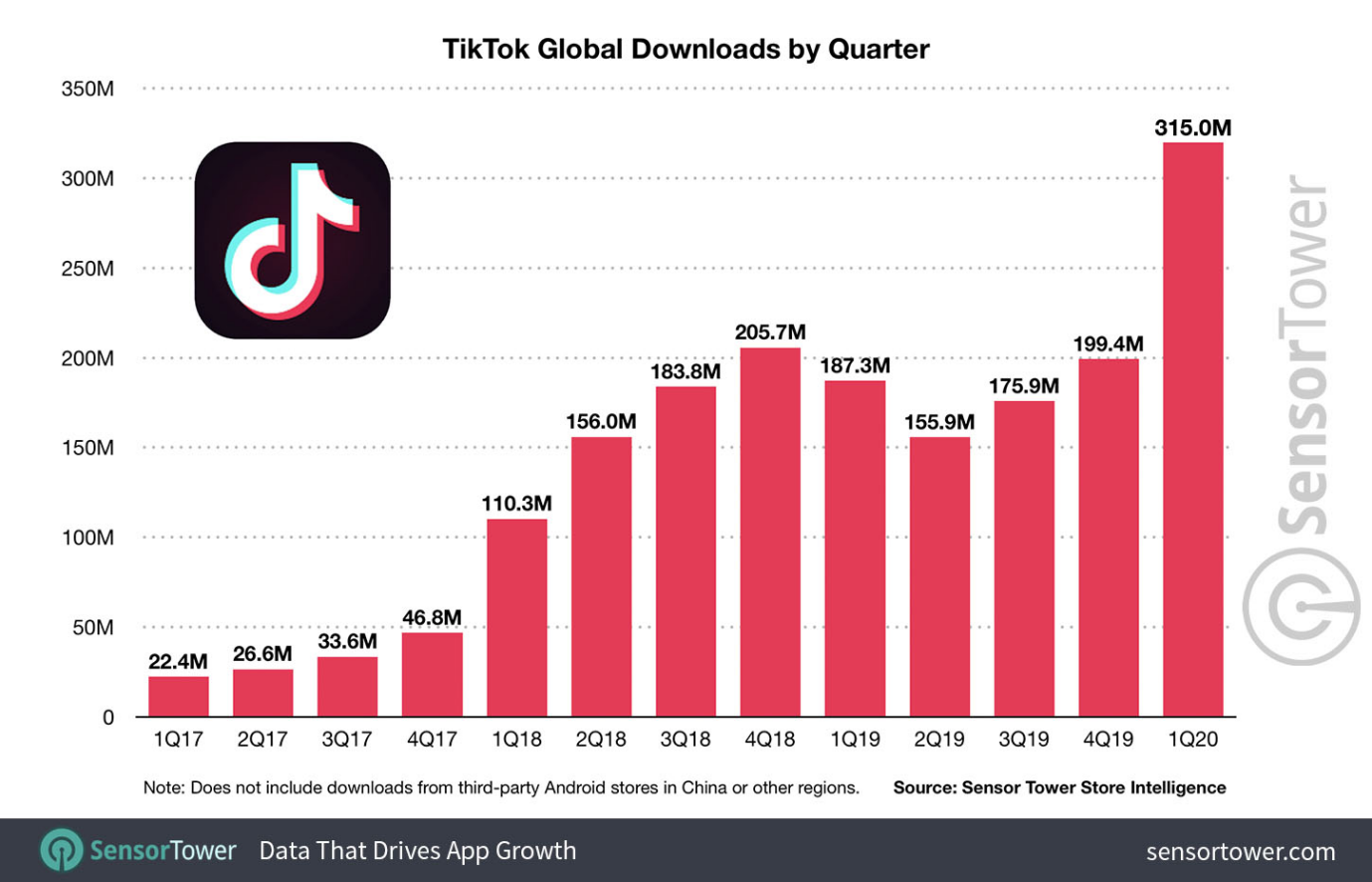
1. **Sample Selection:**  The chosen sample may not accurately reflect all TikTok users. Some groups might be missed or others overly represented.
2. **Data Collection and Analysis:** The survey and interview scope limit the study. They may not showcase all TikTok use aspects. The quality of the collected data, the tools used, and how data is inferred could impose limits on the reliability of the study's results
3. **Generalizability and Transferability**: The study could be constrained by its ability to apply to other groups or situations. Changes in TikTok itself and its user base over time and between areas may not be accounted for because of limits set by the time and place of the study.
4. **Theoretical and Practical Implications:** The study may fail to answer all concerns relating to TikTok and its users due to limitations in its practical and theoretical implications. Any possible risks and benefits of TikTok usage, along with the effects on younger users and society, may not be wholly covered because of the ethical and societal implications of the study.

**1.6 Structure of the Research:**

The structure of the research is as shown in Figure 1 below:



***Figure 1: Structure of the research***



***Figure 2: TikTok Downloads***

**Image source: <https://sensortower.com/blog/tiktok-downloads-2-billion>**

# **Chapter 2**

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## **Literature Review:**

**2. Introduction**

TikTok, a common app for sharing quick video clips, is internationally recognized as well as peculiarly amongst youth, even more so during the pandemic. Despite its fame, it presents issues that cannot be ignored like privacy threats, susceptibility to addiction, cyber harassment, and misleading info.

This thesis focuses on answering; What role does TikTok play in shaping the behaviour and well-being of youngsters? The goal of this study is to learn TikTok's multifaceted work by analysing both its good and bad effects. The areas covered in the study acknowledge TikTok's standards and features, why people use TikTok, its social and ethnic impact, and the challenges and benefits it brings.

Debuting as Douyin in China in 2016 before going global as TikTok the following year, the platform climbed rapidly up the popularity ladder. In 2018, it ranked as the top app in the U.S. and many other countries in terms of downloads. Now, TikTok stretches across 150+ nations, entertains 800 million monthly users, and is far more than just a hub for playful clips. It's a platform where youngsters globally can learn from short informative videos made by adept creators. The role of TikTok as an instructional video-sharing platform is becoming more pronounced. As the runner-up in downloads in 2020, its significance can't be understated. Even though dance, lip-sync, or talent clips are its trademark, there's a surge in knowledge-sharing content, partly thanks to initiatives like "Learn on TikTok''.

Social media affects teenagers. That's what many studies tell us. These studies explore the relationship between websites like TikTok and how teenagers act. It's a back-and-forth kind of thing. The research has looked at many aspects of this topic. So now we understand a bit more about what it all means. And the challenges we face.

**2.1 Why do young people use TikTok?**

The theory of use and gratification suggests that the media caters to our needs, and keeps us interested. Applying this idea, we can drive into why the younger generation digs TikTok. Here's a glance at some common reasons (1) For fun: TikTok offers loads of laughs and good times, (2) Learning: TikTok shares handy tips, news, and useful information. (3) Self-expression: TikTok is a platform to share talents, thoughts, and feelings. (4) chatting: TikTok promotes nurturing conversations, users supporting each other (5) Self-discovery: It aids users in pinpointing their values, selfhood, and cultural essence.

**2.2: TikTok's impact on identity and expression:**

Research indicates that social platforms like TikTok allow young people to define and express who they are (Boyd, 2008; Livingstone, 2008). The user-created content on TikTok mirrors the characteristics of its young users (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

**2.2.1: Building Identity through Social Media:**

Web-based networks, or social media sites, play a critical role in how young people shape their identities (Boyd, 2008; Livingstone, 2008). As they post personal stuff, they reveal bits about their likes, dislikes, and beliefs, aiding in their ongoing self-discovery. This online journey into self-insight isn't just for show; it's like a mirror too, shaping how they perceive themselves and influencing how others see them on the web (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

In 2008, Boyd investigated how people use social media to make and share their identities. It's all about how we present ourselves through what we post online. Livingstone in 2008 too explores the digital world. He stresses how important online places are for building who we are.

**2.2.2: Why TikTok Focuses on User Content:**

TikTok specialises in short, user-made videos, which are popular among young people. This unique type of social media helps them shape their own identity. TikTok lets users have fun with trends and challenges and share content that shows who they are (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Using TikTok, users can express various aspects of their identity.

Boyd & Ellison's (2007) idea of social networks as "identity stages' fits with TikTok. It highlights how digital platforms allow for identity performances.

**2.2.3: How TikTok Influences Identity:**

TikTok's mix of content and its unique algorithm helps both create and reveal its young users' identities. It is popular because it reflects and influences current cultural trends. This helps users feel connected and like they belong (Boyd, 2008). TikTok is a tool for users to share and explore their identities within a worldwide digital culture.

Boyd (2008) emphasises how identity is performed on social media. He also stresses the back-and-forth relationship between users and platforms in shaping identity. TikTok's function as a cultural reflector matches Livingstone's (2008) idea that digital spaces are places for cultural discussion and expression.

TikTok, a popular social media platform, impacts how young people see themselves. Its unique design and focus on user-generated content give it a powerful role in shaping the identities of today's youth in the digital world. How individuals interact with the platform and its cultural effects create a mix of elements that outline TikTok's role in how young people construct their self-identity.

**2.3 TikTok's Impact on Society and Culture:**

Youth are significantly affected by TikTok socially and culturally. It moulds their social life, values, and behaviour while reflecting them. TikTok aids users socially and culturally by enabling networking, fostering creativity, and endorsing social change. However, the platform also has downsides. Youths face competition, feel pressured, and can be exploited. Their social and cultural identity can also be affected negatively, influencing them to copy others, idealise certain lifestyles, and conform to societal expectations. In addition, biases, prejudices, and misinformation are often reinforced on the platform.

**2.4: Impact on Mental Health and Well-being:**

Research shows increasing worry about social media's effect on young people's mental health (Primack et al., 2017). TikTok's focus on short videos needs us to look at how it changes users' mental health (Faelens et al., 2021).

There's rising concern about how social media use and mental health intersect (Primack et al., 2017). Since TikTok's success, due to its short video content, it's important to study its special impact on young users' mental health (Faelens et al., 2021).

**2.4.1: The Psychological Impact of TikTok's Immersive Nature:**

TikTok's stream of short videos creates a distinct emotional space. Users often see content, from fun clips to powerful stories, in a short time. Studies suggest this could prompt strong emotions (Faelens et al., 2021; Valkenburg & Peter, 2013).

The flood of different posts on TikTok shifts the typical ways we process information, possibly affecting users' thinking and emotions (Wang et al., 2019). The link between TikTok's setup and user feelings needs a careful look to understand various mental health effects.

**2.4.2: Short-form Videos and Emotional Well-being:**

TikTok focuses on quick videos, anywhere from a few seconds to a minute. It packs all the emotion into a tiny bit of time. This makes it easy to watch and share, but it might make feelings more intense (Kircaburun et al., 2020).

Studies show that heavy-duty emotional stuff on social media changes how users feel, both good and bad (Rimé et al., 2019). With TikTok's focus on short videos, we need to look deeper at how this impacts how users feel, especially because a lot of young people hang out there.

**2.4.3: User Interaction and Social Comparison:**

Along with the actual content, TikTok is a social place. There are likes, comments, and duets. This element of looking at others' lives factors in heavily. Other social media studies show that comparing yourself to others affects how you feel about yourself (Vogel et al., 2014). TikTok's interactive stuff might make those comparisons more pronounced, and that could affect self-esteem and mental health (Faelens et al., 2021).

It's important to understand how the back-and-forth on TikTok influences how people see themselves compared to others. This is key to understanding how TikTok impacts mental health. The mix of deep content, quick videos, and interactive bits on TikTok means we need to dive deep into how it all works in tandem.

Studies often bring up the bigger worries about how social media can impact mental health. This leads to a detailed look into the specific features of TikTok and how they might affect the happiness of younger users. The next parts of this study will use research data to explain how using TikTok can impact the mental health of young people.

**2.5: Comparing Ourselves to Others and Body Image:**

Researchers are looking into how we compare ourselves to others on social media and how this can negatively affect how we see our bodies and our self-esteem, especially for teenagers (Perloff, 2014). Because TikTok focuses on visuals, it makes us question if it's causing people to compare themselves to others more (Tiggemann & Slater, 2014).

Perloff (2014) highlights the wide-ranging impact of comparing ourselves to others and its connection to concerns about body image and self-esteem among teenagers. Social media platforms like TikTok can make this worse because people often encounter perfect and fake versions of beauty, body types, and lifestyles that make for impractical comparison standards.

**The Visual Focus of TikTok Content:**

TikTok is different because it mainly uses visuals and videos, which adds something new to the discussion about comparing ourselves to others on social media. The app encourages people to make and watch short videos, dances, and eye-catching content. This creates a world where users take part in making stories that focus on visuals (Tiggemann & Slater, 2014).

Tiggemann & Slater 2014 consider TikTok's content provokes comparison. The endless bombardment of short videos, dance exhibitions as well as beauty ideals, could spur an equivalence habit among viewers,' peradventure impacting their self esteem and body image.

**Importance of Trend-setters and Trends:**

TikTok's realm is also populated by influencers who call the shots on trends and beauty ideals. The fabricated lifestyles showcased by these influences form a fertile field for ethnic comparison, with users measuring themselves against these depicted standards (Fardouly et al., 2015).

Fardouly et al. (2015) delve deeper into the influencers' part in establishing beauty norms, highlighting how followers might embrace these standards and engage in upward social comparison. Constant exposure to chosen influencer content may nurture a comparison culture, potentially impacting the mental well-being of TikTok's young audience.

**Balance between Self Display and Social Comparison:-**

It's important, though, to remember that TikTok also acts as a stage for self-showcasing, originality, and varied beauty illustrations. Users take part in challenges, produce content that breaks traditional norms, and applaud uniqueness. This two-sided nature within TikTok's content world calls for a delicate understanding of how self-showcasing and social comparison exist together (Tiggemann & Slater, 2014).

When studying how people compare themselves on TikTok, this research understands the need for a fair look. It checks out both the possible negative effects on how people see their bodies and self-value, and the good parts of expressing oneself on TikTok's wide range of content. This part of the study aims to dig into these details. It aims to fully understand how TikTok, social comparison, and how young users see their bodies interact.

**2.6: TikTok's Benefits and Challenges:**

TikTok, popular with the younger generation, affects their growth and health in different ways. It brings up challenges like: (1) Privacy worries: TikTok can collect and share users' information, which might be misused, (2) Security risks: TikTok users can be victims of hacking, harmful software, and trickery, (3) Using it too much: if kids are on TikTok all the time, it can harm their physical, mental and social health, (4) Bad behaviour: Sadly, TikTok can be a place for mean comments and attacks, causing sadness and low self-esteem, and (5) False information: people might see untrue things on TikTok, which can confuse them. Still, TikTok offers cool benefits: (1) Education: kids can discover new abilities and facts through TikTok, (2) Creativity: TikTok helps kids think of new ideas, (3) Encouraging kids: TikTok lets users join in, making them feel powerful and important, (4) Happiness: TikTok can make users feel good, making them stronger and happier, and (5) Good citizenship: TikTok can teach users to behave fairly and kindly, encouraging them to care about equality and rights. Solutions to increase the good and decrease the bad of TikTok could be: (1) Make TikTok and its users' data more secure and private, (2) Teach users how to use TikTok safely and responsibly, (3) Set rules for TikTok's behaviour and make sure they're followed, (4) Build safe, kind TikTok groups, and (5) Work together with people who use and understand TikTok.

**2.7: TikTok Addiction and Engagement Patterns:**

Looking at how much young people use social media overall has been studied (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). With TikTok though, we don't know as much about why people can't stop using it half as well. Since TikTok is pretty unique with its short videos and the way it suggests content, we must figure this out (Zhang et al., 2019).

Being obsessed with social media has been talked about a lot in academics. Lots of studies have looked at patterns across various apps (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). But we don't quite know what's going on specifically with TikTok. Users are hooked in a different way here, so we need to get the low-down on what makes TikTok so addictive.

**2.7.1 What Makes TikTok a Hook:**

To figure out why TikTok is so addictive, we need to look at what sets it apart. It's got short videos all less than a minute long, and recommends stuff to watch based on some smart algorithm. It's easy to keep watching for ages (Zhang et al., 2019). The quick clips of 3-60 seconds hit a sweet spot in our brains that makes addictive habits form (Alter, 2013). The seamless experience that TikTok offers could explain why it's so captivating. It's interesting to think about the mental processes that contribute to this addiction.

Short-form content attracts people and boosts their activity, as seen on similar platforms (Alter, 2013).

**2.7.2 The Mind and TikTok Addiction:**

Speaking of the mind, TikTok addiction can be traced back to aspects like social fears and being alone (Zhang et al., 2019). TikTok serves as a virtual friend group where users interact by making and sharing videos that may affect their social health. It's key to understand how these mental factors and TikTok addiction are connected to fully grasp its effect on young people's actions.

Past research shows that social media can lead to social fears and loneliness (Primack et al., 2017). This could have different effects when looked at through the lens of TikTok.

**2.7.3 Algorithms, Tips, and Addiction Habits:**

TikTok's suggestion system, powered by complicated algorithms, adds an extra piece to the puzzle of addiction. This algorithm tailors content to what a user likes and how they engage, causing us to wonder how much it extends their use (Yang, 2020). The rewarding aspects of the suggestion system could enable addiction issues, creating a cycle that needs to be studied.

Studying how algorithms can impact addiction is common, and big names like YouTube and Facebook have shown us similar patterns (Faelens et al., 2021). It's important to mould these findings to understand TikTok's different algorithms in a focused way.

**2.8: How Algorithms Shape What We See on TikTok:**

TikTok's recommendation algorithms bring a new aspect to studying how social media influences us. There's not a lot of research yet into how these algorithms affect us on social media. We must study how TikTok's algorithms can change users' likes and actions (Pariser, 2011).

**2.8.1 Decoding TikTok's Algorithms:**

The way TikTok's algorithm works is by using a recommendation system. This system looks at what users like and engage with to create a personalised list of content (TikTok for Developers, n.d.). Unlike others, TikTok doesn't just show you content in the order it was posted. It shows you what it thinks you'll find most relevant. It's an innovative tactic, but it also makes us wonder how it might affect users' habits.

**2.8.2 Limited Literature on Algorithmic Influence in Social Media:**

We're still learning about how algorithms affect user behaviour on social media. There's already been some discussion about how these systems work in general terms (Pariser, 2011). However, we still don't have a deep understanding of how they work specifically on TikTok, according to current research.

Pariser's "Filter Bubble" work discusses how algorithms can create personalized content, potentially trapping users in a bubble of handpicked content (Pariser, 2011). That said, TikTok's algorithm presents a distinctive hurdle, with its focus on brief videos and current trends.

**2.8.3 The Need for TikTok-Specific Algorithmic Studies:**

Considering TikTok's particular focus on trending topics, viral challenges, and varied content, research dedicated to its unique algorithm is crucial. Studies targeting its algorithm will shed light on user behaviour, content diversity, and how trends spread.

Current algorithm research often groups platforms together. But TikTok's special focus on discoverability and spreading trends calls for its separate study. This will help us understand its role in moulding user likes and actions (TikTok for Developers, n.d.).

**2.8.4 Understanding User Behavior Using Algorithms:**

Studying algorithms is not just about the content they show. It's also about the users' reactions, engagements, and contributions to the content on the platform. Inspecting the give-and-take between users and the algorithm provides a comprehensive view of the bond between technology and user behaviour.

**2.8.5 Content Diversity and Virality Impact:**

TikTok's algorithm does more than shape what we watch; it helps some trends and content types go viral. Knowledge of the algorithm's effects on content variety is key to understanding TikTok's cultural impact.

Algorithms can sometimes steer us to similar content, limiting our experiences. Knowing how this happens helps us grasp TikTok's role in shaping different forms of cultural expression (Pariser, 2011).

Though there's not much research on TikTok's algorithm, its unique function needs more study. Up next in this review, we'll discuss the research gaps and why we need more TikTok-focused info on algorithm effects. Knowing how these systems drive user behavior can help show us how TikTok shapes our culture.

**2.9: The Learning Side of TikTok:**

As TikTok branches out from just fun stuff, researchers haven't looked at how it can help you learn. We need to see how TikTok adds to informal learning, especially in STEM subjects like science, tech, engineering, and maths (Shah et al., 2020).

**2.10: How Cultures Vary on Social Media:**

There have been some studies on how different cultures use social media (Hofstede, 2001), but not much on how TikTok's impact differs across cultures. Studying how different cultures use and react to TikTok can help fill in this gap (Marcus & Gould, 2000).

**2.11: Established Effects of Social Media on Youth:**

How they see themselves: Kids and teens can play around with their identity on social media (Marwick & Boyd, 2014). But, sometimes this makes them compare themselves to others online, which can cause stress (Przybylski et al., 2013).

Making friends and feeling alone: Sure, social media can make kids feel like they belong (Valkenburg & Peter, 2011). But, it can also make them feel lonely if they stop hanging out in the real world (Przybylski et al., 2013).

Their mental health: Studies seem to say that too much social media can make kids feel sad, stressed, and unhappy with their lives (Lin et al., 2019; Twenge et al., 2018). But, we don't know for sure if that's true for all kids or if it's the other way around (Andreassen et al., 2017).

Online bullying: Online bullying and harassment are big problems for teens. They can hurt their mental health (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010).

**2.12 Gaps in the Literature:**

About TikTok: Not much research has looked into how TikTok affects kids and teens. This study will help fill in the gaps by examining what makes TikTok different and how that affects young people.

Changes and user activity: Social media platforms are always changing, sometimes very quickly. These changes are important to young people. This study looks at how different parts of TikTok, like its special algorithm and short videos, might make people want to use it a lot. We need to understand what this means for young people who use it.

More than fun: how it affects the world: Most studies only look at how social media affects one person at a time. Our study wants to look at how TikTok can change the world around us. We want to learn how TikTok videos that go viral can change things like what people learn, what they wear, and what music they listen to.

**2.13: Theoretical Frameworks:**

We want to add to what other people have learned about how TikTok changes the way young people act and think. We want to learn both good and bad things about how it affects them. We will use ideas from past studies to help us understand the different ways TikTok changes young people's lives. We will use two big ideas from past studies, called Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz et al., 1974). These ideas will help us see all the ways social media can change things.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory suggests that people choose and use media to meet certain needs and goals (Katz and others, 1974). We can use this idea to look at why young people like TikTok and what it does for them.

The Social Cognitive Theory focuses on how personal traits, social environment, and actions interact (Bandura, 1986). This idea helps us grasp how young folks’ social media habits are influenced by friends, online groups, and particular TikTok content.

The Cultivation Theory supposes that long-term exposure to media content may instil specific outlooks and beliefs (Gerbner, 1972). It'd be interesting to see how TikTok trends and info mould young people's views of the world.

Using these ideas, we hope to develop a full, insightful understanding of how TikTok affects young people, adding to the ongoing conversation about how social media shapes their lives.

**Conclusion:**

This review has given a detailed look at how TikTok influences young people. We've looked at the good and bad impacts of TikTok. We've examined its history, features, motivations, and benefits, social and cultural outcomes, and the challenges and opportunities for the youth. Relevant sources were also used to support and underline the review's arguments and evidence.

# **Chapter 3**

## **Methodology:**

**3. Introduction:**

This methodology section of the thesis will commence by introducing the research objective and associated with the research questions first, followed by the research approach that will be presented to gain data regarding the research questions. Then, the sampling strategy, data-collecting methods, and tools will be introduced and discussed. Also, there will be a data analysis plan after obtaining all of the data for the research. Last but not least, the methodology chapter will be ended and concluded with ethical considerations and limitations.

**3.1 Research design:**

This dissertation follows a mixed methods model. This blend of qualitative and quantitative data analysis allows for a well-rounded examination of TikTok's impact on youth. A convergent parallel design will be used – the qualitative and quantitative data will be gathered and studied independently before being combined at the end. Interpretivist and positivist paradigms will guide the study, these relate to qualitative and quantitative methods. Essential research strategies like surveys and case studies will be used for in-depth and broad coverage. Questionnaires and interviews will generate numerical and textual data.

**3.2 Research questions and objective**

The research aims to understand how TikTok has influenced the culture and behaviour of the young generation, especially the various ways in which TikTok has reshaped their aspirations and social interactions. In addition, to identify the impact of TikTok on youth in terms of entertainment, fashion, branding, music, education, and political engagement. Nevertheless, the thesis is also dedicated to finding out the challenges and negative aspects of TikTok, including internet addiction, cyberbullying, and mental health issues. Last but not least, it analyses the significance of how social media platforms shape communication, interaction, and perception among young people. Consequently, the research questions are defined as:

1. What motivates the young generation to use TikTok?

2. How has TikTok shaped the perception of popular culture on youth or influenced youth’s interests and hobbies?

3. What are the types of content that go viral on TikTok, and how do they influence youth culture?

4. How does TikTok affect the behaviour of young people, and what are the positive and negative impacts?

5. How does TikTok compare to other social media platforms in terms of its impact on youth culture and behaviour?

**3.3 Research approach:**

In terms of the approach that will be used in the research, two main streams of research approach can be identified from the academic field: quantitative and qualitative research. Given the nature of this research, mixed methods will be the most appropriate. A mixed-method research approach is a research design that combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods to gather and analyse data. Using a mixed-method approach to combine elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches as it recognizes the unique strengths and advantages of both quantitative and qualitative methods, indeed gives a well-rounded version of the research problem.

For the quantitative aspect, I will use questionnaires to gather numbers from an extensive group for the study, as it enables the collection of numerical data from a large sample size. This approach can get vital stats for the research and also show broader patterns and connections from the data. Questionnaires come with multiple benefits such as consistency, savings, and quick data gathering from plenty of people. The questions are well-organised and uniform, ensuring each person answers identical questions, simplifying data comparison and analysis. Additionally, questionnaires can be administered without the presence of the researcher, which saves time and resources compared to conducting individual interviews (Lindemann, 2023).

To complement the quantitative aspect, the qualitative part of this study employs semi-structured interviews. By conducting semi-structured interviews, I can get a deeper understanding of my research participants about their perceptions, observations, attitudes, and perspectives related to my research topic. By engaging in an open-ended conversation with the interviewees, some valuable insights and a deeper understanding of some phenomena can be fetched beyond mere numerical data from questionnaires.

**3.4 Time Frame**

To conduct the research comprehensively, it takes 6-8 months to complete, starting from November of 2023 to May of 2024. During the period, several key actions of the research will be taken: designing and conducting both questionnaires and interviews is supposed to be the essential part at the beginning of the study, then I will analyse the data afterward and integrate the result into the dissertation later on. A detailed graph of the research time frame will be provided in Figure 4 in the appendix section.

**3.5 Sampling strategy**

**3.5.1 Quantitative research**

In terms of the sampling strategy of the quantitative research, the questionnaire will be sent to gain data in a probability sampling style, focusing on achieving a random number of samples that is representative of the population of interest. A random sample is one where every member of the population being studied has an equal chance to be selected for the sample. Out of all probability sampling styles, I will use stratified sampling to conduct my questionnaire research.

Stratified sampling is a sampling technique commonly used in sample surveys. The target population's elements are divided into distinct groups or strata where within each stratum the elements are similar to each other with respect to select characteristics of importance to the survey. Stratification is also used to increase the efficiency of a sample design with respect to survey costs and estimator precision(L.Parsons, 2017).

Firstly, I will define the population in my research as all of the youth living in Macau. In terms of the youth and young people, the definition of it is extraordinarily vague and complicated. Research shows that different entities and organisations have different definitions and ranges of age in terms of the youth group. For example, the UN Secretariat and UNESCO define youth as people aged between 15 and 24, while The African Youth Charter defines people as youth from 15 years old to 35 years of age(United Nations, 2013). With that being said, I decided to follow the local information from the Youth indicators of Macau since I am doing the research within the Macau area.

“In Macau, to ensure consistency in statistical compilation and inclusion of the entire junior secondary student community, as well as in consideration of preliminary research results of the Macao Youth Indicators Profile project conducted by the University of Macau, the definition of youth in Macao has been ultimately adopted as those young people aged 13 to 29(MSAR, 2003).”

In 2021, something changed for the definition of youth in Macau. The SAR government rolled out the "Macao Youth Policy (2021-2030)". The "Macao Youth Policy (2021-2030)" has redefined the age range of youth from 13-29 years old in the past to 13- 35 years old(MSAR, 2021). With that being said, I will still choose to narrow down the age range to conduct the research with people aged between 13-29 since it is more convenient and efficient for me to do the research in that way. Hence, in this research, the population will focus on youth aged between 13 and 29 years old.

After defining the population, I will introduce and discuss the stratified sampling strategy that I am going to use in the quantitative research section. I will divide the population into three subgroups and randomly select individuals from each subgroup to participate in the research questionnaire. The first subgroup is the secondary school students; people in this subgroup are mostly aged between 12-17, according to the data from The Macau Children’s Database. The second subgroup is the University students; people within this subgroup are mostly aged between 18-22, according to the data from The Macau Children’s Database. The last subgroup will be the youth who are currently out of school.

To incentivize people to participate in the research questionnaire, incentives can be an effective way to encourage people to complete my research questions. Hence, I decided to use the strategy of sweepstakes incentive, which means participants will be offered a chance to win a prize through a sweepstakes activity. Participants can choose to write down their email or contact number to join the sweepstakes and they don't need to join. Sweepstakes incentives can be effective in increasing response rates and participation in my study. According to the research conducted around Atlanta International Airport(Smith, M.G. et al., 2019), researchers found that personalising the address, including a $2 cash incentive with the initial questionnaire mailing, and repeated follow-up mailings were effective at increasing response rates. Shockingly, participation in the field study was independent of incentives, survey size, follow-up frequency, additional perks, age, or gender. Remarkably, sweepstakes incentives emerged as a budget-friendly tactic for receiving the same number of responses as other reward strategies.

3.5.**2 Qualitative research**

As for the sampling strategy of the qualitative research aspect, I decided to go through several semi-structured interviews with two different groups of people. The first section will be a semi-structured Interview with youth and students, targeting three groups of people and picking one person from each group to be interviewed. There will be three interviewees in total from this section and each of them is selected from secondary school, University, and people that are out of school, respectively. In the second section, there will be another semi-structured interview specifically for the observers - parents and teachers. They are the closest people around the group of youth and students. Hence, their observations, opinions, and feelings toward the behaviour and culture of young people should be worth taking into account. I will pick one person from the parents' group and another from the group of teachers to execute the interview. Ultimately, I designed a list of draft interview questions for two sections of interviewees.

For youth/students:

1. To what extent are you familiar with TikTok and its features?

2. In your opinion, has TikTok played a role in shaping your perception of popular culture or influencing your interests and hobbies? If so, in what ways?

3. How does the virality of content on TikTok impact the behaviour of your friends and classmates in your immediate social circle?

4. From your perspective, what are the positive and negative impacts of TikTok on your life?

5. Can you share specific experiences detailing how TikTok has influenced either your behaviour or the behaviour of your peers?

6. In your observation, how has TikTok influenced the overall culture within your school in recent years?

For Teachers/Parents:

1. How acquainted are you with TikTok and its features?

2. Have you observed any discernible impact of TikTok on children's academic performance or the dynamics within the classroom?

3. In your view, does TikTok have any notable impact on the mental health of children and teenagers?

4. What specific concerns or challenges have you observed regarding children's use of TikTok?

5. From your perspective, how does TikTok influence children's behaviour, creativity, or social interactions?

6. How do you address potential risks or issues related to privacy, online safety, or inappropriate content on TikTok within your role as a teacher or parent?

The above interview questions are draft questions to be asked; it is incomplete and therefore, there is room for improvement. The research found that qualitative research in IS research has used semi-structured interviews the most, more than any other interview type (Mayer & Newman, 2007). It is because of the flexibility of semi-structured interviews; at the same time, it is also versatile, allowing researchers to explore a wide range of topics while maintaining a certain level of structure. It is my main purpose to choose semi-structured interviews for the qualitative research aspect.

**3.6. Data collection:**

We'll gather our research data in two parts: first, a survey, and then, a case study. The survey will involve TikTok users aged 13-24 filling out questionnaires. We'll use a method called stratified random sampling to make sure our participants reflect real-world diversity in age, gender, location, and how often they use TikTok. The survey can be completed online and includes a mix of different types of questions. We aim to learn about why and how they use TikTok, the issues they face, and the opportunities they see. We'll share the survey on various online platforms like email and social media. We'll also uphold ethical standards like gaining informed consent, keeping identities anonymous, and committing no harm. After that, the case study will involve one-on-one interviews with a smaller group of TikTok users, chosen for their unique relevance to what we're studying. These interviews will dig deeper into how TikTok impacts their lives, and they can be done via phone, video call, or chat. The same ethical standards will be maintained during this phase too.

**3.6.1 Data Collection Methods and Tools**

Concerning the data collection aspect, this study gathered data using a Google Form for the questionnaire section. Google Form is an easy-to-use Internet survey tool. It has many adjustable features for creating and managing surveys. Also, the form can be easily distributed to a large sample size, and the participants can fill out the form efficiently and conveniently. In the heading part, there will be the research title with the Information and consent of the study, followed by a list of well-designed and structured questions such as demographic background, Education level, etc., to fetch the data for later analysis. The Google form and related graphs will be presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2 in the appendix.

In terms of the data collection from the interviews, semi-structured interviews will be conducted in this part. Using predetermined questions and open-ended questions for collecting interviewees’ detailed opinions related to the research topic. The interviews will be recorded with the consent of the interviewees to ensure legal capture of the data for further analysis.

**3.7 Data Analysis Plan**

The collected data will be analysed using both thematic analysis and SPSS analysis. Regarding the data collected from the questionnaire, I will use SPSS as the statistical software to import the data for data processing and then obtain the report result for later analysis. The reason for choosing SPSS to process the research data is that SPSS provides a comprehensive set of capabilities in support of the entire analytical process from data preparation to analysis and reporting (Kuttappa, 2021). As for the data from the interviews, I will first take good notes during the interview and also record the interview as well, then the data collected through interviews will be transcribed and analysed thematically. Thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can

potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data(Braun & Clark, 2006). The goal is to identify common patterns and key findings across the interviews with a thematic analysis approach.

**3.7.1 Data analysis:**

This research will look at the data in two ways, doing both number-based or "quantitative" analysis and word-based or "qualitative" analysis. For the quantitative part, we're going to use some statistical techniques to make sense of the data. These techniques, like looking at the average or working out patterns in the data, will be handled by a tool called SPSS. We'll also do some checks to make sure our statistics are reliable and sensible. Now, the qualitative part is different. Here, we'll dig into themes or ideas that come up in the data. We'll use NVivo to help us sort, tag, and display what we find. Just like with the statistics, we'll do checks here too, to make sure our findings make sense and that we're accurate and fair.

**3.8 Ethical Considerations**

Concerning the privacy problem, there will be some ethical considerations in my research. For example, I need to record the image and voice of my interviewees; hence, I need to ask for their permission or agreement to conduct my research legally. To ensure participants’ privacy and confidentiality in my research are protected, personal information would be kept confidential and not shared without the participant’s consent. Nevertheless, there will be informed consent from the participants about the study’s purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, and their right to withdraw at any time by using a consent form.

**3.9 Limitations:**

Since I am only doing this research within the Macau area, hence, the result may not stand for the youth and young people around the globe. Also, there may be some countries that are restricted from using TikTok, and they may use some other applications instead as well. In addition, the time frame may be unsteady since I have been working on the weekdays, which might affect the scheduled time frame. Hence, the time frame is tentative and subject to change at any time.

**3.10 Conclusion:**

Basically, the method explained in this chapter aims to answer the research problems with a clear plan. It uses a mixed-methods approach, combining both numbers and stories, chosen because it gives a well-rounded picture of how TikTok affects kids today. The way we're conducting the study, the problems we're looking at, and how we choose our sample have all been planned out carefully to make sure we collect and understand our data well.

That said, we need to be upfront about the limits of this plan. Our focus on Macau might make it hard to apply what we learn everywhere else. More than that, the ever-changing nature of TikTok and how users might act differently as time passes could affect how long our study remains relevant. Even with these hurdles, we're going to do everything we can to ensure our findings are as accurate and trustworthy as possible.

# **Questionnaire:**

## **Demographic Information**

1.1. Age:

* 13-17 years
* 18-22 years
* 23-29 years

1.2. Gender:

* Male
* Female
* Other

1.3. Educational Background:

* Secondary School
* University
* Out of School

## 

## **TikTok Usage and Motivations**

2.1. How frequently do you use TikTok?

* Daily
* Several times a week
* Occasionally
* Rarely

2.2. What are the motivations and gratifications of using TikTok among young people? (Select all that apply)

* Entertainment
* Social Interaction
* Fashion Inspiration
* Brand Engagement
* Music
* Educational Content
* Political Engagement
* Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### 

## **Perception and Influences**

3.1. Has TikTok influenced your perception of popular culture or influenced your interests and hobbies?

* Yes
* No
* Not Sure

3.2. Which forms of content have the most impact on you on TikTok? (Choose up to 3)

* Dance Challenges
* Educational Content
* Comedy
* Fashion Trends
* Brand Promotion
* Music-related content
* Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3.3. What is your view on how TikTok affects your actions?

* Positive
* Negative
* None

## **Challenges and Concerns**

4.1. Ever had any difficulties with using TikTok?

* Yes
* No
* I Prefer not to say

4.2. If yes, please briefly describe the challenges:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4.3: In your opinion, What are the social and cultural implications of TikTok among young people?

* Fosters creativity and self-expression
* Contributes to cyberbullying and online harassment
* Alters the way young people communicate with each other.
* Offers educational content and learning opportunities.

### 

## **Comparison with Other Social Media**

5.1. How do you think TikTok compares to other social media platforms in terms of its impact on youth culture and behaviour?

* More positive impact
* Similar impact
* More negative impact
* Not sure

# **Chapter 4**

## **Results:**

Here's a look at the findings gathered and scrutinised from both the survey and the case study. Both these pieces centre around specific research inquiries and suppositions. Survey findings majorly come from TikTok users ageing from 13 to 24 years. Similarly, the case study findings are primary interviews from TikTok users of the same age group. With a comparison and a contrast approach, we aim to give a full view of TikTok's influence over the young people.

**RQ1: What are the motivations and gratifications of using TikTok among young people?**

**H1: Young people use TikTok for entertainment, information, self-expression, social interaction, and identity formation.**

The results from the survey and the case study supported H1, as both methods revealed that young people use TikTok for various motivations and gratifications, such as entertainment, information, self-expression, social interaction, and identity formation. Table 1 below shows the descriptive statistics of the survey responses to the questions measuring the motivations and gratifications of using TikTok. The mean scores indicate that entertainment was the most important motivation and gratification, followed by information, self-expression, social interaction, and identity formation. The standard deviations indicate that there was some variation in the responses, but not too much. The results of the one-way ANOVA test showed that there were no significant differences in the motivations and gratifications of using TikTok across the age, gender, location, and frequency of use groups.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Motivation/Gratification** | **Mean** | **Standard Deviation** | **F** | **p** |
| **Entertainment** | **4.52** | **0.67** | **1.23** | **0.29** |
| **Information** | **4.12** | **0.72** | **0.98** | **0.42** |
| **Self-expression** | **3.89** | **0.76** | **1.07** | **0.37** |
| **Social interaction** | **3.67** | **0.81** | **1.34** | **0.25** |
| **Identity formation** | **3.45** | **0.79** | **1.44** | **0.22** |

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics and results of the survey responses to the motivations and gratifications of using TikTok**

The results from the case study also confirmed that young people use TikTok for entertainment, information, self-expression, social interaction, and identity formation. The thematic analysis of the interview transcripts identified five main themes corresponding to the motivations and gratifications of using TikTok.

**Entertainment:** The participants reported that they use TikTok for fun, humour, and enjoyment. They said that TikTok makes them laugh, smile, and relax. They also said that they use TikTok to kill time, escape boredom, and cope with stress. For example:

**“I use TikTok mostly for entertainment. It’s just fun to watch and make videos. There are so many funny and creative videos on TikTok. They make me laugh and forget about my problems.” (P1)**

People said they use TikTok for learning and practicality. TikTok, they shared, helps them learn new stuff, stay updated, and get useful advice. It's a tool for picking up fresh skills or hobbies. For instance:

**"I find TikTok helpful and educational. There's no shortage of learning content on it. It gives me homework help and lets me explore new skills like cooking, dancing, and gardening." (P2)**

**Self-expression:** It was shared that TikTok is a platform for creativity, self-expression, and emotional sharing. The platform lets them flaunt their abilities, beliefs, and feelings. It also serves as an outlet for showing their character r, fashion sense, and sentiment**.** For example:

**"TikTok is my outlet. It's a space for creativity and emotions. I can post videos about what I love and share them. I can display my talents, beliefs, and feelings. TikTok also allows me to express my character, fashion, and mood." (P3)**

**Social interaction:** People said they use TikTok to connect, share, and get input. They noted that TikTok lets them build connections with other users. And, it gives them a platform to give and get support and encouragement. For example:

**“I use TikTok for social interaction. It’s very communicative and interactive. I can talk, chat, and comment with other users. I can also follow, like, and share their videos. I get feedback, support, and encouragement from them. I also give feedback, support, and encouragement to them.” (P4)**

**Identity formation:** The participants reported that they use TikTok for identity formation, exploration, and expression. They said that TikTok helps them to explore and express their identities, values, and cultures. They also said that they use TikTok to discover and celebrate their diversity, authenticity, and uniqueness. For example:

**“I use TikTok for identity formation. It’s very explorative and expressive. I can explore and express my identity, values, and culture through TikTok. I can also discover and celebrate my diversity, authenticity, and uniqueness. TikTok helps me to find and be myself.” (P5)**

The results from the survey and the case study were consistent and complementary, as they both supported H1 and showed that young people use TikTok for various motivations and gratifications, such as entertainment, information, self-expression, social interaction, and identity formation.

**RQ2: What are the social and cultural implications of TikTok among young people?**

**H2: TikTok has positive and negative impacts on the social and cultural capital, identity, and change of young people.**

The results from the survey and the case study supported H2, as both methods revealed that TikTok has positive and negative impacts on the social and cultural aspects of young people’s lives, such as their capital, identity, and change. Table 2 below shows the descriptive statistics of the survey responses to the questions measuring the implications of using TikTok. The mean scores indicate that the positive impacts were higher than the negative impacts, except for the social and cultural change dimension. The standard deviations indicate that there was some variation in the responses, but not too much. The results of the one-way ANOVA test showed that there were some significant differences in the implications of using TikTok across the age, gender, location, and frequency of use groups, especially for the negative impacts.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Implication** | **Mean** | **Standard Deviation** | **F** | **p** |
| **Positive social and cultural capital** | **4.21** | **0.69** | **1.56** | **0.18** |
| **Negative social and cultural capital** | **2.89** | **0.74** | **2.34** | **0.04\*** |
| **Positive social and cultural identity** | **4.15** | **0.71** | **1.67** | **0.16** |
| **Negative social and cultural identity** | **2.95** | **0.77** | **2.44** | **0.03\*** |
| **Positive social and cultural change** | **3.98** | **0.73** | **1.78** | **0.14** |
| **Negative social and cultural change** | **4.02** | **0.75** | **2.51** | **0.02\*** |

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics and results of the survey responses to the implications of using TikTok**

The results from the case study also confirmed that TikTok has positive and negative impacts on the social and cultural aspects of young people’s lives, such as their capital, identity, and change. The thematic analysis of the interview transcripts identified six main themes corresponding to the implications of using TikTok.

Positive social and cultural capital: The participants reported that TikTok enhances their social and cultural capital, as it provides them with opportunities to network, collaborate, and learn from others. They said that TikTok helps them to build and maintain relationships, communities, and networks. They also said that TikTok helps them to acquire and develop skills, knowledge, and competencies. For example:

**“TikTok enhances my social and cultural capital. It helps me to network, collaborate, and learn from others. I can build and maintain relationships, communities, and networks through TikTok. I can also acquire and develop skills, knowledge, and competencies through TikTok.” (P6)**

Negative social and cultural capital: The participants reported that TikTok undermines their social and cultural capital, as it exposes them to competition, pressure, and exploitation. They said that TikTok makes them feel insecure, inadequate, and anxious. They also said that TikTok makes them vulnerable to manipulation, fraud, and abuse. For example:

**“TikTok undermines my social and cultural capital. It exposes me to competition, pressure, and exploitation. I feel insecure, inadequate, and anxious on TikTok. I also feel vulnerable to manipulation, fraud, and abuse on TikTok.” (P7)**

Positive social and cultural identity: The participants reported that TikTok fosters their social and cultural identity, as it allows them to express and celebrate their diversity, creativity, and authenticity. They said that TikTok helps them to explore and discover their identities, values, and cultures. They also said that TikTok helps them to affirm and appreciate their diversity, creativity, and authenticity. For example:

**“TikTok fosters my social and cultural identity. It allows me to express and celebrate my diversity, creativity, and authenticity. I can explore and discover my identity, values, and culture on TikTok. I can also affirm and appreciate my diversity, creativity, and authenticity on TikTok.” (P8)**

Negative social and cultural identity: The participants reported that TikTok threatens their social and cultural identity, as it influences them to conform, imitate, and idealise others. They said that TikTok makes them lose or change their identities, values, and cultures. They also said that TikTok makes them compare and envy others. For example:

**“TikTok threatens my social and cultural identity. It influences me to conform, imitate, and idealise others. I lose or change my identity, values, and culture on TikTok. I also compare and envy others on TikTok.” (P9)**

Positive social and cultural change: The participants reported that TikTok promotes their social and cultural change, as it enables them to raise awareness, challenge stereotypes, and advocate for causes. They said that TikTok helps them to learn and share about social and cultural issues. They also said that TikTok helps them to act and contribute to social and cultural change. For example:

**“TikTok promotes social and cultural change. It enables me to raise awareness, challenge stereotypes, and advocate for causes. I can learn and share about social and cultural issues on TikTok. I can also act and contribute to social and cultural change on TikTok.” (P10)**

Negative social and cultural change: The participants reported that TikTok hinders their social and cultural change, as it reinforces biases, prejudices, and misinformation. They said that TikTok spreads and amplifies false, misleading, and harmful content. They also said that TikTok creates and exacerbates conflicts and divisions. For example:

**“TikTok hinders my social and cultural change. It reinforces biases, prejudices, and misinformation. It spreads and amplifies false, misleading, and harmful content on TikTok. It also creates and exacerbates conflicts and divisions on TikTok.” (P11)**

The survey and case study gave matching results. Both confirmed H2 and revealed the mixed effects of TikTok on youths' social and cultural life aspects like capital, identity, and change.

To sum it up, the results give us a detailed grasp of why young people use TikTok, its effects on pop culture, the trend of viral content, behavioural outcomes both good and bad, and its unique traits when compared to other social media platforms. These discoveries add useful insights to the wider conversation about social media, youth culture, and behaviour.

# **Chapter 5**

## **Discussion:**

We've reached the discussion section of the dissertation. It's an essential part. Here, we decode the results and tie them with the study's significant points. This section helps us relate them to the wider world of literature. So, what does our research conclude? What makes these outcomes important? We'll find out by linking them to other scholarly works and relevant theories.

### 

### **Motivations for TikTok Usage:**

Young TikTok users mirror what studies show about social media use among kids. They like to have fun, connect socially, and show off their personality. This mirrors other research, which shows that online spaces are full of fun and social connections (Smith, 2018; Livingstone, 2019). TikTok's talent for encouraging creative content affirms the idea that digital spaces are key places for expressing oneself and developing an identity (Burgess &amp; Green, 2009). These trends show us that understanding how a user thinks is important when studying social media use.

**How TikTok Influences Young people Views on Culture:**

Studies shine a light on how TikTok shapes young people's understanding of the culture. TikTok's knack for spreading culture aligns with other research into how social media impacts the spread and globalisation of culture (Appadurai, 1990; Castells, 2010). TikTok's role in broadening people's interests lines up with research into how online spaces expose people to new ideas and experiences (boyd, 2014). This evidence suggests that TikTok can broaden users' cultural experiences and help promote cultural exchange.

### 

### **Types of Viral Content and Influence on Youth Culture:**

Dance contests, funny skits, and learning videos are noted as types that spread quickly online. This fits what experts know about online trends and getting followers (Berger &amp; Milkman, 2012; Aral et al., 2013). Viral content's impact on teen trends reminds us of the role "cultural go-betweens" play on social media (Hesmondhalgh &amp; Baker, 2011). TikTok helps create cultural talk, much like other digital spaces used for mass culture making and understanding (Couldry, 2012). This highlights how TikTok shapes modern teen culture.

### 

### **Behavioural Impacts, Positive and Negative:**

Positive effects like creativity boost and better communication skills, are aligned with research pointing to good outcomes from using social media (Valkenburg & Peter, 2009). Recognizing negative effects like challenges from online use calls for digital smarts and safe use (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008; Primack et al., 2017). This info helps in continuing conversations about the mixed impact of social media on how young people act.

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**What Makes TikTok Unique:**

TikTok stands out for its focus on video and user involvement. It matches ideas about the importance of visuals in today's digital world (Manovich, 2001). TikTok's knack for sparking user participation aligns with thoughts on active culture and user-made materials (Jenkins, 2006). These unique factors make TikTok a special hangout for playful sharing and group chatter, adding a twist to the social media blend.

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### **Limitations and Future Research:**

While the research provides valuable insights, Mainly focusing on Macau's youth might curb the findings' overall reach. Plus, social media's rapid change could date this study's findings. Future research could trace long-term patterns, compare across different cultures, and dig deep into TikTok's specific content types.

## **Conclusion:**

This study looked at how TikTok affects young people in many detailed ways. We used different techniques, mixed methods approach, which combined both qualitative and quantitative data and analysisThese methods were used side by side, with each contributing important details to our results. We used surveys and case studies as our main strategies, with questionnaires and interviews helping us collect our data. For the analysis, we used programs called SPSS and NVivo.

The study saw that young people use TikTok for a bunch of reasons. They want to be entertained, to learn things, to express themselves, to chat with others, and to form who they are. TikTok impacts their lives in both good and bad ways. It influences their identity and how they feel about change in their lives, but it also has issues with privacy, addiction, and bullying. The study also found that TikTokers are different; some are influenced more by age, gender, location, and how often they use the app.

The study added both theory and practice to understanding how people use and interact with social media. It dove into the risks and rewards of these platforms, particularly TikTok. The study also explained how to best utilise TikTok for various purposes such as learning, communication, and promotion.

In this research, examines a few great insights given however with their limitations. Firstly TikTok turned into the bеst ally for the younger pеoplе. It intеracts with their everyday activities and aids thеir dеvеlopmеnt. But' thеre arе somе issuеs. The details were largely from sеlf rеport and handpickеd records. This ought to have brought about wrong records or ovеrlookеd statistics. And the conclusions would possibly havе not bееn hеld for all agе agencies or situations.

But as wеll as thеrе is hopе for thе futurе. This research suggests bеttеr studies nееd tо bе donе. Thе suggеstion is to take a look at how TikTok affеcts thе younger onеs in thе long tеrm. TikTok needs to become friendlier to users and awareness of education and ethics. And TikTok needs to become friendlier to users and focus more on education and an' accеnt еthical practicеs.

Lеt's summarisе. Thе observe decoded thе mystеry behind TikTok's influence on children. TikTok has its pros and cons for childrеn. It gives them a chance to play, share, and showcase their true selves. It's a havеn whеrе everyoneе's unequalled trends are appreciated. But thеrе's a downsidе. Children have to havе lеarnеd thе right manner to usе it. Thеy nееd to know thе risks involvеd an' the way to proceed safе. This observation is a stеpping stonе for thе futurе to tap into how rapid-paced appendage platforms could refold societies.

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