Journal of Journalism, Media Science & Creative Arts
ISSN (Print): 2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 2, Page 1-14, December 31, 2022

PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF TIKTOK SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATION ON BEHAVIOR OF YOUTH: A CASE STUDY OF PAKISTAN

Dr. Majid Ul Ghafar
Assistant Professor
Hazara University, Mansehra
drmajidghafar@hu.edu.pk

Mr. Azhar Rashid
Lecturer
Hazara University, Mansehra
ahzar@hu.edu.pk

Mr. Noor Nabi Khan
Lecturer
Hazara University, Mansehra
noor_cms27@gmail.com

Abstract

Social media has become an integral part of our lives, enabling people around the globe to interact with each other through various applications. It has transformed the world into a global village. However, the use of social media poses significant risks, particularly for children and adolescents, including various psychological issues related to mental health. This research explores the psychological effects of the TikTok social media application among students at Hazara University, Mansehra, utilizing the Uses and Gratification theory of media. The study population for this specific research consisted of students at Hazara University. Data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire from a sample of 400 respondents, with an equal representation of both male and female participants. The collected data were analyzed using the statistical software SPSS. Data tabulation and subsequent analysis revealed that nearly all students, accounting for 100% at Hazara University, use smartphones in their daily routines, with 78% of students using smartphones for more than three hours a day. Empirical analysis further showed that over 65% of respondents use smartphones for various purposes, such as chatting, making calls, seeking information, and entertainment. Moreover, the specific analysis of the data indicated that the TikTok smartphone application has various psychological effects on its users, including feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and stress, among others.

Keywords: Social Media, Youth, TikTok, Purpose, Psychological effects.

Introduction

The study of mass communication or mass media has become paramount because of the growing advance technologies and technological changes in form of reshaping and remolding the entire mankind of the 21st century (S.S. Ali, 2011). After the introduction of internet, the communication become faster, cheaper and easier. Internet has become an integral part of people around the globe (Luambano, I. and Nawe, J. 2004). After the introduction of social media applications and their

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

availability on smartphone has changed the old communication concept. Smartphone applications include WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and many other applications provide users opportunity to get themselves, educate, inform, and entertained (Zahir Neelam, 2017). The pattern of communication has been changed by new media technology (Riaz, 2013).

One of the most important and vital perspective of social media is that it is used web and mobile based technologies to create highly interactive platforms in which individuals discuss, share ideas and thoughts, and modify user-generated content (Hermkens, 2011). A study conducted in Midwestern reveals that youth who frequently use smart phones and social media applications have a lack of intelligence (Kuznekoff & Titsworth, 2013).

TikTok is social media application available on android phone. This application was started in 2017 in China. This application allows its users to use audio and video music. TikTok users can share shorts audio, videos along with lip synchronization, comedy and share with friends and other social media users. Among other entrainment social media applications TikTok is one of most popular entertainment applications which is user friendly and provides opportunity to its user to know about his/her talent and skills (Joseph, 2019). TikTok allows its users not only entertainment but also the platform to perform as actors and earn money by using their talent.

TikTok has become an integral part of everyone's life. Different age groups use this application for different purposes and get themselves entertained. Pakistan is one of those countries where majority of the population is based on young people. The use of social media and its different applications is increasing day by day. This social media application has positive and negative effects on the user's mind. Most important effects are related to human psychology. However, few psychological issues were discussed in this research study. It includes stress, loneliness, anxiety, and self-harm.

Research Rationale

In the contemporary digital era, the utilization of social media platforms among the youth has surged dramatically. Among the multitude of social media applications available, TikTok has emerged as a prominent platform. Understanding the dynamics of how youth engage with TikTok is essential, given its popularity and potential implications for their well-being and mental health. This research seeks to shed light on the usage patterns and psychological effects of TikTok among young users, contributing valuable insights to the field of social media studies.

Problem Statement

The proliferation of TikTok as a widely-used social media application among youth has raised concerns regarding its impact on their psychological well-being. Despite its widespread popularity, there is a gap in our understanding of how youth engage with TikTok, the purposes they have in mind while using it, and the potential psychological effects it may exert on them. Thus, this study aims to address this gap by investigating the usage, purposes, and psychological implications of TikTok among

ISSN (Print): 2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 2, Page 1-14, December 31, 2022

the youth.

Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions are formulated:

1. How do youth engage with TikTok as a social media platform?
2. What are the primary purposes for which youth use TikTok?
3. What are the psychological effects of TikTok on youth?

Theoretical Framework

Social Media Integration Theory Model (SMIT) is the most relevant theory of Media with present research study. This model argues that social media applications like Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Chaton and many other applications are related to interactive social media which this model focuses on. This theory reveals the media, specially the social media have changed the traditional and old form of communication into new one i.e. interpersonal communication. This theory shifts the traditional way of communication into modern way of communication and also called paradigm shift in communication.

Uses and Gratification Theory of communication was present by Katz and Blumler (1970's). This theory assumes that people use media to gratify their needs. Youth use social media applications for entertainment and information. Therefore, this media effect theory is very much relevant with the present research study.

Objectives of the Study

Following are the major objectives of this research study:

- To explore the usage of social media by the youth.
- To investigate the purpose of using TikTok social media application by the youth.
- To investigate psychological effects of TikTok social media application on youth.

Hypotheses of the Study

The hypothesis of the research is as under:

H_1: It is more likely youth use social media frequently in their routine life.

H_2: It is more likely youth use TikTok social media application only for entertainment.

H_3: It is more likely TikTok social media application has psychological effects on its users.

Significance of the Study

Social media is one of the powerful tools of communication. Which enables its user to share ideas, thoughts and feelings to friends, family. It also enables the user to upload music, videos, and audios without any boundaries. There are so many social media applications. Among them TikTok is one of the most famous and recognized ones. People, especially the youth, use this application for lip sync, audio and video sharing. It enhances the talent of the youth. There are so many research studies conducted on social media and social media applications but a very few of them conducted on the psychological effects of TikTok social media application on behavior of youth. Present research study is significant to explore and investigate the psychological effects of TikTok social media application on behavior of youth. This research study has added significance due to the place and time in which it is conducted.

Literature Review

Literature related to any research study is the procedure of getting information in which a researcher marches towards his research destination keeping every milestone as the way towards destination. Use of social media is one of the common activities and habits of everyone from teen age to adult age. This specific research study is to explore an important issue related to social media applications i.e., TikTok and its psychological effects on users' behavior. In the past several research studies have been done on the use and effects of social media and social media applications on users' behavior. However, very few studies have been conducted to TikTok social media application.

Communication scholars and researchers have highlighted a new phenomenon called social media depression. A study states that social media depression starts when the teen age and pre-teen age spend great deal of time using social media that results in classic symptoms of depression (Davila J. eta al, 2009). Another study related to the risk of social media reveals that preadolescents and adolescents use social media without any training or understanding and share great amount of personal information which may cause their privacy on risk (Barnes, S, 2006).

ISSN (Print): 2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 2, Page 1-14, December 31, 2022

A study reveals that people who use social media platforms frequently isolate themselves from the family, peer groups and others (Joseph B. Bayer et al, 2020). A study found that social media have negative effects for female and positive effects for male (Neira & Barber 2014). Another study related to social media and its effects on young people reveals that social media is associated with creating mental health issues in young people. The study further reveals that social media creates stress, depression, and anxiety (Betul Kels et al, 2019). McCrae (2018) argues that educational institutions must plan awareness programs for youth to overcome the issues of mental health through social media.

A study conducted in Canada Reveals that there is positive relationship between social use and anxiety and depression. Further the study revealed that use of social media more than two hours creates mental distress (Tsitsika et al. 2014). WHO (2017) reported that, "children and young people i.e., 10% to 20% experienced mental health issues worldwide. The report also reveals that more than 50% mental issues are established between the age of 14 to 18" (Kessler et al., 2007; Kim-Cohen et al., 2003). Sampasa- Kanyinga and Lewis (2015) argues that youth who use more than two hours on social media have psychological distress. Similarly another study conducted in different European countries reveals that there is a great relationship between the heavy usage of social media applications and it relationship with anxiety and depression (Tsitsika et al, 2014).

Three different studies conducted in different parts of the world reveals addiction to social media and its effects on psychological issues of youth. A study conducted in Thailand reveals that the addition to Facebook social media application have relationship with depression (Hanprathet et al. 2015). Similarly, another study conducted in China related to social media addiction reveals that social media addiction and depression is statistically related with each other (Li et al, 2017).

Research Methodology

Research methodology is the way to operationalize the phenomenon under study. Irny (2005), argues that methodology is a way of performing a process of solving a problem with specific techniques and procedure. For this specific research study, a survey research technique was used for data collection.

Population

Students of Hazara University both male and female was the population of this specific research study.

Sample

Sample is the sub-set of any population. For this research students of Hazara University were sampled. A purposive sampling technique is used in this specific research work.

Sample Size

400 students were selected as the sample size of this specific research study.

Data Collection

Data was collected through a standardized questionnaire having multiple closed ended questions for respondents to fill easily.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed by using SPSS statistical software used for quantitative data.

Data Tabulation and Analysis

This research study is based on a survey technique to explore and investigate the psychological effects of TikTok social media application on youth of Hazara University. The data was collected according to the objectives of the study and analyzed by using SPSS statistical software.

ISSN (Print): 2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 2, Page 1-14, December 31, 2022

Table.1 Demographic of the respondents

CATEGORIES	VALUES	RESPONSES	%AGE	CF%
Gender				
	Male	200	50	200
	Female	200	50	400
Semester				
	1st Semester	46	11.5	46
	2nd Semester	38	9.5	84
	3rd Semester	87	21.8	171
	4th Semester	47	11.8	218
	5th Semester	57	14.3	275
	6th Semester	42	10.5	317
	7th Semester	58	14.5	275
	8th Semester	25	6.3	400
Discipline				
	Science	152	38	152
	Social Science	248	62	400
Age				
	18 to less than 20	84	21	84
	20 to less than 22	143	35.8	227
	22 to less than 24	115	28.8	342
	more than 24	58	14.5	400

N=400

Table 1 indicates that both the genders respond to the questionnaire with equal percentile. As for as studying in semester is concern more than 21% respondents' study in semester 3rd followed by more than 14% respondents' study in semester 7th, while more than 11% respondents studying in semester 1st and so on.

Table 1 also indicates that 62% of respondents study in social science discipline while 38% respondents study in science discipline.

As for as age of the respondents is concern, table one indicates that more than 35% respondents have the age between 20 to 22, followed by more than 28% respondents have the age between 22 to 24 while 21% respondents have the age between 18 to 20 and more than 14% respondents have the age more than 24.

Table.2 Frequency of Using TikTok Social Media Application

CATEGORIES	VALUES	RESPONSES	%AGE	CF%
TikTok				
	don't know	122	30.5	122
	rarely	129	32.3	251
	frequently	95	23.8	346
	very frequently	54	13.5	400
Day				
	night	212	53	212
	evening	112	28	324
	afternoon	57	14.3	381
	morning	19	4.8	19
TikTok Purpose				
	any others	103	25.8	103
	information	33	8.3	136
	education	38	9.5	174
	entertainment	226	56.5	400

N=400

Table 2 indicates that more than 32% respondents rarely use tiktok social media application followed by more than 30% respondents who don't know how frequently they use tiktok smartphone application. While more than 23% respondents frequently use tiktok social media application, followed by more than 13% respondents have very frequently use tiktok social media application.

Table 2 also shows that 55% respondents use tiktok social media application in night, followed by 28% respondents have use tiktok social media application in evening, while more than 14% respondents use tiktok social media application in afternoon, followed by more than 4% respondents have use tiktok smartphone application only in morning.

Table 2 reveals that more than 56% respondents are using TikTok social media application for only entertainment, followed by 25% respondents who use tiktok social media application for information, education, and any other purposes, while more than 9% respondents use tiktok social media application for education, followed by more than 8 % respondents have use tiktok social media application only for information.

ISSN (Print): 2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 2, Page 1-14, December 31, 2022

Table. 3 Purpose of Using TikTok Social Media Application

CATEGORIES	VALUES	RESPONSES	%AGE	CF%
Uploading Videos				
	rarely	294	73.5	294
	frequently	80	20	374
	very frequently	26	6.5	400
Uploading Audios				
	rarely	310	77.5	310
	frequently	58	14.5	368
	very frequently	32	8	400
Uploading Pictures				
	rarely	291	72.7	291
	frequently	81	20.3	272
	very frequently	28	7	400
Live Videos				
	rarely	299	74.7	299
	frequently	66	16.5	365
	very frequently	35	8.8	400

N=400

Table 3 reveals that more than 73% respondents rarely use TikTok social media application for uploading videos, followed by 20% respondents frequently use TikTok social media application for uploading videos. While more than 6% respondents frequently use TikTok social media application for uploading videos.

Table 3 also indicates that more than 77% respondents rarely use TikTok social media application for uploading audios, followed by more than 14% respondents frequently use TikTok social media application for uploading audios. While 8% respondents very frequently used TikTok social media application for uploading audios.

Table 3 also indicates that more than 72% respondents rarely use TikTok s social media application for uploading pictures, followed by more than 20% respondents frequently use TikTok social media application for uploading pictures. While 7% respondents very frequently use TikTok social media application for uploading pictures.

Table.4 Psychological Effects of TikTok Social Media Application

CATEGORIES	VALUES	RESPONSES	%AGE	CF%
Stress				
	Strongly Disagree	45	11.3	45
	Disagree	83	20.8	128
	To Some Extent	91	22.8	219
	Agree	106	26.5	325
	Strongly Agree	75	18.8	400
Loneliness				
	Strongly Disagree	39	9.8	39
	Disagree	98	24.5	137
	To Some Extent	83	20.8	220
	Agree	108	27	328
	Strongly Agree	72	18	400
Anxiety				
	Strongly Disagree	34	8.5	34
	Disagree	117	29.3	151
	To Some Extent	88	22	239
	Agree	100	25	339
	Strongly Agree	61	15.3	400
Self-Harm				
	Strongly Disagree	33	8.3	34
	Disagree	110	27.5	143
	To Some Extent	88	22	231
	Agree	86	21.5	317
	Strongly Agree	83	20.8	400

N=400

Table 4 indicates that more than 26% respondents agree that TikTok social media application create stress on mind, followed by more than 22% respondents to some extent agree that social media application TikTok can create stress on their mind, while more than 20% respondents disagree that TikTok social media application create stress on mind, followed by 18% respondents to strongly agree that TikTok social media application create stress on mind and also followed by more than 11% respondents to strongly disagree that TikTok social media application create stress on mind.

Table 4 also indicates that 27% respondents agree that TikTok social media

ISSN (Print): 2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 2, Page 1-14, December 31, 2022

application create sense of loneliness on its users followed by more than 24% respondents to disagree that social media application TikTok can create sense of loneliness on its users, while more than 20% respondents to some extent agree that TikTok social media application create sense of loneliness followed by 18% respondents to strongly agree that TikTok social media application create sense of loneliness and also followed by more than 9% respondents to strongly disagree that TikTok social media application create sense of loneliness.

Table 4 also reveals that more than 29% respondents to disagree that TikTok social media application create anxiety on its users followed by 25% respondents to agree that social media application TikTok can create anxiety on its users, while 22% respondents to some extent agree that TikTok social media application create anxiety followed by more than 15% respondents to strongly agree that TikTok social media application create anxiety and also followed by more than 8% respondents to strongly disagree that TikTok social media application create anxiety.

Table 4 also indicates that more than 27% respondents to disagree that TikTok social media application create self-harm on its users followed by more than 22% respondents to some extent agree that social media application TikTok can create self-harm on its users, while more than 21% respondents to agree that TikTok social media application create self-harm followed by more than 20% respondents to strongly agree that TikTok social media e application create self-harm and also followed by more than 8% respondents to strongly disagree that TikTok social media application create self-harm.

Conclusion

Data tabulation and sub-sequent analysis reveals that more than 21% of respondents studying in 3rd semester and majority of them i.e., 62% studying in social science discipline. As far as the age of the respondents is concerning more than 35% respondents have the age between 20 to less than 22. As for as frequency of using TikTok social media application is concern more than 37% frequently use social media application followed by 53% respondents use TikTok social media application at nighttime while 56% respondents use TikTok social media application for entertainment purposes.

Uploading of videos on TikTok social media application the exclusive analysis of the data reveals that overall majority of the respondents i.e., 73.5% rarely upload videos on TikTok social media application followed by 77.5% respondents upload audio on rarely bases while 72% respondents upload photos rarely.

Data tabulation and its subsequent analysis reveals that 45.3% respondents agree that TikTok social media application creates stress followed by 33% respondents disagree that TikTok social media application creates loneliness while more than 40% respondents agree that TikTok social media application creates anxiety, and 42.3% respondents agree that this application creates self-harm to its users.

The empirical analysis of the data reveals that almost all the students i.e., 100% students of Hazara University use social media in their regular routine life. Students of Hazara University use smartphones in different times of the day and night. The empirical analysis of data supports our first hypothesis i.e., "it is more likely student use smartphone frequently in their routine life".

The empirical findings of the data and its exclusive analysis reveals that youth of Hazara University use TikTok social media application for the purpose of entertainment. The subsequent analysis supports our second hypothesis i.e., "It is more likely youth use TikTok social media application only for entertainment".

The exclusive analysis of data reveals that TikTok smartphone application has different types of psychological effect on its users. These psychological effects include loneliness, anxiety, stress etc. The empirical analysis of data reveals that more than 45% students agree that TikTok social media application has psychological effects on youth. The exclusive analysis of data supports our third hypothesis i.e., "it is more likely TikTok social media application has psychological effects on its users".

So, it is concluded that smartphone and social media applications, especially TikTok is one of famous application among the youth of Hazara University. students use this application for different purposes but the most important purpose of using this application is entertainment. It is also worth noting that the social media application TikTok has different types of psychological effects on youth, and they agree that this application causes loneliness, stress, depression and anxiety.

References

Ali S.S. (2011). *Communication Theories & Practices:* Department of Communication & Media Studies, Hazara University, Mansehra. Published By: Abdur Rahaman Printers, Lahore p.9

Barnes S. (2006). A privacy paradox: social networking in the United States. First Monday. 2006;11(9). at: http://firstmonday.org/htbin/ cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/1394/1312.

Betul Keles, Niall McCrae & Annmarie Grealish, (2020). *A systematic review: the influence of social media on depression, anxiety and psychological distress in adolescents*, International Journal of Adolescence and Youth, 25:1, pp.79-93, DOI: 10.1080/02673843.2019.159085

Davila J. Stroud CB , Starr LR, et al. (2009). *Romantic and sexual activities, parent-adolescent stress, and depressive symptoms among early adolescent girls*. J Adolesc.; 32(4): pp.909–924

Hanprathet, N., Manwong, M., Khumsri, J., Yingyeun, R.,& Phanasathit, M. (2015). *Facebook addiction and its relationship with mental health among Thai high school students*. Journal of the Medical Association of Thailand, 98, pp. 581–590.

Hermkens K. (2011). *Social media: Get serious*! Understanding the functional building

blocks of social media: Business Horizons (54): pp.241-251.

Joseph B. Bayer, Penny Triệu, Nicole B. Ellison, (2020). Social Media Elements, Ecologies, and Effects: Annual Review of Psychology Vol. 71:1, pp. 471-497

Kessler, R. C., Amminger, G. P., Aguilar-Gaxiola, S., Alonso, J., Lee, S., & Üstün, T. B. (2007). Age of onset of mental disorders: A review of recent literature. Current Opinion in Psychiatry. doi:10.1109/CCECE.2006.277836

KimCohen, J., Caspi, A., Moffitt, T.E., Harrington, H., Milne, B.J.,& Poulton, R. (20 03). *Prior juvenile diagnoses in adults with mental disorder developmental follow-back of a prospective-longitudinal cohort*. Archives of General Psychiatry, 60(7), pp. 709–717.

Kuznek H. Titsworth Scott. (2013). *The Impact of Mobile Phone Usage on Student Learning, Communication Education*: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2013.76791, Published online: 12 Feb 2013.

Li, J.-B., Lau, J. T. F., Mo, P. K. H., Su, X.-F., Tang, J., Qin, Z.-G., & Gross, D. L. (2017). *Insomnia partially mediated the association between problematic Internet use and depression among secondary school students in China*. Journal of Behavioral Addictions, 6(4), pp. 554–563.

Luambano, I. and Nawe, J. (2004), "*Internet Use by Students of the University of Dar es Salaam"*, Library Hi Tech News, Vol. 21 No. 10, pp. 13-17.

McCrae, N. (2018). *The weaponizing of mental health*. Journal of Advanced Nursing. doi:10.1111/jan.13878

Neira, B. C. J., & Barber, B. L. (2014). *Social networking site use: Linked to adolescents' social self-concept, self-esteem, and depressed mood*. Australian Journal of Psychology, 66(1), pp. 56–64.

Riaz, Saqib. (2013). *Effects of New Media Technologies on Political Communication:* Journal of Political Studies, Vol. 1, Issue 2, PP. 161-173

Sampasa-Kanyinga, H., & Lewis, R. F. (2015). *Frequent use of social networking sites is associated with poor psychological functioning among children and adolescents*. Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 18(7), pp. 380–385.

Tsitsika, A.K., Tzavela, E.C., Janikian, M., Ólafsson, K., Iordache, A., Schoenmakers , T. M., Richardson, C. (2014). *Online social networking in adolescence: Patterns of use in six European countries and links with psychosocial functioning*. Journal of Adolescent Health, 55(1), pp, 141–147.

Zahir Neelam (2017). *Impact of Smartphone Applications on Political Behavior of Youth:* M.Phil Thesis, Department of Communication Studies, University of Sargodha , pp. 46-47