

Effect of TikTok application on interpersonal communication among university students in Somalia: A Case study at Red Sea University

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ABSTRACT

TikTok application allows individuals to creatively express themselves through brief videos showcasing activities such as dancing, singing and other daily activities. Its popularity is on the rise, particularly among the youth. Nevertheless, it's also facing significant scrutiny. This study aims to gather and analyze social media usage data, specifically focusing on TikTok. It seeks to understand how individuals engage with the app and to evaluate whether its usage negatively impacts interpersonal communication among young people. Participants between the ages of 18 - 32 participated in the survey. The sample used in this study had 316 participants using purposive and quota-sampling techniques. The technological acceptance model is used in this study. SPSS data analysis app was used to analyze the data. The results revealed that the more time students spent on TikTok, the more they became unfocused when trying to interact with their peers. Similar results were noticed when considering losing touch with friends. Their attention was likely to be diverted during discussions. The more they used TikTok, the less attention tended to reduce. The findings indicated that Tik Tok might affect university student's abilities to interact personally. Therefore, interpersonal communication is gradually losing its significance as a catalyst of creativity. The interpretation of the data will aid in the development of techniques to reduce the harmful effects reinforce interpersonal communication and reduce students' addiction to TikTok.

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Introduction

Interaction between individuals in exchanging information, feelings, and meaning is undergone by people in everyday life. The occurrence takes place in both verbal and non-verbal messages. According to Aji (2023), social scientists use the term "dyad" to refer to two people engaging in conversation, often to describe this form of communication. Interpersonal dyadic communication involves a connection between two individuals. With the rapid advancement in technology, these conversations now frequently occur virtually, including through email, Instant Messaging, and discussion

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groups (Kuek, 2023). In addition, Sutikno & Basit (2023) investigated the influence of social media on interpersonal communication among learners; the results indicated that learners do not like engaging in face-to-face conversation. When social media apps are introduced into conversations, especially within family and friend circles, they tend to disrupt the flow of discussion, leading to a decline in genuine interpersonal communication (Rafique, et al., 2023). Interpersonal communication skills are crucial in any discussion. The strength in delivering and receiving messages is greater, and the likelihood of obtaining instant feedback is higher compared to virtual communication (Akgül & İzmirli, 2024).

Al-Jbouri (2024) claimed that many researchers positively support social media's effect on interpersonal communication. Yet, other studies show that social media has a bad effect on interpersonal communication. However, studies have only scratched the surface. The use of social media applications improves students' real lives with their peers, close relatives, or teachers, many of them nowadays are emotionally neglecting person-to-person interaction in turn are gradually suffering at the expense of smartphones (Marino, et al., 2023). Investigating the effects of TikTok on young adults is urgent due to its widespread use and significant impact on behavior (Marino, et al., 2023). As young adults frequently multitask on their devices, including TikTok, it's vital to study these activities' influence on social connections to create targeted interventions. The increasing engagement of youth with TikTok, often leading to distraction, highlights the need for timely research. This is crucial for guiding policies and educational efforts tailored to the digital age. Research outcomes could provide critical insights into TikTok's effects, aiding public campaigns to lessen distractions and helping design technologies that reduce cognitive overload during social interactions.

Many studies have tried to explore the usefulness of social media as a tool of interpersonal interaction. The results indicate both negative and positive effects on the issue. A study by Al Hammadi and Noor (2023) found a positive impact of WhatsApp as an effective medium of interpersonal communication. Furthermore, Akgül & İzmirli, (2024) looked into how Facebook affected pupils' ability to communicate with one another. The results indicated that students are less inclined to engage in face-to-face communication. Al-Jbouri (2024) highlighted that social media brings more negative effects and does not help to improve interpersonal communication.

Additionally, Purnama & Asdlori (2023) explored the influence of social media on interpersonal relationships among learners. Their research revealed that increased reliance on basic notification features for interaction and entertainment has adversely affected face-to-face communication among learners. Similarly, Marino et al. (2023) concluded from their study that individuals who spend more time on social media are more likely to experience negative effects, leading to a decline in relationship quality.

Nowadays, new trends have emerged, particularly in the realm of daily routines. Memorable moments now often take the form of short videos, ranging from fleeting seconds to a few minutes. Social media platforms enable users to share these videos, garnering likes and expanding their follower base. Furthermore, the accessibility of video editing tools has made it effortless to craft engaging content. Consequently, there is a growing enjoyment in expressing creativity through humorous or everyday video creations. Despite its novelty, this trend shows no signs of slowing down. The number of TikTok users is rapidly increasing; TikTok had 1.5 billion monthly active users in 2023 and is expected to reach 1.8 billion by the end of 2024. Iqbal (2024) claimed TikTok demographics show that a majority of users are aged below 30 years. TikTok application fame could be linked to the speed at which it is being downloaded. In June 2021 downloads reached 3 billion (Iqbal, 2023).

The rapid surge in TikTok usage is prompting concerns worldwide, particularly regarding the potential hazards of excessive engagement. The phenomenon of overindulging in short-form video platforms involves users persisting in their interactions despite encountering adverse effects. According to Chao et al. (2023), TikTok serves as a

platform for self-expression, where young users showcase their creative talents, often sharing humorous content. However, as noted by [Chu et al. \(2024\)](#), the escalating popularity and usage of the TikTok app bring with it a range of negative influences. There are concerns that digital content may have detrimental effects on contemporary social norms ([Kaur, 2023](#)).

Efforts to digitally detox and reclaim autonomy from addictive technologies are increasingly recognized ([Hager et al., 2023](#); [Verma & Chatterji, 2024](#)). Studies on this subject often discuss various habits associated with psychoactive substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and narcotics. Others have done studies on the same topic and concluded that there are also behavioral dependencies such as spending more time online otherwise known as internet addiction. Dependency habits that an individual is unable to manage, though many areas of his normal life are disrupted ([Nurudeen, et al., 2023](#)). Internet addiction is described as a condition in which an individual's inability to regulate their internet usage leads to significant impairments in daily functioning. Moreover, it contributes to mental, social, academic, and occupational difficulties. Research confirmed that internet dependency has a high potential to negatively affect users' overall health, including psychological hygiene complications, reduced learning, and poor interpersonal quality ([Troy & Pearce-Dunbaret, 2023](#)).

TikTok offers many filters that are individually specific, exciting labels, and video modifying instruments to enhance videos to make them extra pleasing. These hilarious features and tailored content are attractive and possess addictive entertainment value for young users. ([Chao, et al., 2023](#)) in his paper provides a fertile ground for young persons to be hooked on short-form video apps such as TikTok. One may trace the influence of interpersonal interactions on habits back to the social learning theory. According to [Jun \(2024\)](#) and [Budhiraja and Gupta \(2024\)](#), individuals' thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors are shaped by personal practice and indirectly by observing the habits of others closely. TikTok, being centered around individual users, prioritizes self-expression and restricts interpersonal engagement. This perspective is supported by [Zhang et al. \(2023\)](#), who assert that interpersonal interactions have a greater impact compared to mediated messaging.

While there is extensive research exploring the impact of social media and digital communication on interpersonal interactions, there remains a notable gap in understanding the nuanced effects of emerging platforms like TikTok. However, there is limited research specifically examining the unique features and influence of TikTok on interpersonal communication dynamics. Additionally, while studies have investigated the addictive nature of social media and internet usage, there is a need for further research specifically focusing on the addictive potential of TikTok. Understanding how the platform's design elements, such as personalized filters and addictive content, contribute to excessive usage and its impact on real-life social interactions is essential for developing effective interventions and policies. Furthermore, while some research has touched upon the influence of social learning theory on individuals' online behaviors, there is a lack of comprehensive exploration into how TikTok's emphasis on interpersonal communication. Thus, this current study focuses on the effect of TikTok application on interpersonal communication among university students.

Method

This study employs a quantitative approach, utilizing a structured questionnaire design to effectively elucidate the attitudes, opinions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors of respondents regarding a specific subject within a particular demographic group ([Toyon, 2023](#)). Purposive and quota sampling was utilized to identify the samples for this study, which used non-probability sampling techniques to select samples from Red Sea University. Quota sampling is a non-probability, non-random sampling method that separates the population into several strata based on a predetermined number of

respondents (Ciudad-Fernández, et al., 2024). The concept of purposive inspecting is centered on subjects who have a specific characteristic, which might be perfect assistance to the investigator (Bertoli et al., 2024) For the present study, students who had experience in using social media applications and TikTok in particular were the target, and 316 valid responses were generated.

The research focused on undergraduate students from Red Sea University, aiming to understand how the TikTok app influences interpersonal communication among this demographic. A total of 316 students participated in the study, comprising 153 male students and 163 female students. To ensure a representative sample, participants were selected using purposive and quota sampling methods, with visits made to each faculty of the university. This approach helped capture a diverse range of perspectives within the student population. Before participating in the study, all participants were provided with detailed information about the research objectives and procedures. They were also required to provide informed consent by reading and signing a consent form, ensuring ethical standards were met. The research instrument used was a structured questionnaire designed to assess the impact of TikTok on interpersonal communication. Before its administration, a pilot test involving 50 participants was conducted to evaluate the questionnaire's reliability in generating accurate data. This process helped refine the questionnaire and ensure its effectiveness in capturing relevant information.

Data analysis involved several steps, including data cleansing and coding, aimed at enhancing the precision and consistency of the collected data. The questionnaire demonstrated satisfactory reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.71, indicating internal consistency, and a validity score of 0.82, meeting stringent ethical standards. Once the data collection phase was complete, descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations were used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics helped summarize key characteristics of the data, while cross-tabulations were utilized to explore relationships between variables and identify any patterns or trends. Overall, the rigorous methodology employed in the study ensured the collection of reliable and valid data, allowing for meaningful insights into the influence of TikTok on interpersonal communication among undergraduate students.

Results

The research results are presented in ten categories. They are classified in the gender of the respondent, respondent age, social media app users, various social media, hours spent on TikTok per day, the influence of TikTok on enhancing peer communication, TikTok's value as a platform for communication, sharing videos on TikTok contributes to interpersonal communication, TikTok helps to develop communication skills, the main advantages of TikTok, TikTok is the best App to stay in communication with teachers, reason for not linking TikTok, Communication through sharing videos on TikTok, strength and interpersonal communication, Perceived effect of TikTok on students' communication. The result in the gender of the respondent is demonstrated vividly in Table 1.

Table 1. Gender of the Respondent

	Total	Respondent educational background			
		Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor	Others
Total	316	52	107	154	3
	100 %	100%	100%	100%	100%
Male	163	21	59	81	2
	51%	40%	55%	53%	67%
Female	153	31	48	73	1
	49%	60%	45%	47%	33%

It provides insights into the demographic composition of survey respondents based on gender and educational background. The genders are classified into two, male and female. The distribution was approximately even among the 316 respondents, with 51% male (163) and 49% female (153). Bachelor's degrees accounted for 48% (154) of the total, followed by the Diploma category (34% (107) and the Certificate category 16% (52). 1% (3) of respondents fall into the 'Others'. A closer look at gender and educational background reveals differences within each group. The 'Others' group is dominated by men 67% (2), whereas females make up 33% (1). The decision to do so indicates the importance of studying gender and educational background to provide a comprehensive understanding of the participants that may offer significant insights into the intersectional dynamics of the demographic landscape at Red Sea University.

Respondent age is classified into three categories. They range from 18-22, 23 to 27 and 28-32. The majority of responders, 65% (206), are between the ages of 18 and 22. Bachelor's degrees are common in this age group, accounting for 69% (106). The 23-27 age group accounts for 32% (103) of all respondents, with a varied range of educational backgrounds. The 28-32 age group accounts for 3% (7) of the respondents, indicating a lower representation. This age group has a more evenly distributed distribution across educational categories. The 'Others' category, which represents alternative educational routes, is widespread across all age groups but is significantly greater at 100% in the 18-22 age group. The described data are presented in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Respondent` age

	The respondent educational background				
	Total	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor	Other
Total	316	52	107	154	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
18-22	206	34	63	106	3
	65%	65%	59%	69%	100%
23-27	103	17	42	44	0
	32%	33%	39%	29%	0%
28-32	7	1	2	4	0
	3%	2%	2%	2%	0%

This detailed split emphasizes age-related differences in educational choices, indicating that younger respondents may be more willing to pursue alternatives to typical certificates, diplomas, or Bachelor's degrees. This choice underscores the importance of including age and educational backgrounds for a complete knowledge of the respondent community, offering unique insights into the various dynamics of education within the studied demography.

A breakdown of respondents' usage of social media applications, classified by the number of apps utilized is presented in [Table 3](#). According to the respondents' usage habits, there is zero number of the respondents who do not social media usage. The table vividly shows that the majority, 62% (192), use between 1 and 5 social networking applications. This pattern is true across educational levels, ranging from 54% to 67%. Mainly, 9% (30) of respondents do not use any social networking applications, and their frequency is higher than among those with Certificates 4 (8%) and the 'Others' category (33%). The age range of 6-9 application usage is represented by 17% (55), with a fair distribution across educational levels. The percentage of respondents who use 10 or more social networking applications 12%, (39) varies across educational groups. A considerable majority of the respondents use between 1 and 5 social networking applications, a tendency that is similar across educational levels. 30 of the respondents do not use any social media applications, with a greater distribution among those with Certificates (8%) and 'Others' (33%). The age range of 6-9 applications usage accounts for 17%, with a fair distribution across educational backgrounds. The distribution of

respondents using 10 or more social media applications (12%) varies across educational categories.

Table 3. Social media app usage

	The respondent educational background				
	Total	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor	Other
Total		316	52	107	154
		100%	100%	100%	100%
0	30	4	20	5	1
	9%	8%	19%	3%	33%
1-5	192	30	58	102	2
	62%	58%	54%	66%	67%
6-9	55	10	20	25	0
	17%	19%	19%	16%	0%
10 and above	39	8	9	22	0
	12%	15%	8%	14%	0%

The findings highlight how respondents' education levels influence their use of social media apps, showcasing diverse patterns in the digital realm. This suggests that educational backgrounds shape social media usage, potentially indicating differences in digital literacy skills, preferences, or lifestyle choices.

The preferences of students at Red Sea University regarding their usage of various social media platforms are presented in Table 4. There are 6 social media platforms involved in the category, Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat. Facebook is the most popular platform, with 29% (95) of respondents preferring it, and this usage is constant across educational backgrounds. WhatsApp comes in second place; with 28% (89) saying, it is their preferred social media site. However, WhatsApp preferences differ dramatically with Diploma holders having the highest preference (54%). TikTok app usage is 28% (86). Surprisingly, this tendency is significantly larger among Certificate holders (34%), as opposed to Bachelor's degree holders (25%). YouTube is 10% (31) of respondents, with a significant 67% preference among those classified as 'Others.' Instagram and Snapchat had lower usage rates, with 2% (5) and 3% (10) of respondents using them, respectively.

Table 4. The various social media

	The respondent educational background				
	Total	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor	Other
Total	316	52	107	154	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Facebook	95	8	32	55	0
	29%	15%	30%	36%	0%
WhatsApp	89	28	27	33	1
	28%	54%	25%	21%	33%
TikTok	86	11	36	39	0
	28%	21%	34%	25%	0%
YouTube	31	2	10	17	2
	10%	4%	9%	11%	67%
Instagram	5	2	1	2	0
	2%	4%	1%	1%	0%
Snapchat	10	1	1	8	0
	3%	2%	1%	5%	0%

Based on the data, the choice suggests a rich and diversified social media ecosystem among students formed by both educational backgrounds and the distinctive features of each platform. This comprehensive overview provides valuable insights into social media usage dynamics within the university community.

Table 5 shows an examination of the time spent on TikTok by students at the University. There are six categories of time spent by users. It ranges from nonusers of zero hours, 1 hour, two to three hours, four to five hours, six and above.

Table 5. Hours spend on TikTok per day

	The respondent educational background				
	Total	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor	Other
Total	316	52	107	154	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Not user	75	15	18	39	3
	24%	29%	17%	25%	100%
0 - 1	71	13	26	32	0
	22%	25%	24%	21%	0%
2-3	85	11	28	46	0
	27%	21%	26%	30%	0%
4-5	62	11	27	24	0
	20%	21%	25%	16%	0%
6	21	2	8	11	0
	6%	4%	7%	7%	0%
6 and above	2	0	0	2	0
	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%

According to the data, a sizable proportion of respondents, 24% (75), do not use TikTok. The respondents who use the app (22%, 71) spend between 0 and 1 hour each day, with this tendency constant across educational levels. A significant number, 27% (85) of respondents spend 2-3 hours every day on TikTok, with Certificate holders having a somewhat greater preference (27%). 20% (62) of respondents like the 4-5 hours daily group, while 6% (21) prefer the 6 and above hours category. These data show that the student population's involvement with TikTok varies depending on their educational background. A significant portion, 24% of respondents, do not use TikTok, demonstrating a significant sector of the university population that does not utilize the app. A significant number of TikTok users spend between 0 and 1 hour every day, with 22% falling into this category. Furthermore, 27% of respondents devote 2-3 hours every day. The findings highlight the different usage patterns affected by TikTok's interactive short-form videos and creative content.

Table 6 describes respondent perception of the influence of TikTok on enhancing peer communication. Respondents were questioned whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement. The answer options range from agree, strongly agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. From the total result, it can be inferred that TikTok makes young graduates communicate with each other easily. 27% (84) of the 316 participants agreed with the statement, while 18% (56) strongly agreed. This positive aspect is shared by respondents of all educational levels, with different degrees of agreement. However, 28% (89) strongly disagreed with the statement, and 6% (20) disagreed. The statement's overall average score (2.69) suggests a modest level of agreement. Based on the data given, it is possible to conclude that there is a mixed impression of TikTok's influence on enabling communication among students. While 27% agreed and 18% strongly agreed to recognize TikTok's good function in facilitating contact among students, there is a sizable section, (28% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed). The total average score of 2.69 (Table 6) suggests a moderate level of agreement, indicating that, while TikTok is positively evaluated by some, there is a wide range of viewpoints among respondents. As a result, it can be observed that opinions regarding the impact of TikTok on student communication are diverse. They are encompassing both positive and negative perspectives.

Table 6. Influence of TikTok on enhancing peer communication

	The respondent educational background				
	Total	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor	Other
Total	316	52	107	154	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Agree	84	12	27	45	0
	27%	23%	25%	29%	0%
Strongly Agree	56	18	17	21	0
	18%	35%	16%	14%	0%
Neutral	67	9	15	43	0
	21%	17%	14%	28%	0%
Disagree	89	13	37	37	2
	28%	25%	35%	24%	67%
Strongly Disagree	20	0	11	8	1
	6%	0%	10%	5%	33%
Total	316	52	107	154	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 7 demonstrates the perspectives of students about TikTok's value as a platform for communication. Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement "TikTok provides useful platforms for easy communication to students." Among the 316 participants, 33% (104) had a good opinion, 13% (41) agreed, and 20% (63) strongly agreed. However, 36% (113) of respondents disagreed with the assertion, and 11% (35) strongly disagreed, demonstrating that a sizable portion of the population does not see TikTok as a helpful communication channel for recent graduates. In summary, while a considerable number of respondents acknowledge TikTok's value, a sizable proportion of voice misgivings or indifference, shows a diverse terrain of perspectives regarding its efficiency in encouraging communication among students.

Table 7. TikTok's value as a platform for communication

	The respondent educational background				
	Total	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor	Other
Total	315	52	107	153	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Agree	41	6	11	24	0
	13%	12%	10%	16%	0%
Strongly Agree	63	15	27	20	1
	20%	29%	25%	13%	1%
Neutral	63	6	18	38	1
	20%	12%	17%	25%	33%
Disagree	113	20	37	55	1
	36%	38%	35%	36%	33%
Strongly Disagree	35	5	14	15	1
	11%	10%	13%	10%	33%

A survey on the impact of sharing videos on TikTok among respondents shown in Table 8, illustrates various viewpoints on its contribution to interpersonal communication. Among 316 respondents, 28% agreed and 9% strongly agreed that sharing TikTok videos improves interpersonal communication. In contrast, 28% disagreed and 15% strongly disagreed with this claim. The average score of 2.93 implies a reasonable level of agreement. While there is considerable acceptance for the premise that TikTok improves interpersonal communication, a sizable number indicates disagreement or indifference.

Table 8. Sharing Videos on TikTok contributes to interpersonal communication

	The respondent educational background				
	Total	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor	Other
Total	316	52	107	154	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Agree	86	21	25	40	0
	28%	40%	23%	26%	0%
Strongly Agree	27	6	12	8	1
	9%	12%	11%	5%	33%
Neutral	65	6	19	40	0
	20%	12%	18%	26%	0%
Disagree	90	11	31	47	1
	28%	21%	29%	31%	33%
Strongly Disagree	48	8	20	19	1
	15%	15%	19%	12%	33%
Total	316	52	107	154	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Sharing TikTok Videos by students contributes to interpersonal communication	2.93	2.60	3.08	2.98	3.67

This demonstrates a view of TikTok's significance in facilitating communication among students. Lastly, while there is a significant favorable perspective, the different answers highlight the complexities of the link between TikTok use and interpersonal contact. The survey findings on the perceived influence of TikTok on the development of communication skills are diverse, as shown in Table 9 TikTok contributes to the improvement of communication abilities, according to 23% (75) of the 316 participants, and 9% (25) highly agree. In contrast, 34% (109) disagreed, with 16% (52) strongly disagreeing. The average results show various levels of agreement, with Certificate holders scoring 3.13, Diploma holders scoring 3.17, Bachelor's degree holders scoring 3.38, and 'Others' scoring 2.95. The entire mean score is 2.67, indicating reasonable agreement. While a sizable proportion of respondents agree that TikTok has a good effect on communication abilities, a sizable proportion disagrees.

Table 9. TikTok helps to develop communication skills

	The respondent educational background				
	Total	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor	Other
Total	316	52	107	154	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Agree	75	10	17	48	0
	23%	19%	16%	31%	0%
Strongly Agree	25	7	10	6	2
	9%	13%	9%	4%	67%
Neutral	54	6	19	29	0
	18%	12%	18%	19%	0%
Disagree	109	23	37	48	1
	34%	44%	35%	31%	33%
Strongly Disagree	52	5	24	23	0
	16%	10%	22%	15%	0%
TikTok Help develop communication skills	3.13	3.17	3.38	2.95	2.67

A survey was conducted on the primary advantages of TikTok for students, as shown in Table 10. Four advantages that are classified are communication, entertainment, getting information, and becoming famous.

Table 10 The main advantages of TikTok

	The respondent educational background				
	Total	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor	Other
Total	316	52	107	154	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Communication	27	6	8	13	0
	9%	12%	7%	8%	0%
Entertainment	122	22	45	54	1
	39%	42%	42%	35%	33%
Get Information	27	4	14	9	0
	9%	8%	13%	6%	0%
Become Famous	140	20	38	78	2
	43%	38%	36%	51%	67%

Table 10 gives significant insights into the perceived benefits of the platform across diverse educational backgrounds. A sizable 39% (122) of respondents highlighted the platform's significance in entertainment, showing that TikTok is mostly used for leisure and enjoyment. Furthermore, 43% (140) of respondents mentioned the capacity to become famous as a crucial benefit of TikTok. Conversely, the numbers for communication (9%, 27) and information gathering (9%, 27) are significantly lower. Based on these findings, it is clear that TikTok's principal appeal among students is its entertainment value the opportunity for self-promotion and fame.

As shown in Table 11, the survey results on the reasons why respondents dislike TikTok provide useful insights into the platform's perceived limitations, with variances across different educational backgrounds. A sizable 62% (198) of respondents, a majority, expressed concern that TikTok wastes their time. Moreover, 14% (42) of respondents said TikTok made them lazy, with this feeling shared by respondents of all educational backgrounds. Surprisingly 11% (33) of respondents said TikTok keeps them away from their friends, while 13% (43) said they could not communicate with their friends directly.

Table 11. Reasons for not liking TikTok

	The respondent educational background				
	Total	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor	Other
Total	316	52	107	154	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Make me lazy	42	5	12	25	0
	14%	10%	11%	16%	0%
Waste my time	198	26	59	110	3
	62%	50%	55%	71%	100%
Keep me away from friends	33	10	14	9	0
	11%	19%	13%	6%	0%
I cannot talk to my friends directly	43	11	22	10	0
	13%	21%	21%	6%	0%

The results from the survey on whether TikTok is considered the best app for students to stay in communication with teachers, as shown in Table 12, give significant insights into the viewpoints of respondents. The majority of respondents, 61% (195), believe TikTok is not the best option for staying in connection. This opinion is shared

across educational levels, with 22% (24) of Diploma or Certificate holders 21 % (11), 11% (17) of Bachelor's degree, and 33% (1) of those classified as 'Others.'

Table 12. TikTok is the best App to stay in communication with teachers

	The respondent educational background				
	Total	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor	Other
Total	316	52	107	154	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Yes	54	11	24	17	1
	17%	21%	22%	11%	33%
Not	195	28	57	108	2
	61%	54%	53%	70%	67%
May be	35	6	12	17	0
	11%	12%	11%	11%	0%
I do not Know	32	7	14	11	0
	11%	13%	13%	7%	0%

TikTok was approved by 17% (54) of respondents as the best app for interconnecting with educators. This positive perception varied significantly with diploma holders having a larger percentage (22%). The 'Maybe' category, which has 11% (35) of respondents, and the 'I do not know' category, which has 11% (32) of respondents, reflect a level of hesitation among a section of respondents. Based on the above information, it is clear that a sizable proportion of students do not consider TikTok to be the best app for interacting with educators.

According to the survey data on students' perception regarding communication through sharing videos on TikTok, 43% (138) of respondents believe they are communicating with other users and followers when they share a video on the platform, (Table 13). With notable differences ranging from 42% to 45%, this optimistic attitude is stable across educational backgrounds. In contrast, 55% (172) of respondents said no, suggesting that they do not believe they are engaging with other users and followers when they share a video on TikTok. Respondents of all educational levels, ranging from 54% to 58%, share this attitude. Analyzing these statistics reveals that, while a sizable proportion of respondents saw TikTok video sharing as a form of communication, a sizable proportion did not.

Table 13. Communication through sharing videos on TikTok

	The respondent educational background				
	Total	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor	Other
Total	316	52	107	154	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Yes	138	22	46	70	0
	43%	42%	43%	45%	0%
No	172	30	58	81	3
	55%	58%	54%	53%	100%
Total	316	52	107	154	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Yes	138	22	46	70	0
	43%	42%	43%	45%	0%

Table 14 indicates the data from the survey on the perceived strength of interpersonal communication as a means of transferring messages amongst learners on TikTok reveals varied sentiments among respondents. A notable 35% (112) of respondents affirm that interpersonal communication is a powerful means of transferring

messages on TikTok. This positive perception is particularly evident among Diploma holders (38%) and Bachelor's degree holders (30%).

Table 14. Strength of interpersonal communication

	The respondent educational background				
	Total	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor	Other
Total	315	52	107	154	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Yes	112	24	41	46	1
	35%	46%	38%	30%	33%
No	108	13	38	56	1
	34%	25%	36%	36%	33%
May be	95	15	28	51	1
	31%	29%	26%	33%	33%
Total	315	52	107	154	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Conversely, 34% (108) of respondents disagree, indicating that they do not consider interpersonal communication as a powerful means of transmitting messages on TikTok. This sentiment is more pronounced among Certificate holders (46%) compared to other educational backgrounds. Additionally, 31% (95) of participants expressed uncertainty, stating that interpersonal communication on TikTok may be a powerful means of message transmission. This uncertainty is distributed across different educational backgrounds, ranging from 26% to 33%. Analyzing these findings, it is evident that there is a lack of consensus among participants regarding the strength of interpersonal communication on TikTok.

Data on the perceived effect of TikTok on students' communication is presented in Table 15. It reflects a varied spectrum of opinions among respondents that are classified into negative, positive, and neutral,

Table 15. Perceived effect of TikTok on students' communication

	The respondent educational background				
	Total	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor	Other
Total	313	52	106	152	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Negative	164	28	52	81	3
	52%	54%	49%	53%	100%
Positive	25	4	7	13	0
	8%	8%	7%	9%	0%
Neutral	124	20	47	57	0
	40%	38%	44%	38%	0%
Total	313	52	106	152	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 15 provides a comprehensive overview of participants' perceptions regarding the impact of TikTok on communication among students. Out of the total sample size of 316 participants, a significant portion, comprising 52% (164 individuals), expressed a negative view, believing that TikTok has a detrimental effect on student communication. Among those with Certificate qualifications, 54% held a negative view, indicating a slightly higher level of pessimism compared to other educational levels. In contrast, a minority of respondents, representing 8% (25 individuals), expressed a positive opinion, suggesting that TikTok has a beneficial impact on communication among students. However, this positive sentiment was consistently lower across all educational backgrounds. For instance, respondents with Bachelor's degrees had the highest proportion of positive views at 9%. A substantial portion of participants, accounting for 40% (124 individuals),

adopted a neutral stance on the issue, neither perceiving TikTok's effect on student communication as positive nor negative. This neutrality was observed consistently across different educational background.

Discussion

The study highlighted the inquiry as to whether the TikTok application affects interpersonal communication among students. We found, based on the results of the study that the more time learners spent on TikTok each day, the increase of likelihood to focus on TikTok when they were supposed to be initiating or sustaining a conversation. Another intriguing discovery was that participants were more likely to lose contact with other students on TikTok if they used the app for longer periods. This then could negatively affect how these students can interact with others. The findings are consistent across all educational backgrounds, genders, and ages. This indicates that these findings are likely to be widespread among young university students. Even if we attempt to ignore the notice, our phones might still be a source of distraction, as per the research done by [Lee, & Kim, \(2024\)](#). When someone they follow on TikTok uploads a new video. This could contribute to how frequently participants go on TikTok each day. More notifications may mean more likelihood of clicking on the app and using it, hence affecting variables such as the quantity of time spent on TikTok each day, diminishing person-to-person interaction, lack of attention, and general dialogue among friends.

[Hartanto et al., \(2024\)](#) did research and found out how the nearness to phone devices contributes to being unable to complete the work assigned. Considering how much effect the app has at any time, we deduced that if someone sees a notification, there is a high possibility that he attempted to look at the post. Thus, diverting from going on with the activity that was in progress. Another study conducted by [Tok & Cumurcu, \(2024\)](#) found that making use of the phone when a person is in the process of completing a specific duty could be disrupting, as the student is likely to exhibit addiction inclinations. Our findings point in the same direction: when students spend time on TikTok, they regularly use the app for activities like entertainment and how to be famous when they are possibly not paying attention.

The outcome is that students' everyday lives are affected, and dependence may set in thus interfering with active learning and reducing their interaction a very important aspect of personality development. [Al-Hail, et al., \(2023\)](#) support this aspect, it was found that texting, posting, or sharing on a phone, interacting, or paying attention is affected which in turn influences students' active participation in activities. Our study arrived at similar findings; we found that students frequently became focused on TikTok when they would have been attentively dealing with the activity at hand. We deduced that when students do not concentrate during a conversation, there is a high chance their attention is reduced but their focus on TikTok increases. Thus, students' interpersonal communication is greatly affected.

It was thought that students' possibility to pay attention to social media apps is more as compared to what is before them in addition even more difficult to give up the use of social media. This supports the findings of our study as a significant number of respondents recorded on the survey that they are likely to use TikTok during an activity ([Vogels & Watnick 2023](#)). Results suggest a clear trend: increased TikTok usage correlates with greater distraction from real-life activities, including lectures and discussions. As TikTok gains popularity, students are more likely to spend time on it, leading to a decline in interpersonal communication significance.

Conclusion

The research investigates how demographic characteristics, technology acceptance, and interpersonal communication patterns intersect among college students, with a specific focus on TikTok usage. By examining demographics, the study aims to uncover

how these factors influence the usage of social media apps, particularly emphasizing the Technology Acceptance Model's role. It underscores the significance of perceived usefulness and ease of use in shaping users' intentions and behaviors regarding TikTok. The findings shed light on how the platform affects peer communication, highlighting both its positive aspects and concerns regarding its effectiveness in facilitating interpersonal interactions. This study deepens our comprehension of technology-mediated communication within educational settings, especially concerning platforms like TikTok. It stresses the importance of implementing interventions to address issues such as diminished attention during face-to-face interactions and the diminishing relevance of traditional communication methods in fostering creativity. Addressing TikTok addiction and improving students' interpersonal communication abilities emerge as vital responses to the identified negative impact.

This study encompasses a specific university and its dependence on self-reported data. Future investigations might consider a comparative strategy involving multiple institutions. Furthermore, employing mixed-methods approaches and longitudinal studies could provide a richer understanding of TikTok's enduring effects on interpersonal communication and academic achievements. Subsequent research avenues could explore interventions promoting responsible technology usage among students and crafting tailored digital literacy initiatives to enhance communication proficiencies in today's digital landscape. Additionally, examining the influence of notifications on TikTok usage duration and their potential to divert students' attention warrants attention in future studies.

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