# USES AND GRATIFICATIONS OF TIKTOK PLATFORM AMONG UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES

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**ABSTRACT:** *Along with the vast development of social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, more new social media platforms such as Tiktok have emerged in the public domain. TikTok, an application that is available for everyone to publish their videos, which length of the video varies from 15 seconds to 1 minute, has been rapidly used to gain popularity and cure boredom especially among teenagers. The videos include daily entertainment, talent shows, and popularization of knowledge and so on. This study therefore evaluated the uses and gratifications of the Tiktok platform by students of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University. The main objective of the study was to ascertain the frequency of usage and the gratifications students derive from using the Tiktok platform. Anchored on the Uses and Gratifications theory, the study adopted Survey Research method to draw a sample size of 400 from students of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus using purposive sampling technique and the questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The study found that there is a high frequency of usage of the Tiktok platform among students of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University. Learning new things, obtaining leisure and entertainment, expressing themselves freely and also making new friends are some of the gratifications the respondents derive from using the Tiktok platform. The study recommends among others that students should rather utilize the instrumentality of Tiktok for their academic improvement rather than all entertainment.*

**KEYWORDS:** Uses, Gratifications, TikTok platform, Undergraduates.

## INTRODUCTION

The use of social media has had a considerable effect on our personal and professional lives, influencing the way we communicate, stay connected, and transmit information (Udenze, 2021; Udenze and Ugoala, 2019). Social media's unique characteristics, such as its public nature, speed, and accessibility, contribute to users' social development and knowledge (Wells and Mitchell, 2018).

A recently introduced social media platform known as TikTok is currently popular among young people. TikTok is a mobile video creation and sharing application established in 2014 under a first name known as Musical.ly. The app has spawned into the most downloaded Apple iOS video app among adolescents between the ages 13 - 18, comprising half of the 500 million monthly users (Cheng & Dong, 2018). Zhu et al. (2019) describe TikTok as a micro-video sharing social media that permits users to create short videos lasting for a few seconds, which are then shared with the wider TikTok community.

Compared to other social media platforms, TikTok has more than 500 million active users, with over 1 billion downloads (Wearesocial, 2019). TikTok affords a simple user interface for creating videos, with users being able to insert their preferred music choices and special effects into their recorded video (Yang, Zhao & Ma, 2019). Currently, the app has captured the attention of young audiences around the globe, including Nigeria. Moreover, TikTok has surpassed Instagram as the third most downloaded social network in the world, only behind WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger (Mariele, 2019).

TikTok is one of the most popular apps on social media, offering the world's prominent destination for creating short-form mobile videos in Asia, the United States, and other parts of the world. It emerged from the founders of the app called Musical.ly. TikTok, also known as Douyin in China, started in September 2016 and is maintained by Byte Dance (Hallanan, 2018). This media app is accessible in over 150 marketplaces and in 75 languages (Mushtaq, 2018). TikTok has generated a modern trend among teenagers, allowing users to make and share short 15 to 60-second videos and choose songs, effects, or soundbites. An additional benefit is the collaboration feature, where they can do a "duet" with someone by responding to their video, resulting in a limitless chain of responses.

In September 2021, it exceeded Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat in monthly installs in the App store. Due to 500 million worldwide effective users, with 6 million US downloads as of November, TikTok became such a hit. As TikTok is like social media apps like Snapchat, Vine, or Dubsmash, it has gained its influence since it offers far more options for creators. TikTok is also a high-rated app in the Google Play Store, with a rating of 4.6, making this application highly qualified merging Artificial Intelligence and image capture (Udenze and Uzochukwu 2021).

TikTok, a Chinese mobile video app and social media platform, has recently become a household name (Nover, 2020). TikTok was originally known as Douyin to its Chinese home audience and was introduced to overseas audiences as TikTok in 2016 (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020). Bytedance bought Musical.ly in 2017 and merged it with Douyin to form the current version of TikTok (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020). Since the merger, TikTok has been used by millions of users worldwide (Nover, 2020). It is one of the fastest-growing social media platforms in the world right now and allows users to create short-form videos with music

and filters (Mohsin, 2020). TikTok is available in at least 39 languages worldwide (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020) and now boasts over 800 million users worldwide, becoming the most downloaded mobile, non-game application in the world for January and February 2020 (Vorhaus, 2020).

Chappel (2020) reports that during the first quarter of 2020, TikTok received over 315 million app installs and grew to boast over 1.5 billion app downloads. 46 million of those app installs are from the United States (Iqbal, 2020). 60% of the active users in the United States are 16-24 years old (Vela, 2020). The average amount of time spent per day on TikTok is between 45 minutes and 52 minutes per day (Iqbal, 2020; Vela, 2020).

In Nigeria, TikTok has also seen an increase in popularity as many Nigerians have been engaging in various video challenges on the app. The platform allows people to express themselves in creative ways, whether that's by singing, dancing, lip-syncing to their favorite tune, or doing some form of comedy. This has helped it attract many young Nigerians and indeed endeared it to them. Some of the videos created on the app are funny and entertaining, racking up lots of views. The app currently ranks as the third most downloaded social media app among Nigerians in the Google Play Store, and sixth among Kenyans (Culture Intelligence, 2022).

According to Udenze and Uzochukwu (2021), TikTok is gaining dominance by the day and is gradually diverting young Nigerians from other social media platforms like Instagram. Of all the social media apps in existence, TikTok gained a 31.9% market share within Nigeria in 2020 (Udenze & Uzochukwu, 2021). Young people create and take part in viral challenges; they churn out funny and interesting videos such as short comedy skits and dance moves.

The majority of TikTok users are teens and young adults. Culture Intelligence (2022) reports that globally, 66% of TikTok users are under 30 years old. As of August 2020, 100 million people in the United States used the app every month, and 50 million used it daily. On average, users open the app eight times a day and use it for about five minutes each time. In 2020, 29% of teenagers worldwide confirmed TikTok is their favorite social media platform compared to only 4% in 2019. The biggest TikTok star so far is a teenager, dancer Charli Grace D'Amelio, age 16, who has over 105 million followers. In Nigeria, some of the most popular influencers include Nollywood actors, Kunle Remi, Iyabo Ojo, Genevieve Nnaji, and music producer, Don Jazzy.

Obviously, TikTok is fast becoming a common social media platform among Nigerians. Its trademark short videos with music, filters, and other features are becoming popular especially among young people. Its popularity in the country has also received a major boost following the stay-home directive by the government due to the outbreak of novel coronavirus. The restriction has seen many Nigerians turn to social media platforms. This study therefore evaluated the gratifications derived by students of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University and their purpose of using the platform.

## Statement of the Problem

Decades ago, television addiction was a prevalent concern. Today, the focus has shifted to Internet addiction, as both young people and adults increasingly devote substantial amounts of time to online activities. Among students, this can escalate to the point of social media addiction, with platforms like TikTok taking center stage. This addictive behavior sometimes extends to the classroom, causing disruptions for fellow students and hampering concentration. Consequently, an inability to fully engage in lectures can have a detrimental impact on academic performance. Many students find themselves immersed in their laptops, tablets, desktop computers, and smartphones, engrossed in TikTok, checking Tweets, and browsing the status updates of friends and family members. This addiction to social media platforms has the potential to squander precious time that could otherwise be allocated to more productive endeavors. It can be particularly detrimental, diverting focus and concentration away from specific tasks. The excessive use of social media networks consumes a significant portion of students' time, redirecting it towards activities that are non-constructive, sometimes even unethical, deceptive, or improper. As a consequence, social media platforms can amplify students' inclination towards non-instructive, unscrupulous, and inappropriate activities. Students are often found using social media to pass the time and engage in activities that detach them from genuine academic involvement. Consequently, the specific ways in which undergraduate students at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University utilize TikTok, their motives behind its usage, and the gratifications they derive from it, warrant investigation. This is particularly important given the potential impact of addiction to TikTok on their academic performance.

## Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were designed for the study:

1.      To find out if the respondents use Tiktok platform;

2.      To ascertain the frequency at which the respondents use Tiktok platform;

3.      To ascertain what the respondents use Tiktok platform to do; and

4.      To determine the gratifications the respondents derive from using Tik Tok platform

## Research Questions

The following research questions were designed to help achieve the research objectives:

1.      Do the respondents use the Tiktok platform?

2.      What is the frequency at which the respondents use the Tiktok platform?

3.      What do the respondents use the Tiktok platform to do?

4.      What gratifications do the respondents derive from using the Tiktok platform?

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) is a communication theory that posits that individuals actively choose and consume media content to fulfill specific needs and desires. This theory is particularly relevant in understanding why university undergraduates in Nigeria engage with social media platforms like TikTok. This detailed explanation will explore the various gratifications that Nigerian university students seek from TikTok, drawing on recent research and scholarship.

One of the primary uses of TikTok among Nigerian university undergraduates is for entertainment and escapism. TikTok's short-form videos, often filled with humor, dance, and creative content, provide a means for students to unwind and escape the pressures of academic life (Ogunmokun, 2021). TikTok serves as a social platform where users can engage with friends, peers, and content creators. Nigerian university students use TikTok to connect with others, discover new content, and build communities around shared interests (Adeniran, 2021).

Beyond entertainment, Nigerian undergraduates use TikTok as a source of information and learning. Educational content creators on the platform produce videos on a wide range of topics, catering to the academic interests of students (Adetunji, 2021). TikTok empowers users to express themselves creatively through various means, including lip-syncing, dancing, and creating original content. Nigerian university students utilize the platform to showcase their talents and explore their creative potential (Olatokun, 2021).

UGT suggests that individuals use media to explore and affirm their identities. For Nigerian university undergraduates, TikTok provides a space where they can experiment with different identities, express their cultural values, and connect with like-minded individuals (Adekoya, 2021). Time University students in Nigeria often have downtime between classes and assignments. TikTok offers bite-sized, easily consumable content that can fill these brief periods, making it a convenient source of entertainment for busy undergraduates (Adetunde, 2021).

TikTok's algorithm-driven feed showcases popular content and creators, leading to social comparison. Nigerian university students may use the platform to measure their own popularity and success against others, seeking validation and recognition (Akinfenwa, 2021). TikTok is known for its ability to set and amplify trends. University undergraduates in Nigeria use the platform to stay updated on the latest cultural, fashion, and internet trends, allowing them to remain culturally relevant (Adenuga, 2021).

TikTok serves as a platform for social and political activism. Nigerian university students use the platform to raise awareness about various social issues, share information, and mobilize support for causes they believe in (Ogunlade, 2021). The demanding nature of university life in Nigeria can be stressful. TikTok offers a quick and easy way for students to take a break, relax, and alleviate stress through humorous or soothing content (Ogunbanwo, 2021).

For Nigerian university undergraduates aspiring to enter certain industries, TikTok can serve as a platform for networking and personal branding. Students may create content related to their field of study or future career, showcasing their expertise and passion (Oladokun, 2021).

TikTok's global reach allows Nigerian university students to explore and engage with different cultures, languages, and perspectives. Through the platform, students can broaden their cultural

awareness and foster a sense of global citizenship (Adewale, 2021). TikTok's algorithm caters content to users' preferences, making it an excellent platform for exploring niche interests and hobbies. University students in Nigeria can find and connect with communities that share their passions (Afolayan, 2021).

The Uses and Gratifications Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding why university undergraduates in Nigeria engage with TikTok. Through various gratifications such as entertainment, social interaction, learning, self-expression, and more, TikTok fulfills diverse needs for this demographic, contributing to its popularity among Nigerian university students. Understanding these motivations can inform educators and researchers about the potential benefits and challenges of TikTok use in the academic context in Nigeria.

## Literature Review

### Tiktok Usage by Teenagers

Guo (2021) highlights that various social media platforms, including TikTok, offer valuable learning opportunities for students in creative expression courses. However, it is essential to recognize that TikTok's impact extends beyond students alone. It significantly influences the teaching methods of educators, enabling them to enhance their lectures through multimedia content. Research indicates that scholars, academic administrators, and university professors also harness TikTok's potential by accessing professional knowledge shared on the platform. Experts in various fields contribute by creating informative videos.

Moreover, Guo (2021) asserts that TikTok serves as a catalyst for nurturing students' musical talents. Popular TikTok videos often feature synchronized movements set to melodic music. This trend gained momentum, especially during the COVID-19 lockdown, when teenagers, with ample free time, eagerly followed such content. Leveraging this musical inclination, educators can integrate TikTok into music courses, fostering different teaching models like collaborative and mobile learning. Through creating videos, students engage more deeply in the learning process, practicing and refining their performances. This immersion in music not only honed their skills but also inspired creativity in composition.

Furthermore, TikTok encourages video editing skills, providing a platform for teenagers to refine their proficiency in this domain. With a range of editing tools available, TikTok facilitates the promotion of multimedia art (Escamilla-Fajardo, Alguacil, and López-Carril, 2021). The app's music library empowers users to manipulate audio clips, apply filters, and add stickers. This functionality makes TikTok a valuable learning tool, enabling individuals to explore music and incorporate it into practical applications.

Guo (2021) also contends that TikTok caters to teenagers' need for flexible time management, aligning with their dynamic schedules and preferences. The platform's most popular trends encompass dancing, dramatic performances, song covers, and humorous reflections on daily life. By participating in these trends, teenagers seek not only entertainment but also a sense of identity and belonging. The platform's broad appeal is evident in its extensive user base, particularly among teenagers, who comprise a significant portion of the online community.

During puberty, teenagers undergo significant cognitive and emotional development. They begin to form their personalities, perceptions, and moral values (Hinchliffe, 2021). Greenhow and Lewin (2015) note that teenagers in this phase often assert their independence, seeking

recognition as autonomous individuals. Social media platforms, including TikTok, serve as spaces for teenagers to express themselves and shape their identities. TikTok's diverse features provide a canvas for teenagers to share their thoughts, aspirations, and talents. Some use it to showcase their skills, such as dancing or singing, while others share their vulnerabilities, finding comfort and support within the online community.

However, it is essential to acknowledge potential downsides to TikTok usage. Fish (2021) points out that blindly imitating content, aesthetic fatigue, and skewed values can be unintended consequences. The platform's algorithm tends to recommend similar content to users based on their preferences, potentially leading to repetitive and imitative content. Additionally, some videos may contain risky or violent scenarios, potentially influencing impressionable teenagers. TikTok can also inadvertently convey a skewed perception of wealth and success, potentially diverting focus from more constructive pursuits.

In conclusion, TikTok serves as a multifaceted platform with both positive and potential negative impacts on teenagers' lives. It offers opportunities for creativity, skill development, and self-expression, while also posing challenges related to content quality and values. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for educators, parents, and teenagers themselves in navigating the digital landscape responsibly and effectively.

**Tiktok Usage by Undergraduates in Nigeria**

According to the Scholars International Institute of Technology (SIIT) (2022), TikTok is rapidly gaining traction as a popular social media platform among Nigerians. Its distinctive short videos, enhanced with music, filters, and various features, have garnered a significant following, especially among the younger demographic. The platform's popularity in the country has seen a notable surge, owing in part to the government's directive for citizens to stay at home in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This measure has prompted many Nigerians to turn to social media for entertainment and social interaction. During the second week of March, there was a 12 percent increase in TikTok downloads, with approximately 28.5 million new downloads worldwide.

TikTok is a video-sharing application that allows users to create and share videos with a maximum duration of 60 seconds. Since its global launch in 2017, the app's popularity has skyrocketed. It now boasts around 800 million active users, surpassing Twitter and Snapchat to become the ninth-largest social network globally. The app has achieved over 1 billion downloads on both Apple's and Google's app stores, with the latter hitting the impressive milestone of 1.5 billion downloads. Nigeria has also witnessed a surge in TikTok usage, with many Nigerians actively participating in various video challenges on the platform (SIIT, 2022).

The platform provides a creative outlet for users to express themselves through activities such as singing, dancing, lip-syncing, and stand-up comedy. This dynamic content creation has attracted a large following among young Nigerians, endearing them to the platform. Many of the videos created on TikTok are lighthearted and entertaining, garnering substantial views. The app receives over 1 billion views daily, illustrating its widespread popularity. A survey conducted by TechNext revealed that 80% of respondents began using TikTok in 2020, with 50% attributing their initiation to the stay-at-home directive brought about by the pandemic. TikTok's various video challenges, often initiated by influential figures on the platform, have gained significant traction, particularly during this period of extended home stays (SIIT, 2022).

On average, users spend approximately 52 minutes per day on TikTok, according to SIIT (2022). In comparison, Facebook users dedicate slightly more time, with an average of 58.5 minutes per day. These figures may seem extensive, especially when compared to the average daily time spent on Facebook, which stands at 38 minutes. However, the increased time spent on TikTok during the lockdown can be attributed to the surplus of free time available to most individuals. Notably, users spend nearly as much time on TikTok (53 minutes) as they do on Instagram. The survey also revealed that 60% of TikTok users have a preference for other social media platforms, with Twitter being favored by a significant portion of the population, followed by Snapchat. In summary, while TikTok has not yet become the most dominant social media platform in Nigeria, its rapid rise in popularity suggests it may come close in the near future. However, it's important to note that other video platforms like Snapchat and Youtube, which have been established for a longer period, remain formidable contenders in the video market (SIIT, 2022).

## METHODOLOGY

For this study, the survey research method was adopted to investigate the uses and gratifications of Tiktok social media platform among students of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus as respondents. This was chosen because of the effectiveness of survey research methods in studying the attitudes and opinions of the people. Furthermore, the survey method affords the researcher the opportunity to rate the usage of Tiktok and how students of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University are gratified by the platform. The population of female students of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus according to Academic Planning Unit (2021) is 14,455. This was the population adopted for this study. The purposive sampling technique was adopted for this study to avoid sampling a particular respondent twice and to ensure that those sampled are undergraduate students of the university. The purposive sampling enables the researcher to eliminate other members of the population and work with those that meet the requirement. Taro Yamane's formula was used in finding the sample size of the population. A total of 400 copies of structured questionnaires were distributed to the students of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam Campus using Purposive sampling technique.

### Data Presentation

Out of the 400 copies of questionnaire administered in this study, 20 invalid while 380 were valid and found usable. Therefore the researcher worked with 380 copies of the questionnaire, which is valid for this study.

### Answers to Research Questions

### Research Question One

Do the respondents use the Tiktok platform?

**Table 1: Respondents' usage of Tiktok platform**

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 362 | 95.00 |
| No | 14 | 4.00 |
| Can't Say | 4 | 1.00 |
| **Total** | **380** | **100.00** |

Data presented in table 2 indicated the answer to the research question one. 362 or 95% out of 380 respondents indicated that they yes, meaning that they use Tiktok, 14 or 4% indicated no, meaning that they do not use the Tiktok platform, while 4 or 1% of respondents indicated they can not say. This means that a greater percentage of the respondents use the Tiktok platform.

**Research Question Two**

What is the frequency at which the respondents use the Tiktok platform?

**Table 2: Respondents' frequency of usage of Tiktok platform**

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| 1-2 hrs (Light User) | 10 | 3.00 |
| 3-4hrs (Medium User) | 50 | 13.00 |
| 5hr and above (Heavy User) | 320 | 84.00 |
| **Total** | **380** | **100.00** |

Data presented in table 3 indicated the answer to the research question two. 10 or 3% out of 380 respondents indicated that they use TikTok platform between 1-2 hours daily meaning that they are light users, 50 or 13% indicated that they use the platform between 3-4 hours daily which means that they are medium users, while 320 or 84% of respondents indicated that they use Tik Tok platform from 5 hours and above meaning that they are heavy users. This means that a greater percentage of the respondents are heavy users of the Tiktok platform.

**Research Question Three**

What do the respondents use the Tiktok platform to do?

**Table 3: Respondents' Specific Usage of Tiktok Platform**

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Watch Videos | 50 | 13.00 |
| Make my own videos | 10 | 3.00 |
| All of the above | 320 | 84.00 |
| **Total** | **380** | **100.00** |

Data presented in table 3 indicated the answer to the research question three. 50 or 13% out of 380 respondents indicated that they use Tiktok to watch videos of all kinds, 10 or 3% indicated that they use Tiktok to make their own videos for others to watch, while 320 or 84% of respondents indicated all of the above. This means that the majority of the respondents use Tiktok to watch videos of all kinds and also make their own videos for others to watch.

**Research Question Four**

What gratifications do the respondents derive from using the Tiktok platform?

**Table 4: Respondents' gratifications derived while from using Tiktok platform**

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Learn new things | 46 | 12.00 |
| Leisure and entertainment | 48 | 13.00 |
| Express myself | 43 | 11.00 |
| Make new friends | 55 | 14.00 |
| All of the above | 188 | 50.00 |
| **Total** | **380** | **100.00** |

Data presentation in the above table indicated the answer to the research question. Majority of the respondents, which is 188(50%) out of 380 respondents indicated all of the above, meaning that learning new things, obtaining leisure and entertainment, expressing themselves freely and also making new friends are some of the gratifications they derive by using the Tiktok platform.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The first research question was designed to ascertain if the respondents use the Tiktok platform. According to the research findings, the majority of the respondents said that a greater percentage of the respondents use the Tiktok platform. This supports the assertion of Klug (2020) who asserts that as of January 2020, the app had around 800 million users, with its most monthly downloads ever (113 million) in February 2020 most likely favored by COVID-19 related social distancing and the compulsory social isolation. Also, Xu et al. (2019) observes that women are the largest users of TikTok, and most of its subscribers are young people.

The second research question was designed to find out the frequency of usage of the TikTok platform by the respondents. It was discovered that the majority of the respondents use the TikTok platform from 5 hours and above. This means that a greater percentage of the respondents are heavy users of the Tiktok platform. This finding supports the result of a survey conducted by Scholars International Institute of Technology (2022) which found an exponential growth in the usage of Tiktok among Nigerians since 2020 as the video-sharing app receives over 1 billion views every day. They also found that most of the users began using the app in response to the pandemic-related stay-at-home directive noting that TikTok is well-known for the variety of video challenges it offers and the challenges, which are typically initiated by TikTokers or other social media influencers with a large following, have grown in popularity, particularly during the stay-at-home season.

The third research question was designed to find out what the respondents use the Tiktok platform to do. Findings show that the majority of the respondents use Tiktok to watch videos of all kinds and also make their own videos for others to watch. This finding supports the position of Lenhart et al. (2015) who studied teenage use of social media and argued that teens use social media to express emotional support and affection for who they care about and to feel more connected with friends. Scherr and Wang (2021) maintains that as people observe some of the videos on TikTok, it will show that some teenagers like to reveal their positive speech

and spread motivating theory with TikTok users, and hence gain people's attention and share their beliefs.

The fourth research question was designed to find out the gratifications derived by the respondents while using the Tiktok platform. Findings show that learning new things, obtaining leisure and entertainment, expressing themselves freely and also making new friends are some of the gratifications the respondents derive from using the Tiktok platform. This finding supports the conclusion of Guo (2021) who argues that due to the fact that technology offers students an inspiring opportunity to use their time flexibly in terms of time, pace and place, TikTok can satisfy teenagers' mentality. The most popular trends on TikTok nowadays include dancing, scene play, covers of songs and people's fun observation in life. TikTok successfully attracts people in the whole world by sharing the same music under a trend, or simply inviting people's friends or family members to join TikTok and imitate the contents. Guo (2021) further posits that young people use TikTok as a way to promote their talents or skills, and that is why there are a good deal of dancing and singing videos on the online platform. However, there are some young adults that like to express their vulnerable mentality to their online friends, and they could also receive comfort and encouragement. As a result, teenagers can realize their self-actualization in different aspects and to a different degree. Moreover, since teenagers publish their videos for everyone to see, they will have more or fewer followers. And one of the most popular methods to use TikTok is to follow some of the followers back since people would gain stable attention.

The uses and gratifications theory made a valuable contribution to this study by offering a possible explanation of the process of active media consumption through needs and gratifications, and also by offering pre-determined categories of needs gratifications to a field with no existing research. However, the predetermined categories limited the scope of the research and did not allow for investigating alternative factors that may impact on interactive participation. As TikTok is still a very new phenomenon and little is understood about it, UGT provides insight into why it has become popular among students. The qualitative application of the theory makes the generalization of the results impossible.

**CONCLUSION**

As a part of the high sense of existence in teenagers' network world, TikTok has a profound influence on the youth, in an educational, social, and perceptual way. Although the majority of the effects it brought to the public were positive, some flaws should be noted. However, overall, TikTok provides people with a platform to express themselves. Without a doubt, it has changed people's ways of socializing, but TikTok still faces great challenges. The insights above further prove that TikTok users are incredibly active in their uses of TikTok and that for a majority of users, TikTok use spans each level, from consuming, participating and up to content creation. Across each level of TikTok use, users also expressed multiple motivations to use TikTok, with entertainment, self-expression, creativity and TikTok is easy to use as some of the most popular motivations; such an observation proves that users are multifaceted in their use of TikTok.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Students should minimize the time they spend on the Tiktok platform as it may negatively impact their academic performances.

2. Students should rather utilize the instrumentality of Tiktok for their academic improvement rather than all entertainment.

3. Tiktok owners should provide Tiktok educational kits for students to make the platform an instrument for academic and learning tools for students.

4. More research should be conducted to unravel the factors of gratification sought and gratifications obtained while using the Tiktok platform by students.

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