A HAWKEYE ON TIKTOK USAGE AND ITS IMPACT ON YOUTH

Tasneem Bashir [1,2*]

[1] Department of Management Science, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan.
[2] Oxford College for Commerce, Multan, Pakistan.

ABSTRACT

The present investigation offers significant qualitative and quantitative perspectives to enhance the understanding of digital culture research. This study uses a mixed-methods research methodology to investigate how young people in Pakistan feel about TikTok. A questionnaire with both closed-ended and open-ended questions that was intended for Pakistani youth between the ages of 15 and 30 was used to gather data. The data collection involved a sample of 150 participants, with 33.3% identifying as male and 66.6% as female. A wide range of feelings and attitudes were revealed by qualitative analysis, including content analysis, which highlighted the varied significance of TikTok in influencing respondent's ideas and perspectives.

Keywords: TikTok, Impact, Pakistani youth, Social media.

[*]**Corresponding Author.** E-mail: tasneem.bashir@yahoo.com

INTRODUCTION

Social networking sites are 21st century applications that allow users to create personal profiles and connect with a large audience to exchange ideas, views, information, personal thoughts, and various types of media. Notable examples include Facebook, which features posts, status updates, messaging, photo sharing, videos, and games. A trending platform is Snapchat, enabling users to send photos to friends and family that disappear within seconds. The core concepts of connectivity and network-building are essential to the success of all modern platforms.

Social media has revolutionized communication and entertainment in the current digital era, influencing our ideas, beliefs, and perspectives of the outside world. Numerous social media platforms provide us with fresh means of expressing our identities, emotions, and views. One of the most well-known of them is TikTok, which lets users make, share, and watch short films on a variety of subjects. Pakistani youth have been especially active on TikTok, where a large number of local influencers use their artistic abilities to create a variety of entertaining and educational content. Entertainment, humor, fashion, lifestyle, lip-syncing, cooking, food, and travel vlogs, as well as social commentary and instructional and motivational films, are among their offerings.

The large number of followers these influencers attract indicates their significant

impact on the culture and attitudes of today's youth. A crucial aspect of TikTok is its ability to foster relatability among young users, which is important for activism as well. Many Pakistani TikTok influencers, with millions of followers, create and share content that resonates with their audience across various topics.

In recent years, there has been a growing trend in studying the influence and impact of social media on youth sentiments. Beyond entertainment, social media has emerged as a valuable channel for expressing thoughts, ideas, talents, and concerns regarding social and personal lives [5]. Researchers are increasingly interested in exploring the impact of these platforms on users' worldviews, as well as their perceptions of social media.

The rising popularity of TikTok in Pakistan, primarily for entertainment, has led youth to follow various influencers for a multitude of reasons. It is essential to investigate TikTok's significance and impact on other aspects of life, such as lifestyle, ideology formation, social norms, culture, and educational paradigms. One way to explore these impacts is through the voices of TikTok users themselves. The youth of Pakistan can provide insights into TikTok's influence on their lives.

Social media began to gain widespread popularity in 2004 [6], initially serving primarily as a platform for social networking. However, it is fascinating to observe how its primary purpose has evolved into a valuable tool in educational settings. Social media facilitates active learning, collaborative activities, and peer connections for both students and teachers [7].

Social media, which are among the most widely used and quickly evolving platforms, can also alter since they are the main applications for generating data [8]. With its ability to provide supplemental learning materials like audio and video lectures that can be found on YouTube and other educational websites, it has become an essential component of both formal and casual learning contexts. Social media has improved learning opportunities while also changing students' perspectives and comprehension of their surroundings. It improves their lifestyles and aids in the development of new abilities [9]. It has brought about obstacles in addition to many opportunities [10]. Undoubtedly, social media has reduced geographical distances, improved connectivity and networking, provided opportunities for self-expression and virtual education, and granted easy access to entertainment. Its power in raising awareness and promoting social activism is undeniable. However, these benefits come with challenges, including privacy concerns, cyberbullying, addiction, misinformation, and mental health issues, all of which impact the educational norms of students [11].

In September 2016, TikTok, a platform for creating and sharing short videos, was introduced [12]. During the COVID-19 epidemic, it became extremely popular among teenagers and young adults as a result of the World Health Organization and other healthcare professionals using it to spread disease preventive information to a large audience. It is currently one of the social media sites that young people use the most frequently [13]. On TikTok, influencers frequently represent particular accomplishments, traits, or lifestyles that draw in followers. Through their material, these digital influencers promote a variety of concepts, worldviews, lifestyles, and products, greatly influencing the attitudes and actions of young people [14].

TikTok was the most downloaded social media app in 2018-2019, and its popularity can be attributed to multiple factors, including the ability for users to earn money through the platform, initiate trends, and use hashtags to make their content more visible. Break the records of others. People are still using this app because they enjoy the sense of rivalry. While many users enjoy TikTok for entertainment, it also has negative effects, leading to its ban in several countries [15, 16].

TikTok users come from various backgrounds. Healthcare professionals, event planners, independent content producers, and other users are among the accounts that are quite active on the platform. Not every user, though, has access to every feature. Independent content producers typically take advantage of all of TikTok's features [17]. They frequently interact with their audience to discuss serious issues in a more lighthearted manner. As a result, the engagement metrics for these independent creators are often higher than those for other types of accounts.

Research studies have shown that users' perceptions, beliefs, and intentions about the internet and social media differ based on factors such as age, education, income, and race [18, 19]. These differing perceptions and usage patterns can significantly influence how individuals engage with social media. The impact of these platforms on users' psychological health and traits is considerable, with many studies exploring this topic extensively. The influence of social media was broken down into six categories [20]: maintenance, social surveillance, entertainment, recognition, emotional support, and network extension. These elements show the several ways that social media can impact people's mental health as well as their social and personal traits. Sentiment analysis is a well-known opinion mining method that helps corporations, legislators, financial advisors, educators, and healthcare professionals make data-driven, well-informed decisions. It entails gathering and examining people's views, perceptions, and opinions on a range of subjects, products, and services [21]. Online attitudes and views can be monitored thanks to this approach [22]. Sentiment analysis is beneficial to businesses, governments, and organizations in addition to researchers [23].

Given the significant influence of social media platforms, particularly TikTok, on young people, examining their sentiments towards TikTok influencers can offer valuable insights into the impact of these influencers on both their digital and real lives. A number of circumstances, like the COVID-19 epidemic, which has expedited the move toward digital technologies and social media, can impact Pakistani youth's sentiments regarding TikTok influencers. During this time, TikTok has emerged as a vital platform for self-expression and online learning for Pakistani youth [24].

Investigating the sentiments of Pakistani youth regarding content creators on TikTok can uncover a wealth of insights into the digital culture of this demographic, the influence of these creators on social engagement and cultural norms, as well as their mental well-being and educational literacy.

METHODOLOGY

This study addresses the contemporary subject of TikTok's impact on Pakistani youth. Given TikTok's profound influence on the attitudes and behaviors of young Pakistanis, it is vital to investigate their sentiments regarding the platform and its multifaceted effects on their lives.

The increasing popularity of TikTok in our society is evident, as this social media platform significantly influences the lifestyle and perceptions of our youth.

Thus, it is imperative to investigate Pakistani youth's perceptions of TikTok influencers, since this research can offer a thorough comprehension of the platform's influence on their life. We may examine how these influencers affect our children's behavior, education, culture, and society. In order to manage the ever-changing social media ecosystem and its effects on Pakistani young, academics, industry, and politicians can benefit greatly from the insights provided by this study. The results may add to the body of knowledge already in the field and give scholars and educators new perspectives on how to use this platform to achieve goals in social, cultural, analytical, and educational contexts.

The present study aims to: 1. Analyze the sentiments of Pakistani youth towards TikTok influencers; and 2. Explore the

correlation between age, gender, and the following of TikTok influencers among Pakistani youth.

The methods for collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data were used in order to develop a thorough grasp of this phenomenon. With participants ranging in age from 15 to 30, a stratified random sample technique guaranteed representation across pertinent variables, such as gender, geography, and age. A systematic survey questionnaire with both closed-ended and open-ended items intended to gauge the valence of sentiments was used to gather the data. The study included polarity classification, a popular technique for sentiment analysis that gives researchers a basic classification of sentiments and enables a deeper understanding of participants' feelings about the subject (positive, negative, or neutral sentiments) **[25]**.

In this technological age, survey administration has shifted from traditional in-person distribution of printed questionnaires to more convenient online methods. The current study's survey was conducted online using Google Forms. Questionnaires were shared via social media platforms, emails, and various online channels to reach participants. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the study. All data were anonymized to protect participants' privacy and confidentiality.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This application supports career development, research studies, and promotes a happy and healthy lifestyle. It also facilitates friendship sharing, research purposes, and interactive face-to-face interactions.

This section will cover the results of the sentiment analysis carried out for the current study, which looked into how Pakistani youth felt about TikTok influencers. We will start by looking at the study's descriptive statistics, which include participant demographics and their inclinations when it comes to following TikTok influencers.

The study's sample comprised young Pakistani individuals between the ages of 15 and 30. The age distribution of the participants was gathered with two primary goals in mind: first, to make sure that the questionnaire was only filled out by young people; and second, to examine how various age groups use TikTok. 66.6% of participants were men and 33.3% of participants were women. Gender distribution, like age demographics, helped the researcher to determine whether gender (male or female) was more likely to utilize TikTok.

In addition to this descriptive and statistical analysis of the quantitative data obtained from the participants through a questionnaire, the researcher also collected qualitative data. This data was analyzed for positive, negative, and neutral sentiments of Pakistani youth towards TikTok influencers. The results obtained from the tool underwent human validation to ensure their accuracy **[26]**.

It could be found the valuable insights into the sentiments and perceptions of Pakistani youth regarding TikTok and its overall influence. The variety of emotions expressed indicates a broad spectrum of opinions within this demographic.

When it comes to favorite TikTokers, participants exhibit mixed sentiments. While a significant number of respondents have shown a tendency to follow TikTok influencers and express admiration for their content, there is also a notable group that harbors negative feelings towards TikTok and its offerings. Many participants in this study expressed dislike for the platform for various reasons, including perceptions of immorality, time-wasting, or contradictions to their social and moral values **[27]**.

Moreover, the impact of TikTok content creators on respondents' personalities and worldviews generates considerable positive feedback. Participants highlighted the presence of motivational and spiritual influencers on the platform. However, this

positivity remains a topic of debate, as an almost equal number of respondents expressed skepticism or dislike for TikTok and its content. Similar ambivalence exists regarding the educational value of the platform; while some respondents recognized influencers who create content focused on solving mathematical problems, analytical reasoning, and improving English pronunciation, others viewed it as a mere waste of time and detrimental to youth **[28]**. Some respondents noted that TikTok addresses critical social and cultural issues in a light-hearted manner, suggesting its potential benefit to society. However, the number of participants who favor TikTok is balanced by those who hold doubts or concerns about its impact, viewing it as toxic for young people. Additionally, there are neutral responses that reflect the wide range of experiences and perceptions regarding the platform.

The findings indicate that TikTok impacts personal identity, social interactions, and even skill and knowledge acquisition. However, it can also provoke feelings of insecurity, privacy concerns, and social or psychological challenges **[29]**.

Furthermore, these findings remind us that in today's social media landscape, no single viewpoint can fully capture the narrative. It is crucial to recognize the diversity of opinions, experiences, and emotions within a demographic. A one-size-fits-all assessment fails to address the complexities of how TikTok and its content creators influence individuals and society as a whole.

CONCLUSION

Social media applications play a crucial role in our daily lives, serving both social and educational purposes. It can facilitate better interaction among friends and supports research studies. While it may not be essential for building healthy relationships, it enhances face-to-face interactions and helps maintain connections with friends, family, and research mentors. In conclusion, the examination of Pakistani youth's perceptions and feelings toward TikTok influencers highlights the range of thoughts. The influence of TikTok on people's lives, perspectives, feelings, education, and society as a whole is a complicated and multidimensional phenomenon. The study's conclusions highlight how crucial it is to take into account a range of viewpoints and life experiences when talking about the platform's function in modern society.

The analysis presented that young people in Pakistan have conflicting opinions about TikTok, ranging from favorable to unfavorable. Each group—positive and negative—has good cause to feel the way they do about the application.

It is crucial that scholars, educators, and legislators carry out varied and nuanced inquiries of the platform's function in forming the views and ideologies of our kids as TikTok continues to develop and impact digital and mainstream culture. When applied appropriately, it can provide a fresh way to encourage constructive shifts in societal, cultural, and educational perspectives.

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