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Impact of TikTok on University Students' Academic Achievements – A Case Study of UvaWellassa University of Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Various studies have shown that the social media do have a significant impact on peoples' social life, professional life as well as personal life. The present study was conducted to determine the time spend by students on TikTok and to analyze the impact of TikTok on students' academic achievements. The primary data have been collected from the students of the UvaWellassa University of Sri Lanka through a structured questionnaire, and the secondary data have been gathered from journals and websites. The respondents have been selected using convenience sampling method and the sample size was 240 students. The sample consisted of 110 female and 130 male students, and the age group was between 23-27. It was found that 31.25% of students are addicted to TikTok and 87.5% of students spend more than two hours per a day on social media. Three hypotheses were framed as follows. H1: The less time spent on TikTok will have positive impact on academic achievements, H2: Posting TikTok videos has a negative impact on academic achievements, and H3: Watching TikTok videos has a negative impact on academic achievements. All the three hypotheses were accepted showing positive correlations. It can be concluded that even though TikTok has a positive impact on students' mental health and creativity, watching and posting TikTok Videos are time consuming activities and thus have a negative impact on students' academic achievements.

KEY WORDS: Academic achievements, Social media, TikTok, University students

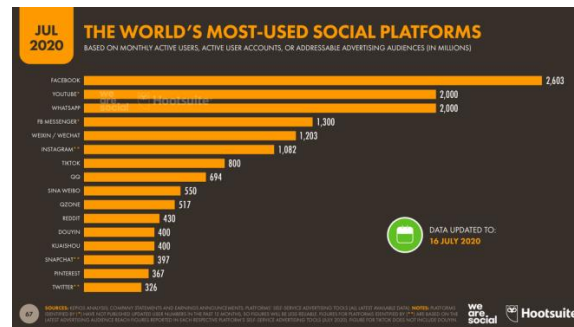
I. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an inevitable and inseparable part of modern life, and it has been revealed that more than half of the global population use social media. In other words, 3.96 billion people use social media today, accounting for roughly 51 percent of the global population. (<https://datareportal.com>). Furthermore, it has been estimated that more than 1 million people have started using social media over the past 12 months, and it is almost 12 new users every second. This suggests that the number of social media users increases faster today than at the beginning of the year 2020. (<https://datareportal.com>). Thus, it is not difficult to understand the extent of the impact the social media brings to our lives. Various studies have shown that the social media do have a significant impact on peoples' social life, professional life as well as personal life. However, referring to those studies, one can not exactly say whether social media is good or bad. Effects of social media have been identified both as positive and negative in different studies.



[Source: Annual Global Digital Growth, July 2020, datareportal.com]

A wider variety of social media platforms were seen during the year 2020, and the Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, Web Chat, Tumblr, TikTok, Reddit, Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, My Space are the popular social media platforms in 2020. The below chart shows the worlds' most used social platforms in 2020.



[Source: Global Ranking of Top Social Media Platforms, July 2020, datareportal.com]

As global web index reveals, only a small fraction of each platform's user base is unique, and many of the platforms' audiences overlap. For example, 95 percent of Facebook users report that they use at least one other social media platform. In Sri Lanka, an incredible development in the internet usage can be seen in comparison with many other countries. There were 10.10 million internet users and 6.40 million social media users by January 2020 (<https://datareportal.com>). This is a significant growth compared to the other developing countries. Specially, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, number of social media usages were increased and countless number of information such as news, opinions, comments, updates, reviews have been constantly shared in social websites. TikTok is one of the most popular music video social platforms, which currently has 800 million active users in 155 countries. This video app was launched in 2017 by a Chinese company named Byte Dance, and within one and half years, it has become the most popular short music video app in the world. Ranking as the most frequently downloaded app in the world, TikTok has shown over 2 billion times on the app store and google play. The special feature of this app is that the users can create short videos up to 60 seconds adding background sound clips from the apps' vast music library, and share the created videos with millions of TikTok users.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A large number of studies have been conducted to analyze the social media usage. In 2016, Jose Gasco and Llopis have analyzed the literature about Facebook in order to study the conclusions of the different works with regard to the Facebook influence on academic performance. The study of 37 papers devoted to the thematic area, was used to identify which journals publish more about the impacts that Facebook has on academic performance, which data collection methods are more often used, which topics emerge in parallel to the use of Facebook in the academic context and which countries are more prolific in this field. The conclusion was, despite the divergence of results, the overall outcome is positive when it comes to the use of Facebook in academic environments. (Jose Gasco J & Llopis J, 2016). In the study titled, the Effects of Facebook Use on College Students' Interpersonal Development, Masin has assessed the impact of Facebook on the psychosocial development of students, specifically, their development of mature interpersonal relationships along the lines of Arthur Chickering & Linda Reisser's vector based model (1993) of student 3rd development. Masin has found that the respondents have been spending more than one hour per day on Facebook, and the majority of users have over 400 Facebook friends. Significant negative relationships between the development of mature interpersonal relationships and Facebook use intensity were found, with slightly more negative correlations when only peer relationships were considered. (Masin R, 2009)

However, only a few research studies have been conducted on the TikTok usage. According to C. Diol, the use of application TikTok has had a very little negative impact on teenagers and young adult students. In his study titled, TikTok Influence on Teenagers and Young Adult Students: The Common Usages of the Application TikTok, C. Diol has also been able to map out the spread of TikTok over the past 3 years and how it has become a significant participant in the role of influencers, creating an entrepreneurial possibility with its growth. (Diol C, 2020) In a research on TikTok based on user centric theory, Jiang Xiao Yu has discussed the reasons behind the huge success of TikTok. From the perspective of user centric theory, TikTok optimizes the user experience in the aspects of UCD design, content production and form innovation, personalized service and so on. It satisfies the user's needs and achieves the user's goals. In terms of user experience, TikTok has optimized the experience in terms of interface design, human-computer interactive, UGC, PGC and OGC content production model, content micro narrative modes and recommended algorithm technology based on big data, which enhanced user loyalty. (Jiang Xiao Yu, 2019)

While studying the impact of TikTok app on students' academics and psychology, Swathi and Devakumar have analyzed how TikTok app has brought a transition in students mental and physical state. Authors conclude that the social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok and Messenger etc. do have positive and negative impact on the student's academic performances. However, Swathi and Devakumar are of the view that there is no sufficient evidence to say that these are the only media affecting the student's performance. (Swathi GK and Devakumar C, 2020)

Out of the few research studies conducted on TikTok usage, according to our knowledge, there is no research conducted among the university students of Sri Lanka. Hence, the present study was conducted to examine the impact of TikTok on Sri Lankan university students' academic achievements.

III. OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

The main objectives of the present study were to determine the time spend by students on TikTok and to analyze the impact TikTok on students' academic achievements.

Based on the above objectives, the three hypotheses were framed as follows.

H1: The less time spent on TikTok will have positive impact on academic achievements;

H2: Posting TikTok videos has a negative impact on academic achievements;

H3: Watching TikTok videos has a negative impact on academic achievements.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Data Collection: Both primary and secondary data have been collected for the present study. The primary data have been collected from the students of the UvaWellassa University of Sri Lanka through a structured questionnaire, and the secondary data have been gathered from journals and websites.

Area Covered and Sampling Technique

All the respondents were selected from the UvaWellassa University of Sri Lanka, located in the Badulla District, Uva Province of Sri Lanka, using convenience sampling method.

The respondents have been selected and the sample size was 240 students.

Sample Size

The size of the sample for this study was 240 students.

Hypotheses

Suitable hypotheses were framed and tested in the relevant places.

Data Analysis Technique: In accordance with the research objectives, descriptive statistics were used to describe the distribution of the data collected through the primary method. Statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyze the data.

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability: The reliability of the research constructs in the accepted level. 34 closed ended questions were formed under TikTok using time, TikTok friends, Motivation, Knowledge, Life, Performance and Academic Achievements, and the coefficient alpha exceeded the 0.7.

Academic Performance : Academic performance was measured using the students' current GPA based on a 5-point scale, as first class honors (4.00-5.00), second class upper division (3.60- 4.39), second class lower division (2.80-3.59), and a general pass (2.00-2.79).

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The sample consisted of 110 female and 130 male students, and the age group was between 23-27. Out of the 240 respondents, 31.25 % of students were from the Faculty of Science & Technology, 11.9% of students were from the Faculty of Animal Science & Export Agriculture, 33.3% from the Faculty of Management and 14.58% from the Faculty of Technological Studies (Fig. 1).

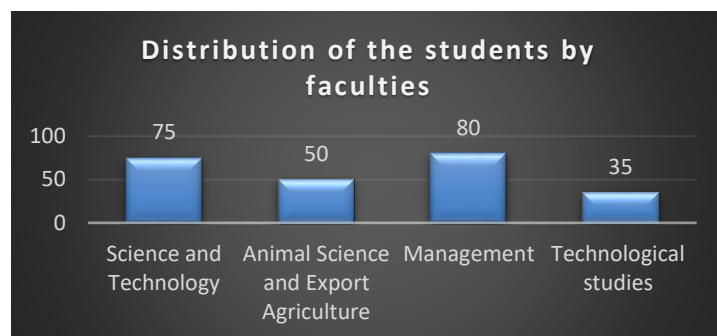


Figure 1. Student Distribution by Faculties

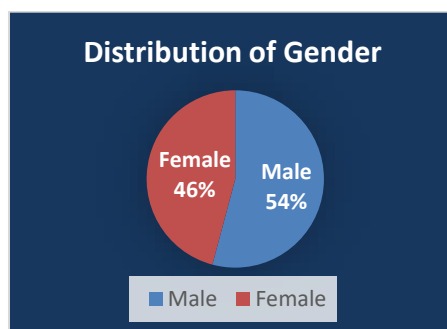


Figure 2. Distribution of Gender

As it can be seen from Figure 2, the sample of the study consisted of 110 female and 130 male students. The majority of the respondents were males, i.e. 54%.

Hypothesis No. 1

Table 1. Spending Time on TikTok vs. Academic Achievements

Correlation		Performance	Spend Time on TikTok
GPA	Pearson Correlation	1	0.359
		Sig.(2-tailed)	.726
		N	
		240	240
Spending Time on TikTok	Pearson Correlation	0.359	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.726	
		N	240
		240	240

As per Table 1, the variables of spending time on TikTok and academic achievements are positively correlated. The correlation shows 0.359. Hence, the hypothesis No. 1 (i.e., The less time spent on TikTok will have positive impact on academic achievements), is accepted.

Hypothesis No. 2

Table 2. Posting TikTok Videos vs. Academic Achievements

Correlation		Performance	Posting TikTok Videos
GPA	Pearson Correlation	1	0.180
		Sig.(2-tailed)	.626
		N	
		240	240
Posting TikTok Videos	Pearson Correlation	0.180	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.626	
		N	240
		240	240

As it can be seen from Table 2, the variables of the posting videos on TikTok and academic achievements are positively correlated. The correlation shows 0.180. Hence, the hypothesis No. 2 (i.e. Posting TikTok videos has a negative impact on academic achievements), is accepted.

Hypothesis No. 3

Table 3. Watching TikTok Videos vs. Academic Achievements

Correlation		Performance	Watching TikTok Videos
GPA	Pearson Correlation	1	0.191
		Sig.(2-tailed)	.623
		N	
		240	240
Watching TikTok Videos	Pearson Correlation	0.191	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.623	
	N	240	240

As it can be seen from Table 3, the variables of the watching videos on TikTok and academic achievements are positively correlated. The correlation shows 0.191. Hence, the hypothesis No. 3 (i.e. Watching TikTok videos has a negative impact on academic achievements), is also accepted.

VI. KEY FINDINGS

The key findings of the study could be summarized as follows.

- 31.25% of students are addicted to TikTok;
- 87.5% of students (i.e. 210 out of 240), spend more than two hours a day on social media;
- Most of the university students are involved in TikTok during leisure time;
- The main reasons for using TikTok are the self-satisfaction of sharing own skills, knowledge, ideas and feelings with others;
- The variables of spending time on TikTok and academic achievements are positively correlated. The correlation shows 0.359. Hence, the hypothesis No. 1 (i.e., The less time spent on TikTok will have positive impact on academic achievements), is accepted.
- The variables of the posting videos on TikTok and academic achievements are positively correlated. The correlation shows 0.180. Hence, the hypothesis No. 2 (i.e. Posting TikTok videos has a negative impact on academic achievements), is accepted.
- The variables of the watching videos on TikTok and academic achievements are positively correlated. The correlation shows 0.191. Hence, the hypothesis No. 3 (i.e. Watching TikTok videos has a negative impact on academic achievements), is also accepted.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

Multiple studies have found a strong link between social media and education of youth. Many researches have shown the good and the bad sides of usage of social media. According to the findings of the present study, there is a positive correlation between TikTok usage and academic achievements. It was found that most of the university students are involved in TikTok during leisure time, and main reasons for this are the self-satisfaction of sharing own skills, knowledge, ideas and feelings with others etc. This is indeed a positive impact on students' mental health and creativity. Nevertheless, most of the students spend more than two hours a day on TikTok as a habit, and it is a significant amount of time of their daily life. When the students engage in TikTok video creating, they spend a lot of time on dressing up, doing make-up and hair styles, selecting locations, arranging the background settings, practicing the performance, rehearsing, reciting the lyrics, recording and editing etc. In other words, posting and updating on TikTok is a time-consuming affair. Furthermore, watching TikTok videos also has a negative impact as students might get addicted. The findings of the present study clearly indicate that as the spending time on TikTok increases, the academic achievements decreases. Hence, the students should be very cautious about the time spent on TikTok.

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