

The Influence of TikTok on Young Generation in Vietnam

Phi Hung Truong and Anh Dao Kim

Faculty of Management and Economics, Tomas Bata University in Zlin, The Czech Republic, Tomas Bata University

ptruong@utb.cz

kim@utb.cz

Abstract: The Internet and its growth throughout these near decades have been unbelievable. Especially social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, or in this case, TikTok has out-grown some of the mainstream media like television, radio, or newspaper. TikTok is a multinational social media platform that mainly focuses on short clips and videos, which is open for anyone to post on the platform, somewhat like YouTube. TikTok videos vary from entertainment, sport, informational, fashion or even cooking videos. The platform allows their videos to spread to all continents, leading to the spreading quickly of any “viral” video. At first sign, the platform seems to be an entertainment platform with no age restriction, due to the claim of the content restriction policy of TikTok. However, there are some downsides to this social media platform that people are slowly coming to realize, and these downsides are affecting the younger generation who use this platform almost every day. This research examines both positive and negative aspects of this social platform and the effects which it has on the younger generation in Vietnam. The research uses both qualitative and quantitative methods, which contain a list of questionnaires and open-ended questions. The purpose of the research is to make clear the influence of TikTok on the youth of Vietnam, which helps to form an opinion on whether the application is suitable for this generation.

Keywords: TikTok, entertainment, #learnontiktok, TikTok influences on teenager

1. Introduction

With the development of technology in the current era, the number of people who invest their time on the Internet is rapidly increasing. In the meantime, there are plenty of social media platforms that grow and become well-known all around the globe, such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok... Presently, TikTok is undoubtedly one of, if not the biggest, social media in the world, and the majority of users of this platform are teenagers. In 2022, TikTok reached 1.534 billion users, of which 1.5 billion are actively using the application (Ruby. D, 2023). In this study, we discuss Vietnam which is one region containing plenty of TikTok users... The amount of Vietnamese TikTok users reached almost 28 million in 2022 (Shaun, 2022). On TikTok, the speed of information spreading is fast, and is able to reach millions of users at the same time. Therefore, millions of teenagers from the age of 15 and above spend 91 minutes a day on average on this application, while only spending 51 minutes watching Youtube daily (Perez, S. 2022). Thus, there is a great chance that one video can go viral within an hour of posting, it creates a wave of shooting and posting TikTok videos. A video of TikTok is in a form of a short video, from 30 seconds to 3 minutes max. With a system like this, TikTok encourages more and more people to post on their platform with the hope of becoming viral. TikTok content is not restricted in any area. It can be entertainment, sport, informational, fashion, news, or cooking videos. The platform allows anyone to post and create their own page to gather attention from others. Although TikTok has plenty of benefits for its users, negative aspects of TikTok exist within the application, which will be discussed in this paper.

In this research paper, both positive and negative aspects of TikTok will be discussed, especially the benefit and downsides of it for the younger generation in Vietnam. The first part of this paper will contain the literature review, which reviews the benefits of TikTok, along with the potential harm that the platform might have on a teenager. The main source of data that is used in this section will be collecting using online resources and also the main TikTok platform. Secondly, the paper will describe the method used to collect data from users in Vietnam, mainly students and teenagers who use the app daily. Thirdly, the data gathering will be analyzed, and the matter of TikTok underlying negative effect that TikTok has on teenagers will be discussed. And lastly, the conclusion will be reached as to whether the app is suitable for this generation of Vietnamese youngsters. The purpose of this research is to clarify the beneficial and potentially negative aspects of TikTok. There are always two sides to the coin. If TikTok still attracts more teenagers to use the application daily, there must be a positive aspect, but also a downside of it.

2. Literature review

2.1 Informative and socialization

The fact that the Internet developed far enough for anyone to sit at home and know, see, and judge everything and every matter in the world through a personal device is proof that humans have gone a long way. TikTok, an application that people use to watch short video contain plenty of content, which also contain news and information across the globe. According to Al-Marouf, et al (2021), TikTok was created solely for socialization and self-expression. This is one of the brightest aspects of TikTok where a teenager can see what is happening around them, and also express themselves through TikTok. Traditional television and newspaper have now become boring and too formal for youngsters to watch and read. Instead, they use TikTok to gather their information and news about the world. According to Newman, N. (2022), by changing the platform and enabling longer videos, TikTok has become more attractive for news-publisher to engage the younger audience. Also, TikTok has a comments section where people can come and give their opinion on the matter, unlike Television or newspapers. Therefore, more and more people are using TikTok as their source of gathering information. A study from the past shows that seeking and spreading information is one of the factors why people continue using TikTok (Falgoust, et al. 2022). Blended in with some videos about food and dogs, there will be a video about news on some matter that might interest someone. This way, the user gets to choose what they want to hear or watch by simply scrolling TikTok in their free time and still manage to gain the information that they are interested in.

2.2 #LearnOnTikToks

According to the report of Seaman and Tinti-Kane (2013), using social media in teaching increases the reach and communication between the lecturer and the student. Thus, social media awareness was extraordinarily high, and personal usage of social media swiftly followed in great numbers. The tag is a feature that TikTok has provided for users to search easier and leads directly to the section of content that users want to watch. When searching in TikTok, a tag name such as #LearnOnTikTok or #EduTikTok is a great way for students to search, watch and learn at the same time on the platform. With this feature, TikTok creates an opportunity for teachers and students to both create and watch the educational content within the application. Some of the research shows that school and university supervisors are taking advantage of this feature since their students can search for professional education knowledge on TikTok. As stated in the research of Bexheti, Ismaili, and Cico (2014), social media platforms provide students with free access to a vast array of instructional materials. Furthermore, it supports teaching and learning process. Therefore, some lecturers who specialize in the field will create and post content about education to reach the student more easily. In addition, there are also contained within the tag #LearnOnTikTok, which is another knowledge and experience video that students can watch and learn from.

These kinds of videos are not made by lecturers or professionals; however, they contain information that can help to develop the knowledge of students and teenagers that search for the tag. People are more positive about social media learning cooperation because it provides a more engaging atmosphere and stimulates them to engage in knowledge-related events (Sharabati, et. al,2022).

The education aspect of TikTok is great for both video makers and audiences. The audience gets what they came for, and the video maker gets the attention from the video. If one of the videos goes viral, plenty will see and comment on the matter and make it even more well-spread through the platform. In the previous study of Fiallos et. al (2021), they stated that TikTok is a platform that provides a youthful and worldwide audience with access to a new format of short instructional films developed by experienced writers, in addition to amusing videos. The research also supports “#learnonTikTok” and supports the idea of developing this domain of TikTok to help the younger generation to have a new tool to study and learn from.

However, there is also a downside to this. Some students do not enjoy studying in class, so they take this as a replacement and not paying any attention in class. Also, watching these videos is great for developing knowledge, but the amount of false information and the authenticity of the information is still not checked. Some teenagers might see some video about “false knowledge” and believe in it without double checking on the matter. One of the issues with major social media sites like Facebook, Reddit, and TikTok is a lack of scientific control, which leads to noise and incorrect information (Egtesadi & Florea, 2020). For example, the matter of a flat earth has been spread through the internet and it got many people to believe in it. Which makes it a new trend that many people discuss and argue about. This is false information that someone creates in the matter

of getting attention from the Internet, and it works. Therefore, despite the great value that TikTok education systems benefit the youth, it has its downside and might damage the youth in some way.

2.3 Entertainment

According to Wei, B (2023), the perfect TikTok is considered a wonderful music decoration. TikTok creates a great platform for people to entertain themselves in their free time. The application, consisting of short videos and content from all around the world, makes it great for people to enjoy the time they have. One of the most successful functions that make TikTok great is the ability to remember and analyze the user's favorite content and send the same format of video to that user to continue watching. Furthermore, if the user is watching the content of some creator repeatedly, the platform will keep recommending the same creator's content for that user to keep them entertained while using the application. According to Sharabati, et.al (2022), escape, relaxation, and amusement appear to be more prominent on TikTok than on other social media platforms. People use TikTok in their free time to give themselves a glimpse of stepping away from their duty and responsibility. TikTok content varies in plenty of areas, which fits everyone's taste for entertainment. Therefore, teenagers are using TikTok in their free time to entertain themselves. This will also encourage a youngster to create and make content similar to their interest. However, some youngsters can just copy and recreate the original viral video that they saw. This is due to the fact that anyone can become famous on TikTok with just one viral video. Success comes as soon as the video went viral, therefore, there are plenty of people just using the same video format and the idea of some video that is already viral and replicating it to gain fame from the original idea. This is also easier to gain views and likes on TikTok due to its system of recommending videos to the viewer, which recommends the video similar to what users have liked or watched. TikTok makes youth think that it's easy to earn money and fame, leading to the reality of copying and stealing ideas from each other rather than creating their own content. Since it is easy to upload a video on TikTok, the problem will carry on and lessen people's ability to innovate and be creative, hoping for quick money and fame. This helps the organization to gain more video quantity on their platform but decreases the quality of video on TikTok. This also creates a new problem in the region of Vietnam, where many teenagers invest their time and money in making TikTok videos, and the quality of the content is repeated, or some will choose to get attention through hate. Any controversial argument on TikTok will get attention and comment in the comment section. The more controversial, the more comment it will get. This is one of the ways to get attention and fame on TikTok and it became a problem in Vietnam. The most recent one is the "TikToker" named 'No O No' in Vietnam, who uses charity food as a cover to verbally shame poor people and make content out of it. This is one of the biggest downsides of TikTok, where people do not care about morality, they just do everything for the money. This is a prime example of how TikTok might damage the youth, not only in Vietnam but also in the world.

Even though the application is great for creating content and entertainment, there are some individuals posting inappropriate videos on TikTok, which is harmful to children and teenagers who scroll into those videos. The research of Jaffar, et al (2019), stated that the recommending feature of the application does not have any age restriction, which means any type of video can reach and show to users from any range of age. Also, the paper stated that the application has been described as "offensive and toxic". Thus, the research shows that some of the videos are coming from individuals, who are quoted as "older men and creeps" who create content that is inappropriate for children and respond inappropriately in some women's video comment sections. Another paper from Oktarini, et al. (2022), listed sexual harassment as the biggest negative impact that TikTok has. These are some of the problems that TikTok has that could harm the next generation.

3. Methodology

In this section, the paper uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A survey will be conducted based on the main question of the paper, which is "Will TikTok benefit you or damage you?". The survey is conducted using Google Forms to fulfill the geographic matter of participants. At the end of the survey, there will be some open-ended questions for participants to express their own opinions on the matter and give a deeper understanding of the matter. The survey is conducted in the region of Vietnam, and the participant are consisting of teenagers from the age of 15-25 years of age, who are regularly using TikTok on a daily. The participant is informed about the possibility of publication of the research, and the information they provided will be used in this paper.

4. Result and Discussion

The age of participant that are included in this paper is vary from age of 15–25-years-old. The total number of participants is 70, consisting of 35 male and 35 female teenagers, all from the region of Vietnam. The majority of participant are high school students and college students, which is 63 out of 70. Only 7 participants are youngsters that have finished school.

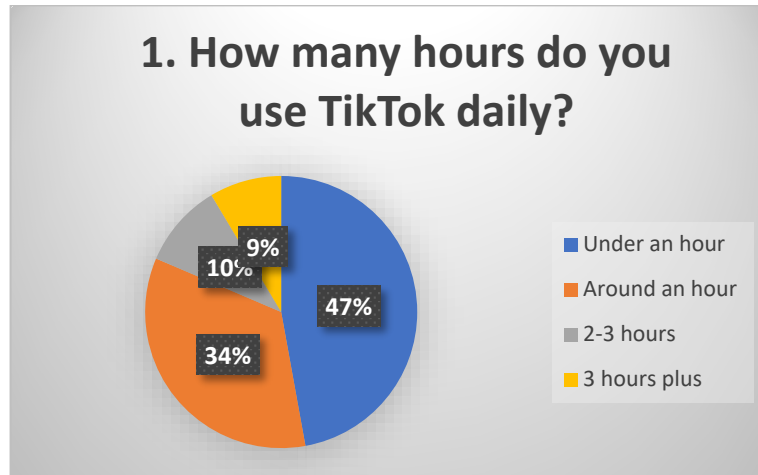


Figure 1

Most of the participant use the app under and around an hour on a daily basis, with the percentage of 47% for under an hour and 34% for around an hour. Only 9% are using the application for more than 3 hours and 10% of them are from 2 to 3 hour. This group is all college student, where they state that they have plenty of free time on their hands.

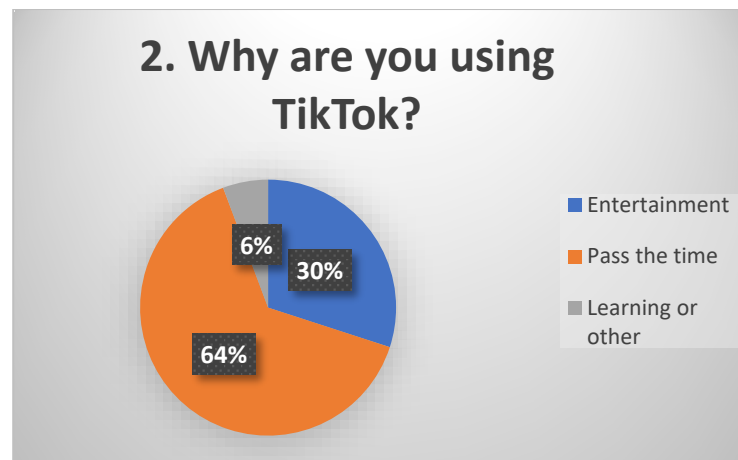


Figure 2

The reason that most participants state that they are using the application is to pass the time, which at 64%. 30% of them are using TikTok for entertainment purposed. Only 6% of participant are using the app for learning and other purposes.

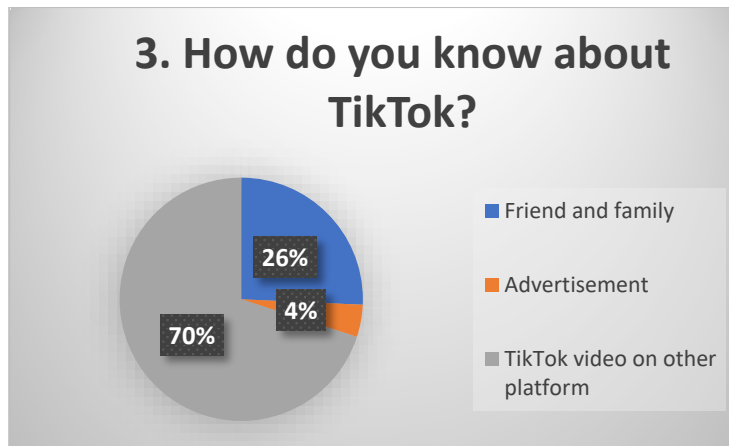


Figure 3

Most people stated that they know about TikTok through different platforms such as Facebook or Instagram (70%). 26% of them say they know about it from a friend or family member, and only 4% know about the platform through advertising.

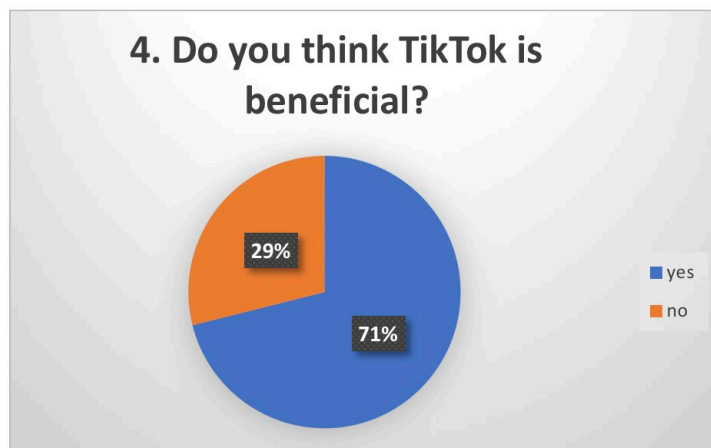


Figure 4

In this question, 71% of people agree that TikTok is beneficial for them. On the other hand, 29% disagree with the statement.

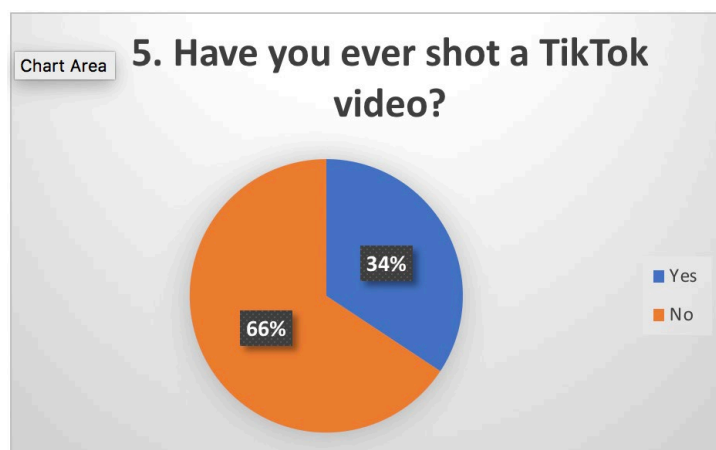


Figure 5

On TikTok, there are various trends from time to time. 66% of people have tried to make a video and post it on TikTok, and 34% of them have not.

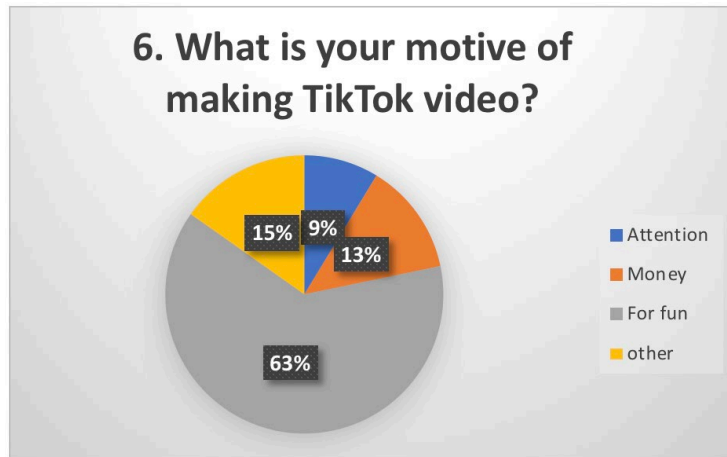


Figure 6

Out of 46 participants that have made a TikTok video, the majority of them stated that they are doing the video for fun (63%). Other motives like money or attention are at 13% and 9%. The remaining 15% of participants said that they are doing it like a form of social media post, a memory almost.

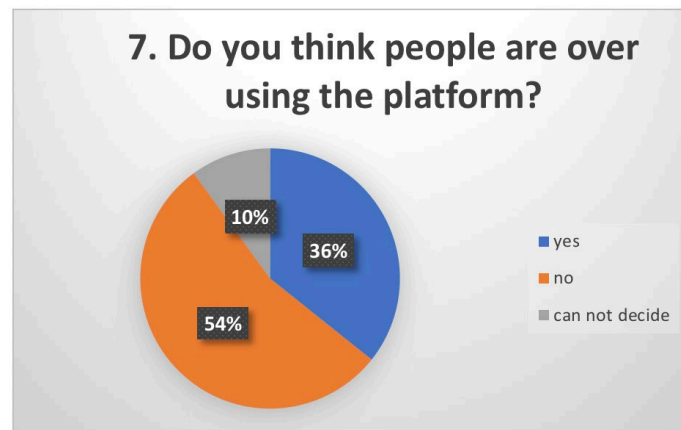


Figure 7

When asked about the matter of overusing the application, 36% of people agree that some people are overusing the app, while 54% did not agree. 10% of the participants could not decide.

When asked about the matter of harmful content, most of the participants agree that some content on TikTok is harmful to the youth, while 18% reject the matter. Only 6% of participants cannot decide whether the content is harmful or not.

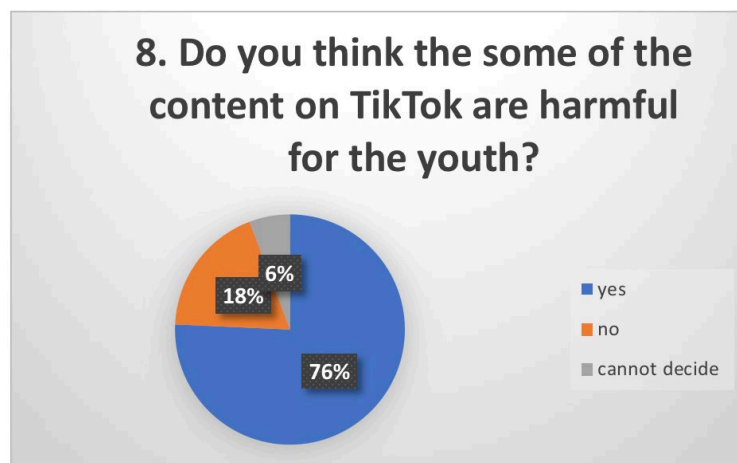


Figure 8

The following part of the survey is open-ended questions, which help gather deeper information to gain a better understanding of the problem. The main point of these questions is focused on answering the question “Is TikTok more beneficial or more harmful?”. Most of the answers are united on TikTok having more benefit than harm. The reason for this that participants provide is that it is the best way to pass on time, the best way to entertain them, and TikTok provides them with information and knowledge from everywhere. However, some participants comment on this matter differently. One of the participants, ‘Mr.Giang’ share that there is a harmful way of using this app, which is getting addicted to it. He shares that his friend is addicted to TikTok and watches it all night and sleeps in daylight, which leads to a lack of studying and sleep. Another female participant stated that TikTok does not have any sensitive verbal content restrictions. Some “influencer” in Vietnam is spreading negative comment and thought on the sensitive subject because these subjects will gather more view. Although the opinion of these “influencers” does not violate any TikTok policy, it gives a negative effect on teenager mind and thought. This type of content needs to be supervised by the parent of teenagers, so they can see what their children have been watching and explain to them if there is any false or negative information being stated.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, as a social media platform, TikTok has brought plenty of benefits to the youth and teenagers of Vietnam. It creates social media that plenty of youngsters found entertaining and useful for educational and informative purposes. Thus, the media is useful for youngster to express themselves and show their talents and skills in some fields. Plenty young individuals have and are becoming famous on the platform, gaining large amount of viewer by creating content, some of them are even turning the view and fame on TikTok into their personal future career. However, some underlying harm needs to be stated to protect the younger generation. TikTok is no doubt the best entertainment platform in the last decade, where people can freely use and post. Thus, the platform benefits some organizations in promoting their product to a wider audience. The application still has some very concerning problems that might affect youngster mental problem and health by over-using the application. In additional, TikTok still have plenty of video content that inappropriate for young children and youth, which is sensitive content or political issue align among Vietnamese.

The impact of the application is huge, and it should consider making some changes to protect the younger generation. For instance, TikTok should require any content creator to specify their content in a different category, such as 18+ or controversial. And the audience needs to specify their age while registering for the account. This way it can prevent younger audiences from watching and seeing content that is not fit for their age. This way, parents can help supervise the content that teenagers are consuming and prevent the wrong, false and inappropriate content from their children. Furthermore, the application should have a time restriction for users that are in the age of study. This will prevent them from overusing the platform and neglecting their studying. Since TikTok is growing bigger every day, there should be a suitable guiding system to protect and develop the future generation.

Overall, even though the application have huge impact and benefit to youngster, entertainment and educational wise, it is important to understand the positive and negative aspect of the application as the children supervisor. This way we can limit the negative impact but still enhancing the positive that the application bring to our future generation in Vietnam.

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