Tiktok on SNSU Students: Engagement and Influence

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Abstract— TikTok is very popular among the young and has become for many a mode of free and creative self-expression. Many people use Tiktok, but most users are teens, and it has become a celebrity start-off. If Tiktok uploads creative content and its viewers are entertained and earned many comments and reactions, this study aimed to determine the level of influence and engagement of Tiktok on the students of Surigao del Norte State University (formerly Surigao State College of Technology). Specifically, it looked into the frequency of the students viewing Tiktok. It deals also with the level of influence as to the content, quality, and music. And the level of engagement as to entertainment factor, viewer's comment factor, and viewer's reaction factor. This study used a descriptive research design. The 4th-year Bachelor of Arts in English Language students were the participants of the study. The data gathered was analyzed using the following statistical tools: frequency count and percentage distribution, mean and standard deviation, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Based on the results of the study, Tiktok was very influential to the SNSU students. It also revealed that Tiktok had a significant relationship with the students which means Tiktok was influential and engaging. It is recommended that guidelines on using social media, particularly the use of Tiktok should be crafted and implemented through a school campaign spearheaded by the Student Government Council.

Keywords— Engagement, Influence, Tiktok, SNSU, Quantitative-Descriptive

I. INTRODUCTION

TikTok is a mobile or computer application used to make and share short videos of 15-seconds long. It is the fastest growing social media application and "is being promoted as a video-sharing social network" where "users can create a variety of videos ranging from challenges, dance videos, magic tricks, and funny videos" (Geyser, 2021).

Since its launch in 2016 by the Chinese technology company ByteDance, it has become the most widely used app with "2.6 billion active monthly users by the beginning of 2021" and "brought in $17.4 billion in advertising revenue in the first quarter of 2020 alone." Around 69% of users are between the ages of 13 and 24, and 60% are female (D'Souza, 2021). In 2020, it was the most downloaded app as it took the top spot from Facebook Messenger (BBC, 2021). In the Philippines, TikTok was the 6th among the leading social media platforms used by Filipinos in the 3rd

quarter of 2020 (Statistica, 2021), and was the most downloaded entertainment app in the country followed by Netflix, especially during the pandemic (Mateo, 2020).

TikTok is very popular among the young and has become for many a mode of free and creative self-expression. It has also become an outlet for the young of their pent-up energy and boredom because of the pandemic. According to Tiffany Diep, TikTok's head of public relations for the Philippines and Emerging Markets in Southeast Asia, "the quarantine has been a major factor that quickly made our numbers grow. With more people staying home, it is only natural to see more people turning to platforms like TikTok to stay entertained, informed, and connected" (as cited in Mateo, 2020).

Tiktok is now the favored platform for Generation Z's desire and interest, that is, content creation. This gives young people the venue for creating video content showing their talents, skills, dreams, desires, ambitions, hopes,

problems, issues, etc. As a primary tool of self-expression, TikTok has become "the ideal channel for escapism to the app to alleviate their boredom or because it's a quick and easy way to get famous, but it's equally possible to frame TikTok's predictable, lighthearted nature as an anesthetic to mass anxiety" (Escober, 2020).

Many people use Tiktok, but most users are teens, and it has become a celebrity start-off. If Tiktok uploads creative content and their viewers are entertained and earn many comments and reactions, it is free publicity for many hoping to become instant celebrities. According to Iodice and Papapicco (2021), TikTokers penetrate a wide range of surroundings, amplifying the phenomena, and it is the web that leads to a theorization of fun as a new type of social influence. Tiktok is a wonderful tool to meet new people.

However, concern about the responsible use of Tiktok arises. It is for this reason that the researcher opted to conduct a study on Tiktok for the students of Surigao del Norte State University (SNSU) which aimed to determine the extent of influence and engagement of TikTok among SNSU students using the app. It is hoped that data generated from this study will become a basis for designing or formulating guidelines for the ethical use of TikTok among students for them to become socially responsible users of the social media, Tiktok.

The study aimed to look into the frequency of the students using Tiktok will be gathered. The level of influence of TikTok on SNSU students was analyzed based on the content, quality, and music and then the level of engagement was based on three factors: entertainment, viewer comments, and viewer reaction. Finally, the significant relationship between the level of influence and level of engagement of students on Tiktok was also determined.

Theoretical Background of the Study

This research is based on the Uses and Gratification Theory (Katz, 1959), which states that audience members are not passive but rather actively involved in understanding and incorporating media into their life. Katz and Foulkes proposed the uses and gratification theory to better explain why and how people actively seek out and use various media to meet specific needs (1962). This approach has served as the foundation for many media content research efforts over the years.

The uses and gratifications theory describes people as active and motivated in selecting the media they choose to consume. The theory depends on two principles: 1) media users are active in their selection of the media they consume, and 2) they are aware of their reasons for selecting different media options. With social media's offer of greater control and greater freedom of choice, new gratifications have emerged. Research on uses and gratifications of the internet identified seven gratifications for its use: information seeking, aesthetic experience, monetary compensation, diversion, personal status, relationship maintenance, and virtual community (Vinney, 2019).

The theory suggests that "users/media consumers are actively choosing specific media content according to their needs. If there are any effects, these are consciously or at least actionably intended" (Matei, 2010). The theory believes that media users seek out a media source that best satisfies their needs.

Furthermore, The Agenda-Setting Theory (Mc Combs & Shaw, 1968), which describes the power to influence viewers and build a hierarchy of news predominance, is another theory considered in this study.
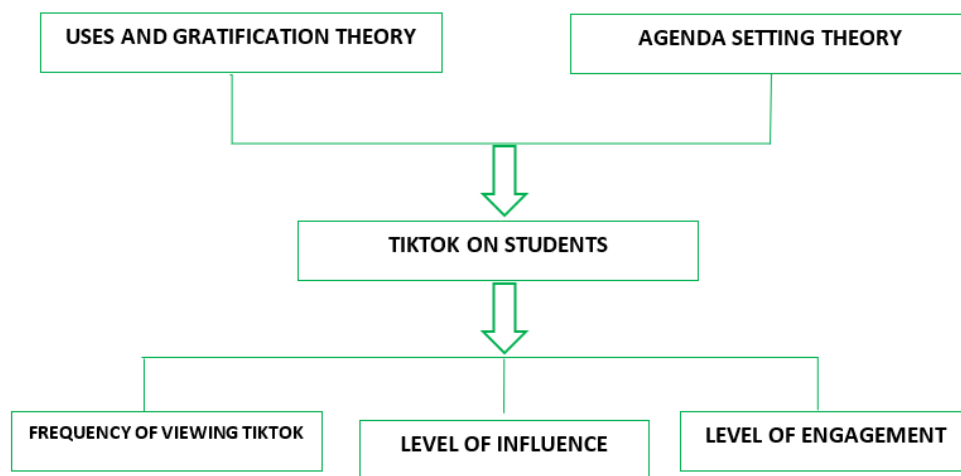

Fig.1: Schematic diagram of the theoretical background of the study

II.   RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

The associated literature and studies of the current investigation are presented in this part. Tiktok is one of the various social networking sites that are available nowadays. Tiktok is a social media network that boasts 800 million active members globally since its introduction in 2016. TikTok's influence on students has provided them with a platform to entertain its viewers. According to Dilon's study (2021), TikTok, like other social media platforms, has its share of influencers, and the 15-second video format attracts what is known as meme machines. Influencers who make money off of views, likes, comments, and shares are known as meme machines. When someone who is influenced by the app is pleased with how viewers react by commenting or liking the published Tiktok, it is reported.

According to Yang (2020), when viewers "like" a video on Tiktok, they are expressing their enthusiasm for the content, and if they leave a remark, they are expressing their desire to connect and enhance one another's videos. Meanwhile, Iodice and Papapicco's study (2021) demonstrates that they are theorizing a distinct type of social impact, or "fun," that is characteristic of the social network and the period. According to Jia (2017), as referenced by Liqian (2018), TikTok's contents come from all walks of life, and diverse contents provide users with different experiences. For example, funny content can entertain viewers, and users may desire to shoot the same content to spread happiness to others. According to Xu (2019), the "Tik Tok" material is quite dynamic, with a lot of online and offline activities aimed at young people with imagination and curiosity. As a result, the uploader of TikTok's video receives fulfillment from comments and replies.

While TikTok may be entertaining to the young, there are also other positive and negative effects. According to Fund (2021), TikTok can be the voice of many people's opinions in the real world, like how it was influential during the Trump rally boycott campaign in Oklahoma. But Fund also observed that negatively, TikTok is highly addictive, and many users, especially teens, spend hours on it daily and it has become a serious distraction to students. Simrin (2020) recognized that TikTok is a source of moral entertainment for young people, as well as a platform for publicity, learning new things, and providing new opportunities for volunteering and internship for students. On the other hand, she also recognized that TikTok is designed to be addictive, saying "It's incredibly easy to fall down the TikTok hole and suddenly reemerge hours later having lost an entire day." For Simrin (2020), TikTok has become a platform for bullying and public shaming, thereby endangering the mental health of viewers and users alike and since it doesn't have restrictions as to who can join the app, it poses a serious concern when it comes to children being exposed to harmful situations.

According to Lee (2021), satisfaction with TikTok was seen as a mediator between different motives to use TikTok and to continue TikTok use. He also mentioned that research cannot show any significant link between TikTok use and well-being, whether positively or negatively. Lee (citing Wang et al., 2020) also underlined the overall relevance of uses and gratification theory to understand TikTok use and presented needed variables in cognitive and affective domains as relevant to personal/social integration and relief of pressure. In addition, he also believed that (as supported by the view of Shao, 2018) "young people use TikTok for positioning themselves in their peer group and to understand where he/she stands in the peer group. Thus, TikTok is also relevant for identity formation of young persons and obtaining feedback to oneself."

But it cannot deny the fact that TikTok has inspired and helped many people around the world, judging from internet testimonies and research generated by scholars and social media enthusiasts. While it is true and has been empirically proven, that TikTok has negative and positive effects on students, there is no doubt that it has reshaped the world of social media as we know it today. But there is a need for some sort of regulation on its use, especially among children, and teenagers to maintain a healthy balance in their psychological and social lives.

Although it's possible to debate the positive and negative effects TikTok has on teens, there's no doubt it has reshaped the world of social media as we know it. With this in mind, it's also incredibly important for users to regulate their TikTok usage and maintain a healthy balance with the real world.

III.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative-descriptive research design using a survey was used. The design was acceptable since it will allow the researcher to determine the extent of influence among SNSU students. The participants in this study were the 4th-year Bachelor of Arts in English Language students. A researcher-made questionnaire crafted by the researcher was used in this study. Expert professors in social science, education, and statistics validated the questionnaire. Part I is about the participants' profile in terms of frequency of viewing the Tiktok app; Part II, on the other hand, examines Tiktok's level of influence and level of engagement.

To determine the frequency of viewing of students on Tiktok, the statistical data utilized was Frequency Count and Percentage Distribution. The mean and standard deviation were used to establish Tiktok's level of influence,

and Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to evaluate whether there is a significant relationship between TikTok's level of influence and engagement.

The participants' frequency or occurrence of viewing TikTok is (29 or 40.3%) viewed Tiktok 2-3 times a week, followed by (21 or 29.2%) viewed once a week, then (17 or 23.6%) viewed more than 6 times a week, and (5 or 6.9%) viewed 4-5 times-a-week

The researcher ensured that the study conducted adheres to the ethical standard intended for this research. The researcher sought approval from the University President of SNSU. Moreover, a confidentiality clause was included in the first part of the questionnaire for the participants to know that their personal information is concealed for data privacy.

IV.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and the discussions of the study.

Table 1. Level of influence of Tiktok on SNSU students

Parameters	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Description
Content	2.85	0.64	Very Influential
Video quality	2.83	0.66	Very Influential
Music	2.80	0.63	Very Influential
Average	*2.83*	*0.64*	*Very Influential*

Parameter	Qualitative Description
3.25-4.00	Extremely influential
2.50-3.24	Very influential
1.75-2.49	Slightly influential
1.00-1.74	Not at all influential

Table 1 shows the level of influence of TikTok on SNSU students based on content, video quality, and music. The result shows that TikTok is *very influential* to the students with (a 2.83 average mean and .64 SD. The content got (2.85 mean and .64 SD), while Video quality got (2.83 mean and .66 SD). Finally, Music got (2.80 mean and .63 SD). Data reveals that students normally find TikTok very helpful in breaking the monotony of daily life, as a source of information, and as a way of connecting with others through sharing relevant and timely videos. Students believed that TikTok video quality primarily makes the delivery of content more interesting and they prefer to watch TikTok with captivating and entertaining music than anything else. These are concordant with what Yang (2020) opined that when viewers "*like*" a video on TikTok, they are expressing their enthusiasm for the content, and if they leave a remark, they are expressing their desire to connect and enhance one another's videos.

Table 2. Level of engagement of TikTok on SNSU students

Parameters	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Description
Entertainment factor	2.90	0.58	Very Influential
Viewer's comment factor	2.86	0.69	Very Influential
Viewer's reaction factor	2.70	0.60	Very Influential
Average	*2.82*	*0.62*	*Very Influential*

Parameter	Qualitative Description
3.25-4.00	Extremely influential
2.50-3.24	Very influential
1.75-2.49	Slightly influential
1.00-1.74	Not at all influential

Table 2 shows the level of engagement of Tiktok to SNSU students based on the three factors: entertainment factor; viewer's factor; and viewer's reaction factor. The result shows that TikTok is *very influential* on the level of engagement of the students with (2.82 average mean and .62 SD. The entertainment factor got (2.90 mean and .58 SD), while Viewer's comment factor got (2.86 mean and .69 SD) and the Viewer's reaction factor got (2.70 mean and .60 SD). Shao (2018) avers that young people use TikTok for positioning themselves in their peer group and to understand where he/she stands in the peer group. Thus, TikTok is also relevant for the identity formation of young persons and for

obtaining feedback from oneself. Fund (2021) believed that Tiktok can be the voice of many people's opinions in the real world, like how it was influential during the Trump rally boycott campaign in Oklahoma. But Fund also observed that negatively, TikTok is highly addictive, and many users, especially teens, spend hours on it daily and it has become a serious distraction to students. While the SNSU students were engaged in using TikTok, Simrin (2020) recognized also that TikTok is a source of moral entertainment for young people, as well as a platform for publicity, learning new things, and providing new opportunities for volunteering and internship for students.

Table 3. Significant relationship between the level of influence and level of engagement of students on Tiktok

		Content	Decision	Video quality	Decision	Music	Decision
Entertainment factor	Pearson Correlation	0.729	Do not Accept Ho	0.069	Accept Ho	0.076	Accept Ho
	P-value	0.000		0.563		0.526	
	N	72		72		72	
Viewer comment factor	Pearson Correlation	0.006	Accept Ho	0.499	Do not Accept Ho	0.260	Do not Accept Ho
	P-value	0.958		0.000		0.028	
	N	72		72		72	
Viewer reaction factor	Pearson Correlation	-0.043	Accept Ho	0.364	Do not Accept Ho	0.504	Do not Accept Ho
	P-value	0.723		0.002		0.000	
	N	72		72		72	

Table 3 shows that when it comes to the entertainment factor's video content, the level of influence and level of engagement are significantly related, but this is not so when it comes to video quality and music. When it comes to viewer comment factor's video content the level of influence and level of engagement is not significantly related, while video quality and music shows otherwise. And lastly, when it comes to the viewer reaction factor, the video content shows no significant relationship between the level of influence and level of engagement of TikTok videos, while video quality and music are significantly related. Results show that SNSU students' outlook on TikTok being influential and engaging rests primarily on video content rather than music and video quality. And they see viewer comments and reactions as more related to video quality and music than the Tiktok video. According to Lee

(2021), satisfaction with Tiktok was seen as a mediator between different motives to use TikTok and to continue TikTok use. He also mentioned that research cannot show any significant link between Tiktok use and well-being, whether positively or negatively. Lee (citing Wang et al., 2020) also underlined the overall relevance of uses and gratification theory to understand Tiktok use and presented needed variables in cognitive and affective domains as relevant to personal/social integration and relief of pressure.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

The study revealed that most SNSU students do watch Tiktok videos regularly and they were influenced by the content, video quality, and music. Likewise, their engagement on Tiktok was very influential, especially since

they were entertained, and even take action in commenting and reacting on someone's Tiktok.

It is hereby recommended that the formulation and implementation of guidelines on responsible use of social media, in particular TikTok. The students must be involved in the formulation to make them more responsible for their actions. This can be implemented by the Student Affairs and Guidance Offices of SNSU and will be discussed during the student's orientation before a school year commences. It is also recommended that issues and concerns on social media apps use, particularly TikTok, be integrated with their related courses, like Purposive Communication, Ethics, etc. A school campaign spearheaded by the Student Government Council can be launched and sustained to reinforce the school's advocacy for responsible use of social media applications.

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