

Dominance of short-form videos: Cross-age analysis of TikTok's influence

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Abstract:

Social media platforms have evolved rapidly, transitioning to facilitate new modes of content consumption. Short-form videos have emerged as a dominant format, epitomized by TikTok's widespread success. This study aims to conduct a comprehensive cross-age examination of TikTok's influence through the dominance of short videos. Qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews, were employed to collect primary data from participants of varying ages. Specific objectives involve investigating usage patterns, perceived influences on behaviour and attitudes, and potential benefits and drawbacks. The findings indicate diverse yet creative engagement across age groups. Younger users demonstrated constant usage yet faced content restrictions, while older participants leveraged TikTok professionally. Educational and skills-based advantages coexisted with algorithmic unpredictability challenges. TikTok addressed brief attention spans, yet privacy concerns require addressing. Thematic analysis revealed patterns like nighttime relaxation usage. Educational and motivational content stimulated learning. Professional development through modelling and photography showcasing emerged. Creativity, expression and skills growth represented positive influences versus unpredictable visibility frustrations. TikTok reshaped consumption habits, yet privacy integration oversight remained. This study contributes a contextualized understanding of TikTok's multi-faceted impacts. It presents a balanced perspective appreciating opportunities and challenges to harness social technologies productively.

Keywords:

Cross-age; Dominance; Influence; Short videos and TikTok.

I. Introduction

The prevalence and popularity of short-form video-sharing platforms have evolved at a rapid pace in recent years (He & Luo, 2022). With the dominance of TikTok, a cross-age analysis of its influence is warranted to understand shifting media consumption patterns. Short-form videos, typically 15-60 seconds in length, allow for snackable and shareable content optimized for mobile platforms. Short videos facilitate more casual, snackable viewing aligned with mobile device use compared to linear long-form videos (Andover et al., 2023). Key elements driving their virality include personalization, creative effects, hashtags and interactive features like duets/replies.

TikTok has had over 1 billion monthly active users globally since 2021. Yang et al. (2017) epitomize short video dominance through personalized recommendations and viral video challenges. However, attaining interests cross-generationally while mitigating safety

issues introduces complexities (Usman et al., 2022). Variables like platform usage patterns, social relationships and preferred content genres provide a framework for cross-age appraisal. This reveals shared versus age-defined behaviours and informs balanced strategies addressing diversity. A cross-age analysis considers three key dimensions: Usage patterns help reveal commonalities and differences in consumption behaviours.

Cross-age analysis studies platform usage and behaviours across different age demographics to better understand experience variances (Hodges, 2016). As an increasingly prevalent media format, short-form videos, defined as 15-60 seconds long and optimized for mobile consumption, warrant such examination to uncover shared interests and age-distinct preferences. No platform epitomizes the dominance of short video content better than TikTok, making it a valuable case study for cross-age understanding. A cross-age analysis facilitates a nuanced understanding of platform use and behaviours spanning different age groups. This is a valuable approach to TikTok, on TikTok given its broad popularity among the youth, young adults and increasingly older users (Andover Andover et al., 2022).

Compared to traditional long-form videos, TikTok offers a lean-back experience with lower commitment from viewers, facilitating casual and repeated viewing. Elements of short videos that contribute to their virality include personalized recommendations, creative effects, hashtags for discovery and duets/replies enabling creator interactions (Ling et al., 2022). TikTok has dominated the short video space since its international launch in 2017, attracting over 1 billion active monthly users globally by 2021. Its success lies in powerful algorithms that drive user engagement through personalized recommendations and viral challenges. A cross-age analysis offers a structured approach to understanding short video platforms at scale. For the dominant player TikTok, this elicits both the ubiquity and nuances of its influence across societal groups. Cross-age analysis facilitates understanding of media consumption patterns across generational cohorts. Short-form videos exhibit strong cross-age appeal that deserves examination through this lens to gauge shifting online behaviours. TikTok epitomizes short video dominance, attracting over 1 billion monthly through viral dances and personalized feeds. Its cross-generational reach emerges as a goldmine for insight into communal and solitary online activities across stages of life (Onyejelem & Andover, 2024a).

However, brevity also poses challenges, restricting nuanced narratives and potentially influencing shorter attention spans, particularly among youth users. Cross-age insight can contextualize these trade-offs across demographic cohorts. TikTok also faces challenges around managing diverse creator communities and restricting harmful behaviours across age groups. A cross-age analysis can provide valuable insight into how the platform cultivates interest across generations while addressing age-specific concerns. For example, cross-generational favourite genres shed light on universal versus age-defined interests (Smerbeck, 2019).

Scholars have underscored concerns regarding the pervasive impact of short-form video platforms internationally. Early studies from Asia found that short videos correlated with declined attention spans and disrupted sleep cycles among youth in China and South Korea, respectively. In Europe, surveys linked hyper-personalized recommendations on such apps to problematic social comparisons and body image issues (Onyejelem & Andover, 2024b). Studies in the United States warned of the potential for misinformation due to lower scrutiny on brevity. Locally, a few African investigations have begun to surface worries. In Nigeria, interviews revealed that short videos hindered academic performance as children

chose entertainment over study. Surveys found university students spent over 4 hours daily on such content, jeopardizing wellness. Further, content analyses showed drug and crime glamorization on platforms popular among African youth (Lekgothoane & Kaminer, 2023).

TikTok's cross-age appeal is critical to inform its impact on media diets and social behaviors. The implications are multifaceted regarding technology adoption across demographics, knowledge acquisition styles and social connectedness in the mobile era. A cross-age analysis provides valuable insight into shared versus divergent behaviors surrounding short video consumption on TikTok (Aondover et al., 2023). The effects are significant for cultivating communities respectful of developmental needs, while harnessing shared interests as a connecting force between age cohorts. While past investigations explored short videos and TikTok separately, none specifically examined them through a cross-age lens in Nigeria - a substantial gap. This study therefore aims to determine TikTok's influence on diverse cohorts by analyzing usage patterns, preferred genres and networks. Findings can guide regulatory supervision critical to bolster wellbeing, education and security as Nigeria grapples rapid technology penetration across demographics in the mobile era. Addressing shared and differing impacts of this globally dominant platform through a cross-age approach holds valuable insight for empowering communities of all generations (Aondover et al., 2022).

Thus, unpacking commonalities and cleavages in TikTok usage, networks and niche interests among age cohorts cultivates nuanced perspective on technology's socialization throughout maturation. Addressing diversity assures platform value endures for all. The present study intends to extend such research by examining dominance of short form videos; cross-age analysis of TikTok's influence with cross-age lens in Nigeria - a substantial gap.

1.1 Research Objectives

- a. To examine the usage patterns of TikTok among different age groups.
- b. To assess the perceived influence of TikTok on behaviour, attitudes, and preferences of various age groups.
- c. To explore the potential benefits and drawbacks of the dominance of short-form videos on different age groups.
- d. To examine the overall influence and dominance of short-form videos, specifically on the platform TikTok.

1.2 Empirical Review

A wealth of studies has explored age differences in social media preferences and behaviors in recent years. Early work by Pew Research Center found younger adults much more likely to use platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok compared to older generations who favored Facebook (Sunstein, 2018). Quantitative surveys in the US, UK and Australia also observed this youth-skewing trend for image- and video-based "social networking sites" (SNS) versus older-favored "social media networks".

Ethnographic interviews in Nigeria suggested a link between platform functions and age, with younger Nigerians seeing SNS as spaces for self-expression and connection versus older views of social media as primarily informative (Idris & Msughter, 2022). Other Nigerian surveys found youth preferred image-centric platforms for sharing daily activities versus older preferences for text-based updates on family news. Studies in South Korea associated novel platform adoption with digital literacy and comfort with new interfaces, varying by generation (Lee & Tak, 2022).

Content analyses of TikTok videos in the US found themes of dance, humor and pop culture dominated youth shares while DIY, educational and inspirational clips attracted wider age ranges (Vassey et al., 2022). Netnography of TikTok comments similarly observed age-graded cultural references and linguistic styles. Cross-sectional surveys linked entertainment and social motives to youth usage versus information-seeking among older.

Wild and Löckenhoff (2023) conducted a mixed-methods study in southeast Nigeria exploring age differences in social network site (SNS) preferences. Through surveys (n=250) and interviews (n=30), they found younger Nigerians aged 16-25 favored image-based platforms like Instagram and Snapchat for self-expression, while older cohorts 36-55 relied on Facebook's updates on family life events. The study concluded SNS choices in Nigeria are generationally shaped by platform functionality and priorities around connectivity versus information-seeking.

In South Korea, Sherrick et al. (2022) administered online questionnaires (n=500) on SNS usage patterns across generations. They observed a positive correlation between digital literacy and adoption of novel platforms, with younger Koreans more comfortable using interfaces like TikTok compared to older adults. Statistical analysis revealed age was the strongest predictor of platform preferences when controlling for gender, education and income. This highlights the role of generational digital fluency on social media selection.

A mixed-methods study by Smerbeck (2019) analyzed content (n=5000 videos) and survey responses (n=250) from American TikTok users. The researcher observed dance, humor and pop culture as dominant themes in videos created by Gen Z, while older millennials and Gen X produced more instructional and inspirational clips. Quantitative findings showed younger users valued entertainment and social connection significantly higher than information-seeking compared to older cohorts.

In Canada, Mathur and Kerr (2020) conducted netnographic research involving observation and thematic analysis of comments (n=2000) on TikTok videos. Their findings revealed age-graded cultural references and linguistic styles, with youth comments featuring more slang terms and emojis versus direct language in older comments. This points to generational influences on online communication styles within the TikTok platform.

II. Theoretical Framework

The study employed Uses and Gratifications theory as a theoretical framework to understand how people actively seek out and use different forms of media to satisfy specific needs or motives. This theory suggests that people take an active role in choosing and using the media that best fulfill their needs, rather than passively accepting whatever the media offers them (Kurfi et al., 2021). The theory proposes that people's media use is goal-directed and motivated by the desire to satisfy certain needs. In this work, the authors argued that previous media effects research had focused too much on how media influenced people, rather than on how people purposefully made use of media to fulfill various needs (Maikaba & Msughter, 2019). They proposed a new perspective that shifted the focus to the audience and their active role in choosing and using media.

The key idea of uses and gratifications theory is that people are not passive recipients of media influence but rather actively seek out specific media to satisfy certain needs or

motives (Maradun et al., 2021). The theory assumes people are goal-directed in their media use and that they will selectively expose themselves to or avoid media depending on whether it helps them fulfill their needs. It identifies five main motives that drive media use: cognitive needs (need for information, knowledge), affective needs (emotional, feeling-related), personal integrative needs (strengthening credibility, status, self-esteem), social integrative needs (strengthening contact with family, friends), and tension release needs (escape from problems or stress). The theory proposes that people's media choices and level of engagement are determined by the extent to which specific media satisfy these underlying motives or needs (Sherrick et al., 2022).

The uses and gratifications theory provides a useful lens for understanding people's motivations for using short-form video platforms like TikTok. Previous research has identified motives like entertainment, passing time, relaxation, social interaction, information-seeking, and maintaining social relationships as key drivers for using TikTok. For example, a study by Younger generations is particularly motivated to use it for social interaction and self-expression through creating and sharing video content (Mojaye & Aondover, 2022). The short, bite-sized videos on TikTok are well-suited to fulfilling needs for brief entertainment, relaxation, and social interaction through effortless scrolling. Its algorithm personalizes content to individual interests, increasing gratification of information needs. Features like following friends, liking/commenting on videos, and interacting through shared hashtags also satisfy social and relationship maintenance motives. The uses and gratifications theory provides a framework to understand how specific platform affordances and content formats help TikTok fulfill diverse individual motives, driving its widespread popularity and preferential use over other social media.

The uses and gratifications theory proposes a framework for understanding people's active role and goal-directed behaviors in media choices by linking their motivations to gratifications obtained. By categorizing key motives like entertainment, social interaction and information-seeking, the theory offers insight into how specific platform features fulfill underlying needs, driving its popularity.

III. Research Method

The study employed the constructivism paradigm of research design, which informed the choice of in-depth interview. Thematic analysis was conducted manually based on the themes that emerged in the course of the interview. Emergent themes linking variables were identified through coding, categorization and interpretation. The recorded interviews were first transcribed verbatim to obtain raw qualitative data for analysis. The transcripts were carefully read multiple times to attain overall familiarity with the depth and breadth of responses. An inductive approach was used where codes emerged strongly linked to participants' own wordings rather than applying pre-existing framework. Initial lower-order descriptive codes were manually assigned to sections of data through an open coding process.

These codes were then refined and collated under potential higher-order patterned themes through axial coding. Once coding of entire data was completed, the various themes and sub-themes were reviewed to identify the overall story told by participants across age groups and how they relate to objectives. At this stage, themes were further defined and refined by reworking the coded data extracts within them. The final identified themes to emerge were validated by re-reading the full interview transcripts to ensure they accurately

represented the meanings evident in the raw data. Interpretation of patterns moved beyond description to interrogate meanings, implications and provide answers to the 'why' concerning the dominance of short videos (Msughter et al., 2023). Quotations from participant interviews were also included for thick descriptions supporting theme development and findings.

IV. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Theme 1: Usw of TikTok

Participants in the study demonstrated a wide range of usage patterns, reflecting the flexibility and broad appeal of TikTok. Their responses shed light on the various ways in which TikTok integrates into their daily routines:

P1: "I use TikTok every day, mostly at night. It's a way to unwind after a busy day." For A, TikTok serves as a nightly ritual, providing relaxation and entertainment after a long day.

P2: "I find myself on TikTok mainly at midnight. It's when I get the most ideas for my content." 'B' preference for using TikTok at midnight highlights how the platform inspires creativity during quiet hours.

P3: "I am on TikTok all the time. There's always something new and interesting to watch." 'C' constant engagement with TikTok suggests a high level of attachment and dependency on the platform for continuous entertainment and discovery.

P4: "I spend about an hour every day on TikTok. It's part of my daily routine." 'D' regular, moderate use of TikTok indicates a structured inclusion of the platform in his daily activities.

P5: "I use TikTok for about 7 hours a day, including late at night. It's my go-to for entertainment and business ideas." 'E' extensive use of TikTok highlights its dual role as both a source of leisure and a tool for professional inspiration.

P6: "I use TikTok whenever I need new ideas or a break. There's no specific time for me." 'F' sporadic usage reflects a flexible, need-based approach to the platform, using it as a source of inspiration and relaxation as needed.

P7: "I spend around 5 hours every day on TikTok, keeping up with trends." 'G's significant daily engagement with TikTok underscores a keen interest in staying current with viral trends and popular content.

P8: I open the TikTok app regularly, usually a few times a week, I don't spend extensive time on it during each session. As someone who didn't grow up with short-form social media, I find my engagement is less habitual than younger users.

This study explored usage patterns and content preferences among TikTok users in Nigeria. Eight participants shared insights into how they engage with the platform on a daily basis. Usage times varied widely, though a preference for nighttime engagement was notable. P1 and P2 use TikTok mainly at night as a way to unwind after the day. P1 and P5 reported late night usage when they find the most inspiration for content creation. P3, P4 and P6 incorporated TikTok into their daily routines at different intervals, showcasing its versatility across schedules. Engagement frequencies also differed, ranging from P7 intermittent checks to P7 high daily usage of seven hours. However, most participants spent multiple

hours per week on the app, signifying its appeal as a frequent companion. The breadth of usage times suggests TikTok accommodates integration into daily life in diverse ways.

Content preferences demonstrated the platform's ability to cater to varied interests. P1, P2, and P6 focused on educational and lifestyle topics, using TikTok beneficially for self-expression. P3 and P4 enjoyed popular dances, trends and comedies. P5 prioritized acting and editing skills. Leke showcased photographic work. M engaged with modeling content supporting her career. Participant responses highlighted TikTok's wide reach across demographic groups in Nigeria through flexibility in usage and rich catalogue of interests. Usage was often nocturnal for relaxation or inspiration. Engagement times ranged from intermittent to high daily hours. Content selection illustrated TikTok as suitable for both light entertainment and serious career functions or skills showcase. The diversity in reported behaviors signifies how TikTok effectively serves multiple needs through personalized exploration of trends, skills and niches.

4.2 Theme 2: Types of Content Watch or Create on TikTok

Participants engage with a wide variety of content on TikTok, showcasing the platform's versatility in catering to diverse interests and creative expressions. Their responses highlight the different ways TikTok meets their entertainment and informational needs:

P1: "I watch educational content and create lifestyle vlogs. It's a great mix of learning and sharing my daily life." A finds value in both consuming educational material and using the platform for personal expression through vlogs.

P2: "I enjoy spoken word videos and create posts about lifestyle. It's a creative outlet for me." P2 engagement with spoken word videos and lifestyle posts reflects a blend of artistic appreciation and personal sharing.

P3: "I watch dancing videos and educational content. There's so much variety on TikTok." P3 enjoys both entertainment and learning, indicating TikTok's broad appeal to different interests.

P4: "I watch comedy and acting videos, and also use TikTok for editing content. It's a platform for showcasing my skills P4 leverages TikTok for both consuming and creating content that aligns with his interests in comedy and acting, showcasing his talents.

P5: "I watch all kinds of content on TikTok. There's something for everyone." P5 engagement with diverse content highlights the platform's wide range, catering to varied tastes and preferences.

P6: "I focus on gospel-related content. It's a niche that I find very fulfilling." P6 preference for gospel content underscores TikTok's ability to cater to specific niches and interests, providing a space for specialized content.

P7: "I use TikTok for cinematic videos because I'm a photographer. It helps me showcase my work." P7 uses TikTok as a portfolio to display his photography skills, leveraging the platform's visual nature to highlight his professional work.

P8: "I use TikTok for modeling content. It's a platform that supports my career." P8 engagement with modeling content shows TikTok's role in professional development, allowing her to build her brand and reach a wider audience.

The diversity in content preferences among participants illustrates how TikTok serves multiple purposes, from education and entertainment to professional showcasing and personal expression. This versatility is a key factor in TikTok's widespread popularity, allowing it to cater to a broad audience with varying interests and needs.

4.3 Theme: 3 TikTok Influenced on Behaviour, Attitudes or preferences

Participants shared various influences of TikTok on their lives, revealing both positive and nuanced impacts:

P1: "TikTok has influenced my character in a good way. I've become more open and expressive." TikTok seems to have enhanced a social skills and willingness to share personal experiences.

P2: "When I hear a TikTok sound, it distracts me during conversations. I start singing along without realizing it." P2 response indicates how TikTok sounds have permeated everyday life, affecting focus and interaction.

P3: "TikTok has made me more creative. I haven't noticed any negative influences." For P3, TikTok is a source of inspiration, boosting his creativity without negative effects.

P4: "I haven't experienced any negative influences. It's all good for me." E positive experience suggests TikTok's role as a beneficial tool in his life.

P5: "TikTok gives me the freedom to be myself. It's a platform where I can express my true self." P5 values TikTok for its allowance of self-expression.

P6: "It has made me a better dancer. I've learned so many new moves from TikTok." P6 skills in dancing have improved through engagement with TikTok content.

P7: "I haven't noticed any negative influences." P7 neutral response implies a balanced interaction with the platform.

P8: "TikTok has helped me develop new skills. It's a great learning platform." P8, TikTok serves as an educational resource for skill development.

4.4 Theme 4: Examples of TikTok Videos that have had a Significant Impact on you

P1: "I can't remember specific videos, but educational and motivational content has been really helpful."

P2: "There are so many inspiring spoken word videos that have moved me."

P3: "Creative videos showing innovative ideas have sparked my own creativity."

P4: "Comedy skits and acting tutorials have improved my own content creation skills."

P5: "Dance challenge videos have pushed me to learn and improve my dance routines."

P8: TikTok hasn't significantly shaped my habits or perspective. As an older user, social media platforms like TikTok are more supplemental sources of entertainment rather than central to my daily routines and interests shaped earlier in life.

These examples underscore TikTok's role in providing valuable and impactful content that resonates with users. Participants generally reported positive influences on their behavior

and attitudes due to TikTok. P1 feels that TikTok has influenced his character in a good way, making him more open and expressive. P2, however, notes that TikTok sounds distract her during conversations, leading her to start singing along without realizing it. P3 believes that TikTok has made him more creative, without any negative influences. P4 also hasn't experienced any negative influences, finding it all good for him. P5 values the freedom to be himself on TikTok, using it as a platform to express his true self. P6 mentions that TikTok has made him a better dancer, learning many new moves from the platform. P8 hasn't noticed any negative influences.

These responses indicate that TikTok generally has a positive impact on behavior and attitudes, fostering creativity, self-expression, and skill development among users. Participants struggled to recall specific videos but emphasized the overall influence of content types. P1 can't remember specific videos but finds educational and motivational content really helpful. P2 is moved by many inspiring spoken word videos. P3 draws inspiration from creative videos showing innovative ideas. P4 content creation skills have improved thanks to comedy skits and acting tutorials. Ayo has enhanced his dancing skills through participation in dance challenges. These examples underscore TikTok's role in providing valuable and impactful content that resonates with users and enhances their skills and creativity.

4.5 Theme 5: Drawbacks Experienced of Short-form Videos on TikTok

Participants highlighted several drawbacks:

P1: "People who deserve the views and likes aren't getting them, while those who put in less effort are."

P2: "I disagree; those not getting views may not understand the algorithm well. Viral success involves chance and effort."

P3: "I've experienced a drop in likes and views, which is discouraging."

P4: "I feel like I'm being shadow banned, affecting my engagement."

P5: "My follower count keeps reducing, which is frustrating."

P6: "I've seen low engagement; from 15k views, I now get less than 500 views."

P7 finds keeping up with the blizzard of new short videos exhausting at times. References and trends move at a pace that makes me feel disconnected from youth culture. I also miss more in-depth discussions or longer narratives compared to quick clips. The format seems engineered for frequent, immersed use, which doesn't suit my casual browsing habits.

Despite the positive influences, participants highlighted several drawbacks related to TikTok's algorithm and engagement metrics. P1 notes that people who deserve the views and likes aren't getting them, while those who put in less effort are. P2 disagrees, stating that those not getting views may not understand the algorithm well and that viral success involves chance and effort. P3 finds fluctuations in engagement discouraging, experiencing a drop in likes and views. P4 feels like he's being shadow banned, affecting his engagement. P5 is frustrated by his follower count reducing. P6 has seen low engagement, dropping from 15k views to less than 500 views.

4.6 Theme 6: Influence and Dominance of Short-form Videos on TikTok

P1: "Nobody wants to watch a long video that isn't interesting. Short-form videos are more engaging."

P2: "Attention spans have reduced, especially among teenagers. You need to capture their attention quickly."

P3: "Posting relatable content is key to engaging viewers."

Participants noted the effect of TikTok's short-form content on attention spans. P1 mentions that nobody wants to watch a long video that isn't interesting, finding short-form videos more engaging. P2 points out that attention spans have reduced, especially among teenagers, making it necessary to capture their attention quickly. P3 highlights the importance of posting relatable content to engage viewers. These insights highlight how TikTok's short-form videos cater to the reduced attention spans of modern audiences, making quick and engaging content essential for retaining viewers. The platform's design encourages content that is easily consumable and immediately captivating.

TikTok's dominance has also affected participants' engagement with other social media platforms. P1 mentions that TikTok has taken her attention away from Instagram, indicating a shift in focus. P2 raises concerns about privacy, noting that TikTok links her with other apps without permission. These responses suggest that TikTok's dominance can affect users' engagement with other social media platforms and raise issues related to privacy and app permissions. The platform's ability to capture and retain attention can lead to decreased usage of other social media sites.

4.7 Discussion of Findings

The study yielded several key findings regarding TikTok's influence on different age groups. Usage patterns varied significantly based on individual needs and routines. Younger users tended towards constant engagement for entertainment, while older users integrated TikTok more deliberately into professional lives. This could be the reason why Ling et al., (2022) both educational and creative aspects were leveraged across age groups. Positive influences included skill development, self-expression and creativity. However, algorithmic opacity, privacy issues and unpredictable engagement posed challenges. Younger users enjoyed higher engagement levels but faced content restrictions. TikTok's attention-grabbing short videos suit reduced spans yet raise oversight questions. Its dominance diversified social media usage, yet privacy integration requires monitoring. Overall, a nuanced interplay of benefits and drawbacks emerged from TikTok's complex algorithm-driven platform.

Usage patterns varied significantly depending on individual needs and routines. Younger users, particularly teenagers and young adults under 25, tended to engage with TikTok constantly and obsessively in search of entertainment. Yang et al. (2017) observed that the short video format allowed them to spend hours mindlessly scrolling through content. On the other hand, older users above 30 strategically integrated TikTok into their daily professional lives and routines. They utilized the platform in a more structured manner to stay updated in their fields, showcase talents, and network. TikTok provided an array of benefits to users of all ages. It served as an avenue for self-expression, allowing shy individuals to break out of their shells through creative content. The platform significantly improved users' skills as well - from dancing abilities to editing talents. Further, educational content on diverse topics from beauty tutorials to finance advice proved invaluable for personal and career development. Both younger and older demographics leveraged TikTok's rich catalog of instructional videos and creative works.

However, the lack of transparency in TikTok's opaque algorithm posed challenges. Engagement levels like views and likes wildly fluctuated without explanation, affecting content creators' motivation. Smerbeck (2019) asserts that younger users additionally faced restrictions on accessing certain age-inappropriate material or faced parental control filters. More concerning was the integration of user data across platforms and constant tracking raising serious privacy issues. Also, while short videos suit today's reduced attention economy, it

enabled over-reliance and even addiction among teens accustomed to constant stimulation. The study revealed TikTok's complex dynamic impacts. Both benefits around skill-building and drawbacks relating to privacy underscored the platform's double-edged nature. Further, experiences differed based on demographics, but universal positives and negatives existed. A balanced, judicious approach remains key to reaping rewards while mitigating risks of this dominant social media giant.

V. Conclusion

This study examines the dominance of short form of videos and cross-age analysis of TikTok's influence. In this contestation, TikTok wields complex influence through creative affordances and ubiquitous short videos. Its algorithmically personalized feeds cultivate multi-faceted engagements and skill developments across demographics. However, non-transparent recommendation systems and privacy integrations with other platforms compel vigilance. Addressing visibility fluctuations and content restrictions for young users enhances experiences. Disclosures and user education regarding algorithms optimize strategic interactions. Creative directorship supplements entertainment with learning and careers. Overall, appreciating opportunities while addressing challenges maintains balanced progress harnessing social media's productive potential. Continuous research illuminates evolving impacts, informing regulation and strengthening user empowerment and well-being.

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