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## Sustaining Students' Mental Health Through the Use of Tiktok Application

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### ABSTRACT

The relationship between social media use and an increase in mental health problems has long been established. Since the TikTok application became the most widely used app in 2019 has been an issue with the students. This study was conducted primarily to assess students' mental health through the use of the TikTok application. Quantitative data were collected from randomly selected college students within the Province of Sultan Kudarat who are using the TikTok application for almost a year regardless of gender with a total number of thirty (30), coming from different tertiary schools in Region XII. Adapted test items in the survey questionnaire were made from Google forms and were disseminated online through messenger and Google mails, considering the Covid 19 pandemic. Descriptive analysis showed a positive impact between the level of engagement in terms of frequency of use, duration of use and the students' use of TikTok application, the level of effects of the abovementioned application in students' mental health; the level of students' management of mental health in terms of academic stress, family crisis and peer pressure. Conclusion of these findings indicated that the use of TikTok application can raise awareness about the importance of using the said application with moderation and can help implement early interventions and prevention for the symptoms of any mental health issues associated with the identified common factors namely academic stress, family crisis, and peer pressure.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

TikTok was launched internationally in 2017 by Bytedance and permits every user to share short looping videos from 15 seconds to 1 minute. It served as a platform for some individuals who are afraid of showing their talents, skills, capabilities, and true identity for they are combating with fear of criticism. This fear was caused by both internal and external pressures which lead to various mental health issues arising.

Human beings are social creatures that require the companionship of others to make progress in life. Thus, being socially connected with other people can relieve stress, anxiety, and sadness, but a lack of social connection can pose serious risks to mental health (Karim et al., 2020). Imposing this result on our minds will help us dispel the stereotypes that any social media platforms only bring negative effects to our mental health. TikTok is a stress-relieving platform. It helps us sometimes to handle anxiety, depression, or other mental issues. This is also a boost to students' confidence to fight for affecting factors that causes them to decline from moving forward.

Students are undergoing pressure and have been combating it internally, hiding it for good. The reason why they choose to engage themselves on TikTok is to lessen the amount of pain and get away with pressures brought about by external factors. Social media isn't a replacement for human connection, but mental health professionals like Dr. Puder are using apps like TikTok (much like how women's health professionals have taken to Instagram) to spread mental health awareness to an audience that has been the most impacted, both positively and negatively. TikTok is a way for teens to begin coping with mental health issues when they might feel uncertain or uncomfortable about where to start, where teens are mostly students. First, it is important to understand individual strengths and vulnerabilities that may predispose certain adolescents to engage with and respond to social media in adaptive or maladaptive ways.

Moreover, this study was to assess the student's use of the TikTok app, how this affects students' mental health, and particularly show the extent of their engagement in creating content on TikTok which is used widely by students how they carry out their mental health issues through this platform, how they feel when spreading inspirational messages, quotes, poems, songs, lessen the different pressures, how they are affected by their use of TikTok app in dealing with problems and their levels of mental health in terms of frequency of use, duration of use, academic stress, family crisis, and peer pressure.

## 2. METHODS

The descriptive research design was used to supply and describe the use of the TikTok application on students' mental health. This descriptive survey method is necessary to gather data through survey questionnaires evaluating student mental health through the use of TikTok application in terms of factors influencing their relationship.

The respondents of this study were the thirty (30) college students comprised of 12 male users and 18 female users coming from different tertiary schools from Region XII, residing within Sultan Kudarat who uses the TikTok application for almost a year since the aforementioned application was developed just by 2017 regardless of gender (see **Table 1**).

**Table 1.** Distribution of respondents of the study.

Gender	No. of Respondents
Male	12
Female	18

To determine the respondents of the study random sampling was used considering the years and months that selected students began to engage and use the TikTok application. As aforesaid, there were thirty (30) total college students who are using the TikTok application from different tertiary schools.

The researchers employed a survey questionnaire in eliciting the needed data for the study. Since the threat of pandemic still outbursts, the researchers looked for an alternative way to make the conduct safer for both the respondents and researcher. Effects on Their Academic Success and Stress Management by Students, [Gupta and Bashir \(2018\)](#) Social Networking Usage Questionnaire: Development and Validation in an Indian Higher Education Context and; "Student Mental Health Self-Assessment Questionnaire", 2006. After a thorough consultation with the research adviser, the adapted questionnaire was accepted as an instrumenting gathering the data needed. It was answered online through the means of messenger, Google mail, or e-mail. The respondents gave their own opinions by answering the questionnaires honestly and thoroughly, followed by the rating for evaluation. The questionnaire was designed to measure the level of engagement of students in TikTok application in terms of frequency of use and duration of use, the level of effects to mental health and to measure the level of students' management of mental health through the use of TikTok application in terms of academic stress, family crisis, and peer's pressure.

The researchers used the following rating scale in answering the survey (see **Table 2**).

**Table 2.** Rating scale in answering the survey.

Scale	Scale Range	Verbal Description	Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Always	Excellent
4	3.41-4.20	Often	Very Good
3	2.61-3.40	Sometimes	Good
2	1.81-2.60	Rarely	Poor
1	1.00-1.80	Never	Very Poor

This study, being descriptive, the data gathered was statistically computed and analyzed.

In answering the objectives, the mean was computed and employed for the analysis. To interpret the result, the descriptive statistic was used. The result was also solved through the SPSS from Microsoft Excel by the statistician.

The analysis was used to determine the impact of the use of the TikTok application on college student's mental health and how this application helped them cope with the different factors affecting their mentality.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 3** above exhibits the different reasons and the level of engagement of college students in the TikTok application in terms of frequency of use. Having the computed mean of 4.14, the students are found to be using the aforesaid application very well or oftentimes, as shown in **Table 3** above.

As gleaned further, the data presented in **Table 3** depicts all the reasons for students' engagement in the TikTok application. It is observable in the data collected that and as presented in the aforesaid table, having the computed mean of 4.40, the college students are using the TikTok application every day to watch inspirational videos. This will be amplified by the findings of [O'Reilly et al. \(2018\)](#) that adolescents frequently utilize social media and the internet to seek information about mental health.

This further implies that though there are problems along with the students' lives, it is highly observed that they engage themselves on the said application to look for inspirations for them to do well and be motivated in any aspect of life. Also, as founded by [Blomfield Neira and Barber \(2014\)](#) while higher investment in social media (e.g. active social media use) predicted adolescents' depressive symptoms, no relationship was found between the frequency of social media use and depressed mood.

**Table 3.** Mean score distribution of the level of engagement of college students in Tiktok application in terms of frequency of use.

Frequency of Use	Mean	Verbal Description	Interpretation
I use the TikTok application To share my dance, singing, acting, and artistic videos every day.	4.20	Often	Very good
I use the TikTok application to look at funny sharing every day.	3.96	Often	Very good
I use the TikTok application to watch inspirational videos every day.	4.40	Always	Excellent
I use the TikTok application to get relief from academic stress every day.	4.26	Always	Excellent
I TikTok application to get information regarding current social events every day	3.86	Often	Very good
<b>Mean</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very good</b>

*Note: n = 30. 1.00-1.80 – Never (Very poor); 1.81-2.60 – Rarely (Poor); 2.61-3.40 – Sometimes (Good); 3.41-4.20 – Often (Very Good); 4.21-5.00 – Always (Excellent).*

**Table 4** above presents the duration of students' use of the TikTok application and the reasons behind their engagement of the said application. Having an average mean of 3.10, it is concluded that students' usage is good as interpreted and sometimes, if in verbal description. This simply connotes that they limit themselves in using the aforesaid application only if needed depending on their interest.

Further, it is shown that students use the TikTok application to seek help by watching educational videos for 1-3 hours with a mean of (3.40). A recent study of the University of Pennsylvania in 2018, suggesting such self-monitoring can change one's perception of social media. The study's researchers looked at 143 undergraduates randomly assigned to two groups. The first set was asked to limit Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat to ten minutes per platform per day, while the second was asked to continue to use their social media as usual for three weeks. The limited group showed significant reductions in loneliness and depression during those three weeks over the group that continued using social media. Both groups showed significant decreases in anxiety and fear of missing out compared to where they were at the study's beginning.

Implying another perspective about the results, according to the theory, people who spend more time in sedentary behaviors such as social media users have less time for face-to-face social interaction, both of which have been proven to be protective against mental disorders ([Coyne et al., 2020](#)). Moreover, a 2018 University of Pennsylvania study found that reducing social media use to 30 minutes a day resulted in a significant reduction in levels of anxiety, depression, loneliness, sleep problems, and FOMO. But you don't need to cut back on your social media use that drastically to improve your mental health. This means, moderating the use of social media especially the TikTok application can help neutralize students' mental health in any factors affecting them.

**Table 4.** Mean Score Distribution of the Level of Engagement of College Students in Tiktok Application in Terms of Duration of Use.

Duration of use	Mean	Verbal Description	Interpretation
I use the Tiktok application to seek help by watching educational videos for 1- 3 hours.	3.40	Sometimes	Good
I use the TikTok application for collaborative content 1-3 hours.	3.23	Sometimes	Good
I use the TikTok application to solve my academic problem for 1 – 3 hours.	2.73	Sometimes	Good
I use the TikTok application to share new ideas for 1 – 3 hours.	3.06	Sometimes	Good
I use the TikTok application for watching the news for 1 – 3 hours.	3.10	Sometimes	Good
<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.10</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Good</b>

Note:  $n = 30$ . 1.00-1.80 – Never (Very poor); 1.81-2.60 – Rarely (Poor); 2.61-3.40 – Sometimes (Good); 3.41-4.20 – Often (Very Good); 4.21-5.00 – Always (Excellent).

**Table 5** from the above shows that the seventh statement, I've been interested in new things (4.46), is found to be the dominating effect of students' use of the TikTok application in their mental health. It further gives the idea that the TikTok application has positive effects on students' lives. As implied by Yu (2019), TikTok is the leader in the field of music short video social platforms, which focus on vertical reading. TikTok base on the perspective of user-centric theory, can optimize the user experience, meet the needs of users, achieve the goal of users, and attract users in the aspects of interface interaction design, content production, and form innovation, recommended algorithm technology based on big data. TikTok can help its users create value to keep the user discovering new things like life hacks and more.

Moreover, as presented in **Table 5**, the total average mean of the level of effects of TikTok application in students' mental health was found very good (4.11) which entails that for students, social media use or TikTok application use do not necessarily bring negative effects in their individuality. In contrary to the result, Karim et al., (2020) stated that social media is a new study that is rapidly growing and gaining popularity. Thus, there are many unexplored and unexpected constructive answers associated with it. Lately, studies have found that using social media platforms can have a detrimental effect on the psychological health of its users. However, the extent to which the use of social media impacts the public is yet to be determined. This systematic review has found that social media envy can affect the level of anxiety and depression in individuals. Here, on the other hand, the result of their study is removed from the paradigm, as the result of this study showed positive effects on students' mental health.

A Pew Research Center report from 2018 surveyed 743 teens aged 13 to 17 and 1,058 parents of children in this age group, finding mixed views on the impact of social media in their lives. Nearly a quarter - 24% - said it had a mostly negative impact, compared to 31% who said the impact was mostly positive and 45% who could not decide either way. Notably, the use of any social media platforms, especially TikTok does not bring affect the way the students approach negativities of life.

**Table 5.** Mean Score Distribution of the Level of Effects of the Use of TikTok Application in Student's Mental Health.

Level of Effects	Mean	Verbal Description	Interpretation
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	3.83	Often	Very good
I've been feeling confident.	4.30	Always	Excellent
I've been thinking clearly.	3.96	Often	Very good
I've been dealing with problems well	3.83	Often	Very good
I've been feeling good about Myself	4.26	Always	Excellent
I've been feeling useful.	3.76	Often	Very good
I've been interested in new things.	4.46	Always	Excellent
I've been feeling relaxed.	4.33	Always	Excellent
I've been feeling close to other people.	4.13	Often	Very good
I've been able to make up my mind about things.	4.20	Often	Very good
<b>Mean</b>	<b>4.11</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very good</b>

Note:  $n = 30$ . 1.00-1.80 – Never (Very poor); 1.81-2.60 – Rarely (Poor); 2.61-3.40 – Sometimes (Good); 3.41-4.20 – Often (Very Good); 4.21-5.00 – Always (Excellent).

**Table 6** above indicates the level of students' management of mental health through the use of TikTok application in terms of academic stress. This presents the different factors affecting students' mental health academically having a total mean of 3.11, meaning the students only have a good level of management in the abovementioned factor when using the TikTok application. Social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, messenger, etc do have a positive and negative impact on the student's academic performances. However, we cannot precisely conclude by saying these are the only media that are affecting the student's performance. This is one of the primary factors affecting technology changes. Students are now very much inclined with technology. Moreover, social media do give a positive impact as education is completely on technology.

Moreover, the criterion I don't feel stressed whenever I get a Lower grade, has the lowest mean of 2.86 which tells that the use of TikTok application does not have a highly positive influence on the students' level of management of mental health and the criterion I don't feel stress due to many hours of studies has the highest mean of 3.33 which asserts that through the use of TikTok application they do not feel stress.

**Table 6.** Mean Score Distribution of the Level of Student's Management of Mental Health Through the Use of TikTok App in Terms of Academic Stress.

Academic Stress	Mean	Verbal Description	Interpretation
I don't feel stressed where there is an increase in class workload (assignment).	3.30	Sometimes	Good
I don't feel stress whenever I get a Lower grade.	2.86	Sometimes	Good
I don't feel frustrated due to misunderstanding lectures.	2.93	Sometimes	Good
I don't feel stress due to many hours of studies.	3.33	Sometimes	Good
I don't feel frustrated with the examinations.	3.13	Sometimes	Good
<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Good</b>

Note:  $n = 30$ . 1.00-1.80 – Never (Very poor); 1.81-2.60 – Rarely (Poor); 2.61-3.40 – Sometimes (Good); 3.41-4.20 – Often (Very Good); 4.21-5.00 – Always (Excellent).

As illustrated in **Table 7**, students assessed, I don't let the clash between my parents affect my mental health with the mean of 3.70, as the last criterion which means that it is the least managed mental health factor among the rest. The fight between parents can greatly affect every child, this must be taken seriously anytime it occurs and it is undeniable that anyone in the family cannot take this with ease.

Based on research, Parental conflict is associated with negative effects on children, and child feelings of involvement in conflict might exacerbate negative outcomes. Research has yet to explore the long-term impact of both parental conflict and caught feelings. In a sample of college students, linear regressions (N = 800) indicated that regardless of parent marital status, children's feelings of involvement in the parental conflict were important predictors of academic and psychological functioning, and in some cases mediated the relationship between conflict and adult child outcomes. Given that parental conflict is common, it appears important to minimize children's involvement in the conflict, as it can have lasting impacts (Bannon *et al.*, 2018).

Above all, as gleaned in the tabulated data, it is explicitly revealed that the criteria I don't let financial difficulties affect my mental health and I don't let stress in combining my job with studies affect my mental health are the most managed by college students having the mean of 4.06 which is very good as interpreted. Further, with the overall computed mean of 3.94, it is concluded that the student's level of management of their mental health is very good. This can be supported by the findings of Bekalu *et al.* (2021), the findings go against what some might expect, which is intriguing. Having a strong social network is associated with positive mental health and well-being. Social media may provide individuals with a platform that overcomes barriers of distance and time, allowing them to connect and reconnect with others and thereby expand and strengthen their in-person networks and interactions.

**Table 7.** Mean Score Distribution of the Level of Student's Management of Mental Health Through the Use of TikTok App in Terms of Family Crisis.

Family Crisis	Mean	Verbal Description	Interpretation
I don't let the clash between my parents affect my mental health.	3.70	Sometimes	Good
I don't let the change in my living environment affect my mental health.	3.94	Often	Very good
I don't let financial difficulties affect my mental health.	4.06	Often	Very good
I don't let health problems affect my mental health.	3.90	Sometimes	Good
I don't let stress in combining my job with studies affect my mental health.	4.06	Often	Very good
<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.94</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very Good</b>

Note: n = 30. 1.00-1.80 – Never (Very poor); 1.81-2.60 – Rarely (Poor); 2.61-3.40 – Sometimes (Good); 3.41-4.20 – Often (Very Good); 4.21-5.00 – Always (Excellent).

Examining the data in **Table 8**, the level of students' management of mental health through the use of TikTok application in terms of peer pressure is collectively assessed as very good, having the total computed mean of 4.00. This result can be comforted that positive outcomes about student's peer association likely to occur when the student environment drives the students to engage in their desired activities that are motivated by their peers to continue to strive to reach possible outcomes (Korir & Kipkemboi, 2014).

This implies then that the ridicule of peers as it is seen in the data (3.90) affects students' mental health sometimes. This result can be assisted by Gulati (2017) as he stated that peer pressure is described to have a positive and negative impact among individuals and even without effect to a person because peer pressure is continuous learning. The criterion I don't let guilt affect my mental health just because I did not do what they want me to do has the highest mean of 4.13 which shows that students have a very good level of management of mental health through the use of the TikTok application. As stated by Kim (2017), TikTok serves its aspect the #wellness-tagged videos which have been viewed over 180 million times by the app's 800 million active users, while its #health-tagged posts have been viewed 2.7 billion times. Therefore, the TikTok application helped students in managing peer pressure factors to not fully affect them negatively.

**Table 8.** Mean Score Distribution of the Level of Student's Management of Mental Health Through the Use of TikTok App in Terms of Peer Pressure.

Peer Pressure	Mean	Verbal Description	Interpretation
I don't let threats from my peers affect my mental health.	4.03	Often	Very good
I don't let ridicule of my peers affect my mental health.	3.90	Sometimes	Good
I don't let guilt affect my mental health just because I did not do what they want me to do.	4.13	Often	Very good
I don't let their bribes influence the way I think.	3.96	Often	Very good
I don't let their myriad of requests affect my mental health.	4.00	Often	Very good
<b>Mean</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very good</b>

Note:  $n = 30$ . 1.00-1.80 – Never (Very poor); 1.81-2.60 – Rarely (Poor); 2.61-3.40 – Sometimes (Good); 3.41-4.20 – Often (Very Good); 4.21-5.00 – Always (Excellent).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study intended to assess college students' mental health through the use of the TikTok application and understand the impact of this social media platform in shaping mental health. It was found that using this application is imperative in maintaining positive mental health status. In other words, the use of the said application was therefore positively associated with students' good mental health status. Based on the findings, this research can raise awareness about the importance of using the said application in moderation and can help implement early interventions and prevention for the symptoms of any mental health issues associated with the identified common factors namely academic stress, family crisis, and peer pressure. Therefore, the ill effects coming from different factors affecting the college student's mental health can be sustained through the use of the TikTok application and can raise mental health awareness for everyone.

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## 6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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