

USES AND GRATIFICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA “TIKTOK” AND INFLUENCE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS' USERS

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Abstract

The study examined the uses and gratification of *TikTok* as a social networking platform and how it has influenced the academic performance of youths that are students of Kwara State University, Malete. The population of the study was 13,559 with a sample of 350 respondents derived from stratified random sampling procedure. The measuring instrument was questionnaire which contained 10-items close-ended questions. The data for the study was analysed and presented in simple and percentage frequency tables, as well as standard deviation. The study found that students of Kwara State University Malete were motivated to use *TikTok* because it gives them popularity beyond the vicinity, as well allows them to connect with people and meet new faces. It also established that various benefits derived from *TikTok* adoption include: connecting and reconnecting with friends, showcasing one's activities, keeping distance relationships and offering of supports. It was further discovered that *TikTok* usage do not negatively influence their academic performance, rather, it provides them with platform for pleasure and adventurous engagements capable of relieving them of academic stress. However, the study recommended continual usage of *TikTok* among students, and its subsequent adoption as a recreational activity capable of easing academic stress.

Keywords: Benefits, Usage, Motivations, Social Media, TikTok.

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Introduction

Social media are elements of the new media and according to Danny (2017) have become the highest activity on the internet today. The concept of “social media” or “social network site” is broadly used to refer to Web sites that enable users to articulate a network of connections of people with whom they wish to share access to profile information, news, status updates, comments, photos, or other forms of content. According to Elshout (2012), social networks form a good platform for organizing countervailing power by political activists and citizens. Social media is a form of electronic communication which facilitates interaction based on certain interests and characteristics (Boyd & Ellison, 2017). There is no gainsaying that social media are media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. It uses web-based technologies to transform and broadcast media monologues into social dialogues, as well as provides support for the democratization of knowledge and

information, thereby transforming people from content consumers to content producers.

According to Sylvester (2014), the rapid growth of social media activities in the last few years is indicative of its entry into mainstream culture and its integration into the daily lives of citizens and inhabitants of a society, because it disseminates information at a very high speed, quite affordable and enhances immediate feedback as an interactive media (Oriola, 2021). As posited by Ademosu and Oyeleye (2019), social media are web-based and mobile technologies that facilitate interaction between organizations, communities and individuals. The important features of social media technologies that are ubiquitous, communicate instantaneous and enables the creation and exchange of user-generated contents. Social media accounts such as Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, Youtube, Whatsapp, Wechat are just few of the hundreds of applications that make participatory information, civic

engagement, political participation, and social networking possible (Chartora, 2012).

On the other hand, *TikTok* is a social media platform primarily focused on short-form videos, known for its algorithm-driven personalised feeds and user-generated content. According to Zaheer (2022), *TikTok* allows users to create, edit, and share videos, often accompanied by music and effects. While it has a global reach, the platform is particularly popular with younger demographics. However, the popularity of *TikTok* as a social media platform beloved by the general public enables reaching a broader audience through its engaging interface. The global proliferation of *TikTok* has transformed it from merely an entertainment platform into a potential educational tool.

There is no gainsaying that the rise of online technologies has helped in rebooting the implementation of uses and gratification theory on the new media. A high level of interactivity is demanded from users of new media like the Internet, blogs, and social network sites (SNS), in comparison to the users of traditional media like television, newspapers or radio which basically obtains the media's content from one direction from the sender to the receiver. The integral nature of SNS has changed the communication ecosystem (Ruggiero, 2012). Thus, each SNS is a channel that presents a different set of possibilities for interaction with a closed group of "friends" or even the public at large. Facebook for example, allows users to actively seek out information from their news feed, they can also post a picture or status, react to friends' posts, or share insights or opinions. This means the activities of users on SNS are more interactive and goal-oriented compared to passive and hand-holding traditional media. Thus, the theory of uses and gratifications is applicable for a study of SNS, however it may require expanding and retesting.

Moreover, as averred by Adebisi and Olayiwola (2019), the Uses and Gratification perspective suggests that existing satisfactions from media experiences have been derived by media choices. According to them, it also highlights the notion that needs obtained, and motives behind the equivalent media consumption, vary between individuals. In other words, it points out the notion that individuals are aware of their needs, assessing various channels with their content and functional alternatives, in addition to selecting the interpersonal channel or media that they think will satisfy the gratifications they seek out for (Nabi, Stitt, Halford & Finnerty, 2016). Thus, social media accounts such as *TikTok* let those who use them to have access to abundant information and activity, while connecting with other users of the networks, thereby deriving some level of satisfaction in their usage.

Statement of the Problem

There is no gainsaying that the rise of social media accounts as platforms for communication has gained popularity over the last decade. These platforms have attracted millions of users worldwide (Boyd & Ellison, 2017). Due to this, many people are changing the outlets where they search for news, information, business and entertainment. These social media platforms let those who use them create personal profiles while connecting with other users with similar devices. Users can upload photographs and post what they are doing at any given time (Pempek, et al., 2018). By their nature, social media have the capabilities of educating, informing and entertaining the audience.

Moreover, *TikTok* is a leading video streaming application which is one of the social networks, it boasts of over 1.2 billion users across the world and approximately 12 million active users in Nigeria (Internet Live Stat, 2024). Its usage has been largely characterised by young adults, with about 59% of users under the age of thirty. Owing to the various features embedded in it, users of *TikTok* have continued to appraise its versatility above other social media platforms available. Thus, the gratifications derived from usage of *TikTok* among students are unlimited, just as genuine concerns have been raised among scholars on its negative effect on the academic performance and morals of young adults who are the major user (Galdys, et al. 2019).

However, studies have been conducted on social media account uses, application and gratifications. Bouhnik and Deshen (2014) did a study on WhatsApp as Mobile Instant Messaging between teachers and student, and found that WhatsApp groups are used for four main purposes which are: communicating with students; nurturing the social atmosphere; creating dialogue and encouraging sharing among students; as well as serving as a learning platform. Moreover, Abubakar, (2011) in his study found that social media, which include blogs (political Blog), networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), video sharing (YouTube) audio sharing (Podcast), mobile sites (2go, WhatsApp, etc.), image or picture sharing (flicker) and soon, have the capacity of boosting participation because of their open, conversational nature, connectedness and textual and audio-visual characteristic appeals.

Furthermore, Ezeah, et al. (2017) in their study on use of social media revealed that students view social media for the purposes of leisurely entertainment, to watch films, to expose themselves to phonography, discuss serious national issues like politics, economy, and religious matters. Unfortunately, very little is known about the uses and gratifications of *TikTok* as a popular social network. In view of this, the present study seeks to find out the uses and gratification of *TikTok* and how it influenced the

academic performance of students of Kwara State University Malete.

Research Objectives

The broad objective of this study is to investigate the uses and gratifications of *TikTok* among students of Kwara State University Malete. This study is also set to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. to identify the motivations behind the usage of *TikTok* by students of Kwara State University;
2. to determine the benefits derived from *TikTok* usage among students of Kwara State University; and
3. to determine the influence of *TikTok* adoption on the academic performance of students of Kwara State University.

Literature Review

Overview of Social Media

Social media has been described in various ways by different scholars. For instance, Fasuwon (2019) characterizes social media as a set of new information networks and technologies that facilitate effective communication and interaction among people. Obar and Wildman (2015) take it a step further, defining social media as digitally-interactive technologies that enable the creation and sharing of information, opinions, and various representations through online networks. It's clear that social media has dramatically transformed how we communicate and share information in the 21st century. The diverse interfaces of social media platforms allow for easy access to a wide range of information, including images, tables, and documents. Additionally, social media opens up avenues for individuals to express their views, share their experiences, and voice their opinions, while also gaining expertise and knowledge (Okoro & Nwafor, 2013).

Moreover, social media plays a vital role in helping us stay connected with family and friends, no matter where they are, and it keeps us updated on global happenings. Many people also turn to social media for entertainment or to quench their thirst for information (Oghenetaga & Ejedafiru, 2014). It's a universal platform for interaction that bridges distances. As noted by Uwazuruike (2020), social media is often referred to as online media or virtual worlds, where users can engage with one another. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, and Instagram are quicker and more interactive than traditional media like newspapers, TV, radio, and even the telephone, making it easier to gather, share, and assess information (Fasunwon, 2019). In Nigeria, some of the most popular social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, Telegram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and YouTube, among

others.

TikTok at a Glance

TikTok is a social media platform primarily focused on short-form videos, known for its algorithm-driven personalised feeds and user-generated content. As averred by Zaheer (2022), it allows users to create, edit, and share videos, often accompanied by music and effects. While it has a global reach, the platform is particularly popular with younger demographics. However, the popularity of *TikTok* as a social media platform beloved by the general public enables reaching a broader audience through its engaging interface. The global proliferation of TikTok has transformed it from merely an entertainment platform into a potential educational tool.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of the TikTok experience is found in what it doesn't require. Unlike Twitter, TikTok doesn't need a critical mass of famous or influential people to use it for its content to prove engaging. The short-video format grabs the user's attention at a more primal level, relying on visual novelty, or a clever interplay of music and action, or direct emotional expression, to generate its appeal (Zaheer, 2022). And, unlike Facebook, TikTok doesn't require that your friends already use the service for you to find it useful. Though there are some social features built into TikTok, they're not the main draw of the app. TikTok also doesn't rely on its users to manually share content with friends or followers to surface compelling offerings.

Review of Empirical Studies

The study under review is related to the works of Adebisi and Olayiwola (2019) on "Exploring the Uses and Gratifications of Social Media among University Undergraduates: Evidence" which sought to determine the kinds of social media sites and services undergraduates of a selected university used and the gratifications derived from its usage. The study employed Focus Group Discussion as a research design, while findings from the study revealed that the participants use not less than 2 and not more than 8 social networking sites. It was also found that peer influence is a major motivation among others, for participants adoption of some of the social networking sites, while Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat top the chart on the ranking of the most frequently used social networking sites. Finally, it was revealed that gratifications sought from social networking sites include information seeking, social interaction, self expression and self profiling. The study recommended probing of uses and gratifications of a specific social media platform among youths and undergraduates, while a quantitative research approach should also be explored.

In another study by Gladys, Wilson, Wachira,

Odek, Ochieng and Sang (2019) on "A Uses and Gratification Perspective on Social Network Sites among Private University Students in Kenya", with a focus on St. Paul's University sought to know which gratifications lead to high dependence in the use of a particular SNS, and how it enhances the sense of social presence among students. The study adopted survey method to randomly select 489 students of the selected private university. Findings by their study showed that students sought various gratifications from SNS which enables them to communicate, interact, socialize and connect with friends, and family. Further findings showed other gratifications sought which are to transact business, carry out work-related duties, enhance learning, entertain and enjoy the attributes of SNS. Thus, the study recommended that universities should channel the gratifications that students seek in social media to enhance learning activities.

In the same vein, Wardhani, Hesti and Dwityas (2019) did a study on "Uses and Gratifications of Social Media: Media Use among University Students in Jakarta" with a view to identify media uses, needs of news and news satisfaction on online media among students of the selected university. Moreover, quantitative research method was employed for the study, while findings showed that the selected students had access to news with hand phone or laptop at least once per two days, and the search duration for news reached an hour or two hours. It was also found that the most frequently read news topic was public life, while the information they got from it become discussion material with their friends. The study concluded that online media has become a source of news for students as it has increased their knowledge about latest development, and has improved their academic works towards a better writing competence.

Also, Ajimakin (2018) in her study on "Exploring the Uses and Gratification Theory on Facebook and Students: The Motivation for Use and its Effects on Undergraduate Students at the University of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa". The study was aimed at seeking opinions from students on what motivated them to use Facebook; and analyse the motivations in relationship to the four major constructs of the UGT. Furthermore, qualitative research method was adopted with the use of focus group discussion to sample the opinion of 24 undergraduate students within the ages of 18-24. Findings from the study revealed that the factors of peer-pressure, keeping in touch with friends, meeting new people, low cost of access and social surveillance were the key motivations for UKZN undergraduate students to adopt the use of Facebook as a social media platform. It was also discovered that personality difference among individuals is vital in the acceptance of Facebook as many students did not agreed to using it for building social relationship,

accessing information and getting entertained. The study concluded that Facebook has significant meaning in the everyday life of a student, as it helps them maintain a balanced life, in education, providing a better social interaction space, identity expression and seeking valuable information.

Moreover, Asogwa, Ojih and Onoja (2019) carried out a study on "Use of Social Networking Sites and Academic Performance among Students of Selected Tertiary Institutions in Kogi State". The study was aimed at assessing the use of social networking sites, with a focus on Facebook, its level of usage and possible effects on the academic performance of students of KSU, FPI and FCE. Survey research method was adopted to select a sample of 384 respondents using fitcher formula. Findings revealed amongst other things that, students use Facebook primarily to escape boredom, for communication; make new friends; update status; chats; post/comment on photos; and admonition. Further findings showed that majority of the students hardly ever visit the sites during class period, studying hours or miss classes because of Facebook; that Facebook usage does not have negative effects on the students' academic performance. The study recommended among other things that students should be encouraged to adequately utilized the potentials of Facebook for academic excellence, while lecturers should look out for and completely discourage the use of Facebook and other social networking sites gadgets during classes.

In another related study, Musa, Azmi and Ismail (2019) did a study on "Exploring the Uses and Gratifications Theory in the Use of Social Media among Students of Mass Communication in Nigeria". The study sought to explore the current functions of the uses and gratification theory in the students' use of social media. Moreover, survey and focus group discussion were used to elicit information from purposively selected final year students of mass communication, while findings revealed that majority of these students used social media for communication, collaboration, news sharing, research, expression of opinion, maintaining a connection, and making friends from other countries. It was also discovered that Facebook and Whatsapp were the most preferred social networks among them. Thus, the study concluded that social media platforms have revived the functions of the U&G theory and provided a plethora of media uses that the traditional media never could.

Therefore, the various studies above have established the fact that there are various motivations behind the usage of social media and social networking sites, especially among students, and in line with the tenets of the uses and gratifications theory which apposite that people derived certain gratifications from the media they actively choose based on their specific needs. Thus, social media and various social

networking sites were focused in the various studies above, with none of them specifically discussing *TikTok* as a social network, motivation behind its usage and adoption and the gratifications derived from its among users.

Theoretical Framework: Uses and Gratifications Theory

There are abundance of media effect theories to drive a study like of this nature, however, the uses and gratification theory was found suitable to justify the position established in this study. Moreover, the theory of Uses and Gratification was postulated by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch in 1974. This theory, according to Asemah, Nwammuo and Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017) believes that it is the users of a communication medium that determines its influence by the way they use it. The theory's proposition is that, media audience uses a particular media to gratify specific needs, as their choices are justified by gratification seeking behaviour such as social interaction, entertainment, personal, affective, escapism, among others.

Furthermore, people are exposed to different stations, sites, networks, stories, messages for different reasons. This type of selective exposure and attention is usually informed by audience's earlier ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and world views generally (Asemah, et al., 2017). Thus, the theory according to Papacharissi (2012) rests on the following core assumptions:

1. Individuals select media and contents to fulfill felt needs or wants. These needs are expressed for motives for adopting particular medium use, and are connected to the social and psychological makeup of the individual.
2. People are helpless victims of mass media produced by large companies; and individual differences perspective, which states that intelligence and self-esteem largely drive an individual's media choice.
3. The audience is active and its media use is goal-oriented.
4. The initiative in linking need gratification to a specific medium choice rests with the audience member.
5. The media compete with other resources for need satisfaction.
6. People have enough self-awareness of their media use, interests, and motives to be able to provide researchers with an accurate picture of that use.
7. Value judgments of media contents can only be assessed by the audience.

The uses and gratification theory claims that media do nothing to people, rather people do things with the media. As people seek out and use the media in different ways, there is no uniformity in the way

individuals perceive the media and how they use it, how long and for what reason they use the media. As a result, differences exist in the way individuals and groups react to media messages differently. The theory is concerned with what people do with the mass media, instead of what the mass media do to the people. The assumption is that the people influence the effects that mass media have on them because media audience are now active member rather than been passive.

Thus, the position of this theory lies on the position that people access the type of media that is capable to satisfy specific personal needs (Anaeto, Onabajo & Osifeso, 2009). This foregoing point to the fact that adoption of *TikTok* as a social media by students of the selected institution, is on the capacity of *TikTok* to meet their specific needs and goals. From this theory, it is evident that *TikTok* users beliefs and trust in it features is on the basis of different interests which include: social status, political interest, social class and gratifications derived.

Methodology

This study adopted survey research method. In using survey design, questionnaire was deployed to generate data for the study. Questions were drawn from the research objectives for the questionnaire to get responses from the respondents. The items of the questionnaire were built based on the existing literature reviewed. The instrument went through validity, while the internal consistency and reliability were established, as all items went through a reliability test through the use of Cronbach Alpha to pick constructs with higher values of alpha, desirable to measure the variables. Furthermore, all items have high alphas to measure the construct. The questionnaire was designed using online survey service (Google form) which had four sections. The first section consists of respondents demographic details, while the second section was designed to identify the various motivations behind the usage of *TikTok*. Also, the third section was designed to determine the benefits derived from *TikTok* usage, and the fourth section focused on influence of *TikTok* adoption on the academic performance of users who are mainly students of a selected university. Therefore, the population was purposively drawn from students (undergraduates) of Kwara State University Malete, Kwara State. Furthermore, the students were selected to represent the youthfolk, since it is adduced that *TikTok* is more popular among younger demographics. More so, these students are literate and prolific in the usage of *TikTok*. The total population of registered undergraduates of the institution stands at 38,542 (Source: Kwasu Academic Support services, 2024). Six faculties were purposively selected from the university to have a mix of them in both Sciences and Humanities, using stratified random sampling. According to the data

obtained from the Academic Planning unit of the institution, there are 9 faculties in the university with over 58 academic departments. Using stratified random sampling, 4 faculties were picked (management and social sciences = 6,630; Pure and Applied Sciences = 5,714; Law = 92; and Engineering = 1226) and the total population of the faculties equals 13,662, while the Krejcie and Morgan sampling size was drawn from the population and simple random sampling was used to arrive at 372 students as respondents. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed physically, while a total of 350 copies of questionnaire were correctly filled and found suitable for further analysis.

Data Analysis and Discussions

Data generated was analysed with SPSS using simple percentage tables, mean and standard deviation for easy understanding. The result of the reliability test is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Reliability Study

Variables	No of items	N	Alpha
Motivations for the usage of <i>TikTok</i>	09	50	.913
Benefits derived from <i>TikTok</i>	06	50	.780
<i>TikTok</i> adoption influence on academic performance	10	50	.840

Source: Field survey, 2025

The above result shows greater internal consistency of the items on the data instrument. This is in line with the positions of Cresswell (2013) and Bello (2015) that if a reliability test result is .7 and above, it means there is greater internal consistency of the items on the data instrument, and it is reliable for use.

Table 2: Demographic Details

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Gender	Gender
Male	166	47.4%
Female	184	52.6%
Total	350	100%
Age		
Less than 18	58	16.6%
18-23	226	64.6%
24-29	64	18.3%
30 & Above	2	0.5%
Total	350	100%
Level		
100 level	71	20.3%
200 level	119	34.0%
300 level	74	21.2%
400 level	82	23.4%
500 level	4	1.1%
Total	350	100%

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 2 shows the demographic information of the respondents. In this study the female respondents dominated the study, while those in the age range of between 18 and 23 have the majority. Furthermore, slight majority of the respondents are currently in the 200 level of their respective programmes.

Table 3: Motivations behind the usage of *TikTok*

Motivations	Level of Agreement%					
	1	2	3	4	M	SD
I am aware that I can gain popularity beyond my vicinity through the usage of <i>TikTok</i>	3.4	3.4	12.6	39.1	4.12	0.98
<i>TikTok</i> enables me to connect with people across the globe and encounter new faces	6.6	4.6	5.7	38.6	4.10	1.12
Through <i>TikTok</i> , I've been able to express my feelings in a realistic manner	3.1	3.4	8.9	46.6	4.13	0.93
I found comfort and relieve in the usage of <i>TikTok</i> compared with other social networks	5.1	5.7	13.1	44.9	3.91	1.06
Total					4.01	1.07

Scale: 1=Never, 2= Hardly Ever, 3=Sometimes, 4= Often

From the above table, majority of the respondents emphasised that they are often motivated to use *TikTok* because they can gain popularity beyond their vicinity (M=4.12, SD=0.98), while they also stressed that *TikTok* sometimes enable them to connect with people across the globe and as well encounter new faces (M=4.10, SD=1.12). Moreover, they maintained that they have sometimes been able to express their feelings in a realistic manner through *TikTok* (M=4.13, SD=0.93), while they often find comfort and relieve in the usage of *TikTok* compared with other social networks (M=3.91, SD=1.06).

Table 4: Benefits/Gratifications derived from *TikTok* usage

Benefits	Level of Agreement%					
	1	2	3	4	5	M SD
It helps me to reconnect with old friends and maintain long distance relationship	2.0	9.0	10.5	36.0	42.5	4.30 1.96
It offers support networks for me to share experiences and get support	4.0	11.0	6.5	44.5	34.0	4.11 1.43
It enables me to showcase myself and	8.0	8.5	3.0	39.0	41.5	3.98 1.18

activities involved in
to people across the
globe
Total

4.14 1.24

Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4= Agree,
5=Strongly Agree

Table 4 shows the various benefits and gratifications derived from *TikTok* usage among the respondents. Majority of the respondents strongly agreed that *TikTok* helps to reconnect with old friends and maintain long distance relationship (M= 4.30, SD=1.96), followed by agreement that *TikTok* offers support networks for them to share experiences and get supports (M= 4.11, SD= 1.43). Also, slight majority strongly agreed that *TikTok* enables them to showcase their activities to people across the world (M= 3.98, SD= 1.18).

Table 5: Influence of *TikTok* adoption on academic performance

	Level of Agreement%						
Influence	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
It complements my academic activities through educational updates	6.5	9.0	8.0	42.5	34.0	4.28	1.64
It offers the opportunity to relay my current mood with colleagues	1.5	6.5	1.5	42.0	48.5	4.17	1.99
It gives a sense of pleasure and adventure which is needed to escape from academic/mental stress	5.5	11.0	3.3	38.5	41.5	3.94	1.02
Total						4.11	1.14

Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4= Agree,
5=Strongly Agree

The table indicates that majority of the respondents agreed *TikTok* complements their academic activities in terms of educational contents and posts (M= 4.28, SD= 1.64). Also, the respondents strongly agreed that *TikTok* offers them opportunity to relay their current mood with colleagues (M= 4.17, SD= 1.99), while they also emphasised that *TikTok* gives them a sense of pleasure and adventure needed to escape academic stress (M= 3.94, SD=1.02).

Summary of Key Findings

Having analysed the various responses to the research questions in the data set, the following are the key findings:

1. The students are motivated to use *TikTok*

because they can gain popularity beyond their vicinity, as it enables them to connect with people across the globe and as well encounter new faces. Thus, this finding is in line with that of Subramanian (2017) that social networks today; has made it possible for people to assess information, post information, retrieve information and as well; connect with people from all works of life.

2. Moreover, the students have sometimes been able to express their feelings in a realistic manner through *TikTok* usage and adoption. Thus, this finding supported the views of Parvez, et al. (2019) which apposite that there is growing increase in the use of social media platforms, as users do various things with them from time to time.
3. The students derived various benefits and gratifications from *TikTok* usage; chiefly among them is its ability to assist in reconnecting with old friends, keep long distance relationships, offering of support networks as well as ability to showcase one's activities to people across the world. This finding is in tandem with the positions of Ademosu and Oyeleye (2019) which emphasised that social media accounts such as Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, Youtube, Whatsapp, Wechat are just few of the hundreds of applications that make participatory information, civic engagement, political participation, and social networking possible.
4. *TikTok* complements the students' academic activities through educational contents and posts they are exposed to, and as well gives them a sense of pleasure and adventure needed to escape academic stress. This finding reinforced the assumptions of the uses and gratifications theory which postulates that media audience actively select media contents based on their specific needs and the gratifications derived from its usage.

Conclusion

The rise of popular social media networks, especially *TikTok* in communicating and connecting with the vast audience/users globally cannot be overemphasised. *TikTok* as a social network has attracted millions of users worldwide. As a result of this, many users of *TikTok*, especially the younger populace are getting interested and involved in the various features it render, chiefly among them is its ability to allow the users to create a real-life video showcasing their activities and intentions, as well as using these video posts to connect with the global audience. Thus, users can upload photographs and videos, as well as post what they are doing at any given time. Thus, users of *TikTok* actually seeks various

gratifications from their usage, various gratifications they seek include: leisure and entertainment, unwind, escapism from stress and boredom, relationship building and connections, among others. Unfortunately, some of these benefits/gratifications may either have positive or negative influence on them, especially among students' users. Therefore, it is recommended that *TikTok* is continually used among students, especially for positivity in terms of connecting with people and engaging new faces, while students should exploit its video messaging feature to boost their confidence in the aspect of oral expressions. It is also expedient that students adopt *TikTok* usage as a recreational activity that can give them relief from academic stress.

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