



## To Assess the Effect of Tiktok on Youths' Behaviour in Molyko Community in Buea Municipality, Cameroon

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### Abstract

This study aimed to assess TikTok's effect on youths' Behaviour in the Molyko community in Buea Municipality, Cameroon. The study utilized a descriptive research design. The study used a survey method for data collection. Data was collected from individual youths who consented to participate in the study. The self-administered questionnaire method was used to collect data from the participants. Simple random sampling methods were used, and the sample size of 53 participants was for the study. Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis using SPSS version 21. The findings reveal that TikTok has a significant influence on youths' behavior. The strong positive correlation between patterns of TikTok usage and youths' behavior suggests that as TikTok usage increases, certain behaviors among youths are more likely to occur. Nevertheless, given the statistically significant association between TikTok and youths' Behaviour, policymakers should consider the impact of these platforms when formulating youth well-being and mental health policies. This can be done by incorporating digital literacy and media literacy programs into school curricula to equip youths with the skills to navigate social media platforms effectively. Teach them how to evaluate and interpret the content they encounter critically, identify potential risks, and develop strategies for responsible online participation.

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### 1. Introduction

The advent of the Internet in the 1990s led to significant developments in the world of communication, hence the introduction of social networking sites (SNSs) (Raza *et al.*, 2020) <sup>[21]</sup>. The coming into being of these sites revolutionized the world of communication, and today, we celebrate its improvements ranging from education to entertainment (Ali *et al.*, 2024) <sup>[2]</sup>. The evolution of the Internet has led to its usage as the best medium of communication, whereby two-thirds (2/3) of the Internet world's population visit social networking sites (SNSs), thus serving as communication and connection tools (Boyd & Ellison, 2007) <sup>[4]</sup>.

As social media continues to gain momentum and become an increasingly integral part of our daily lives, dating apps are considering targeting more individuals through social media advertising (Duguay & Gold-Apel, 2023) <sup>[7]</sup>. Platforms like TikTok have become great tools for advertisers to utilize as they could promote their apps and bring them more users. These platforms reformed how people communicate, share information, and buy products or services. However, targeting users through social media ads has proven much easier today as marketers can target a specific demographic (Boyd & Ellison, 2007) <sup>[4]</sup>.

Over the past decade, there has been a notable increase in the utilization of TikTok apps. In the world context, with 689 million

active monthly users, TikTok has attracted users from all over the globe, giving different types of businesses opportunities to collaborate with influencers in 155 countries (Charmaraman *et al.*, 2021) <sup>[5]</sup>. In the U.S. alone, TikTok has 100 million active monthly users, with 62% being between the ages of 10 and 29. Europe brings in another 100 million, 58.5% being over 18 years. Moreover, TikTok has more male usage globally, with 53% of users being male and 47% female (Omar & Dequan, 2020) <sup>[18]</sup>.

TikTok opens up a new avenue for businesses to collaborate with influencers that reach the brand's target audience (Guerrero, 2023; Teixeira *et al.*, 2023) <sup>[8]</sup>; in collaboration, an influencer typically makes content related to the business or promotes a specific product in exchange for compensation. If the influencer has a more modest following, companies can occasionally agree with the influencer and compensate them with free products (Haenlein *et al.*, 2020) <sup>[9]</sup>. However, experienced influencers typically expect monetary compensation and free products (Stubb *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[26]</sup>. Usually, the more significant the following an influencer has, the higher their rates are for collaborations (Levin & Opsahl, 2022) <sup>[11]</sup>.

In Cameroon, the impact of social media on youths has garnered significant attention in recent years. These countries have experienced a rapid increase in social media adoption, with platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp becoming immensely popular among youth (Zefack *et al.*, 2024; Ngange *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[28]</sup>. According to Panta (2024) <sup>[19]</sup>. TikTok has had significant repercussions on youths, including psychological effects, academic performance, social relationships, and cultural influences. Cultural norms, socio-economic conditions, and internet accessibility are crucial in shaping how social media impacts youths in developing countries (Magis-Weinberg *et al.*, 2021; Ali, 2011) <sup>[12]</sup>.

The implications of this paper rest on the fact that technology brought about social media, which is a valuable tool but is misused by today's youth. The two primary forms the youth use to access social media are cell phones and the Internet, which have significantly changed their lifestyle. With the current exposure and easy access that the youth can get out of these mediums, this study will establish its impacts on the youth. According to Ogaji *et al.* (2017) <sup>[17]</sup>, it is a waste of time, building shallow and harmful relationships and eventually causing, rather than alleviating, users' depression, loneliness, social isolation, and withdrawal, among others.

## 2. Literature Review

Sharabati *et al.* (2022) <sup>[23]</sup> state that the study aims to define factors that influence the continuous intention to use TikTok in Jordan and to what extent satisfaction with TikTok influences the continuous intention to use TikTok; the current research uses a quantitative cross-sectional approach; the results indicate that the following factors significantly affect satisfaction: self-expression, informativeness, a sense of belonging, and trendiness in TikTok. However, the following factors do not significantly affect satisfaction: sociability, affection in TikTok, and past time in TikTok.

Nugroho *et al.* (2023) <sup>[15]</sup> discovered the impact of the TikTok application on student behavior at MTSN Nurul Huda. The type of research used was quantitative, and the sample population was 87. Findings on the effect of Tiktok downloads from friends and others results: 22 students agreed, and 13 students disagreed.

Arifa (2023) <sup>[3]</sup> Tiktok and the deviation of student behavior from Ahmad Baradja's thought perspective, the study uses a qualitative paradigm with a content analysis design. This

research design is based on the study's purpose: to find out the TikTok content pattern made by UIN students and the Islamic behavior reflected in the content. 69% of accounts reported behaviors deviating from Baradja's Islamic behavioral theory indicators. Most of these deviations are exposing forbidden body parts according to Islam, having interactions with the opposite sexed person, losing one's shame (riya), and uttering inappropriate words.

Sherman *et al.* (2018) <sup>[24]</sup> this study examined the effect of Likes on youths' neural and behavioral responses to photographs. High school and college students ( $N = 61$ , ages 13–21) viewed their and others' Instagram photographs while undergoing functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI). Participants more often Liked photographs that appeared to have received many (vs. few) Likes. Popular photographs elicited more significant activity in multiple brain regions, including the nucleus accumbens (NAcc), a brain's reward circuitry hub. NAcc's responsibilities increased with age for high school students but not college students. When viewing images depicting risk-taking (vs. nonrisky photographs), high school students, but not college students, showed decreased activation of neural regions implicated in cognitive control

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Sampling method and sampling size

The study adopts a random sampling technique to select participants with specific characteristics and experiences that align with the study's objectives (Rai & Thapa, 2015) <sup>[20]</sup>. Participants for this study were selected from individuals involved in the TikTok platform in the Molyko community. This approach ensures that the sample represents diverse perspectives and experiences related to TikTok usage and youths' behavior (Lanneskog, 2023; McCashin & Murphy, 2023) <sup>[10]</sup>; criteria for participants' selection were established based on factors such as having installed the TikTok app on their electronic device and creating an account that is currently active.

### 3.2 Research design and method of data collection

The study utilized a quantitative approach to data analysis (Dismanb & Barliana, 2017; Sileyew, 2019; Sadan, 2017) <sup>[6]</sup>; a regression analysis was run to examine the effect of the TikTok platform on youth behavior in the study area. The data for the study were collected through the administration of questionnaires to key informants. The key informants included youths in the Molyko community in Buea Municipality, Cameroon. The questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative data on the TikTok platform's youth behavior. Different scales were used to ease data processing and analysis. The questionnaire was used because it was easy to apply as most respondents were well-educated and filled in the questions quickly or with little guidance. The completed questionnaires were collected from the key informants. The data collected included numerical responses from the closed-ended questions, which were analyzed quantitatively.

### 3.3 Technique of Data Analysis

#### 3.3.1 Model Specification

This study assesses the effect of TikTok on youths' behaviors in the Molyko community using regression analysis. The regression model used to run the analysis is specified in Equation (1).

$$\text{Youth Behaviour (YB)} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (\text{Tiktok}) + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

The measuring instruments used for the study were adapted from Nugroho *et al.* (2023) [16] to determine the impact of the TikTok application on student behavior at MTSN Nurul Huda. The effect of Tiktok on youths' behaviors in the Molyko community is therefore examined through a single regression model specified in Equation (2).

$$YB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Tiktok} + \epsilon \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

YB represents Youths behaviour.  $\beta_0$  represents the intercept.  $\beta_1 = \text{Tiktok}$  and  $\epsilon$  is the error term.

### 3.3.2 Estimation Technique

The ordinary Least Squares (OLS) technique was employed to estimate the coefficients ( $\beta$ ) and assess the significance of the relationship between TikTok and youth behavior. The regression analysis results provided insights into the effect of TikTok on youth behavior among individuals in the Molyko community Buea Municipality in Cameroon.

## 4. Results

**Table 1:** Distribution of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	15- >21 Years	13	24.5
	21->30 Years	24	45.3
	30->50 Years	16	30.2
	Total	53	100
Gender	Male	21	39.6
	Female	32	60.4
	Total	53	100.0
Education Level	Primary Level	1	1.9
	Secondary Level	6	11.3
	Higher Level	20	37.7
	Undergraduate	26	49.1
	Total	53	100

Source: Computed by Author (2024)

The finding revealed that a significant portion of the sample (24.5%) consists of teenagers and young adults between the ages of 15 and 21. This highlights TikTok's substantial influence on the younger population in the Molyko community of Buea Municipality in Cameroon. Additionally, a considerable proportion (45.3%) falls within the age range of 21 to 30, indicating that the TikTok app continues to impact young adults beyond their teenage years. Moreover, the presence of respondents between the ages of 30 and 50 (30.2%) suggests that TikTok's influence extends to individuals in their thirties and forties. The finding further revealed that females are slightly more represented in the study sample, accounting for 60.4% of the respondents. This shows that exploring the impact of the TikTok platform on girls and young women in the Molyko community of Buea Municipality in Cameroon is particularly relevant and may reveal unique insights into their experiences and perspectives.

The finding further shows that most respondents (49.1%) are undergraduate students, indicating that the study revealed that university students are more attached to social media, with the majority being at the degree level. Moreover, a significant proportion of the participants (37.7%) have a higher level of education, suggesting that their experiences and perceptions of social media may be influenced by their educational background. The presence of respondents with primary and secondary education levels (1.9% and 11.3%, respectively) also adds diversity to the sample, allowing for a broader understanding of how the TikTok platform impacts youth behavior with varying educational backgrounds.

**Table 2:** Distribution according to Respondents' access to the Internet

Internet Access	Frequency	Percentage %
Multiple times a day	33	62.3
Once a day	10	18.9
Rarely or never	10	18.9
Total	53	100.0

Source: Computed by Author (2024)

This section presents the internet usage patterns among the respondents in the study sample. The finding revealed that the majority of the participants (62.3%) have frequent access to the Internet, indicating that they are likely to be regular Internet users. On the other hand, a significant portion of the respondents (18.9%) reported accessing the Internet once a day. This group may still have regular access to the Internet, but they do not rely heavily on it for their daily activities. Interestingly, 18.9% of the respondents mentioned that they rarely or never access the Internet. This group may have limited access to technology or may not be inclined to use the Internet frequently.

**Table 2:** The impact of TikTok on youths' Behaviour

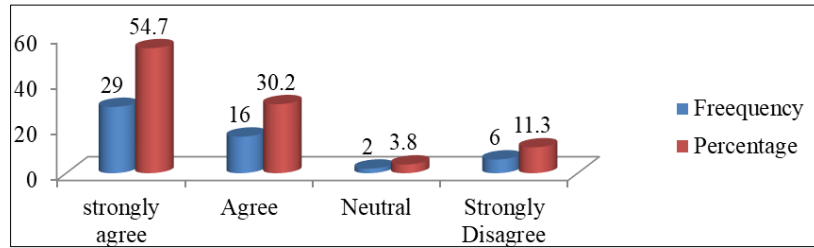
Questions	Yes	No	Total
Difficult to manage your time due to excessive TikTok usage	79.2%	20.8%	100%
Pressured to maintain a particular image or lifestyle on excessive TikTok usage	60.4%	39.6%	100%
Feelings of anxiety or low self-esteem due to TikTok usage	69.8%	30.2%	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

According to Table 2 findings, teenagers in the Molyko community in Buea Municipality, Cameroon, have seen a notable change in behavior and general well-being due to using TikTok. Because they used TikTok excessively, most respondents (79.2%) said they had trouble managing their time, suggesting that the app could be highly addictive and interfere with everyday activities. Furthermore, more than 60% of participants experienced pressure to uphold a specific image or way of life on TikTok, which could result in feelings of inferiority and social comparison. In addition, almost 70% of participants reported feeling anxious or having low self-esteem, which may be related to their repeated exposure to idealized content and their desire to imitate influencers on the network. The statistical findings indicate that in order to mitigate the detrimental effects of youth in this community

using TikTok excessively, interventions and awareness-raising campaigns are required.

**4.1. TikTok influenced your code of dressing**



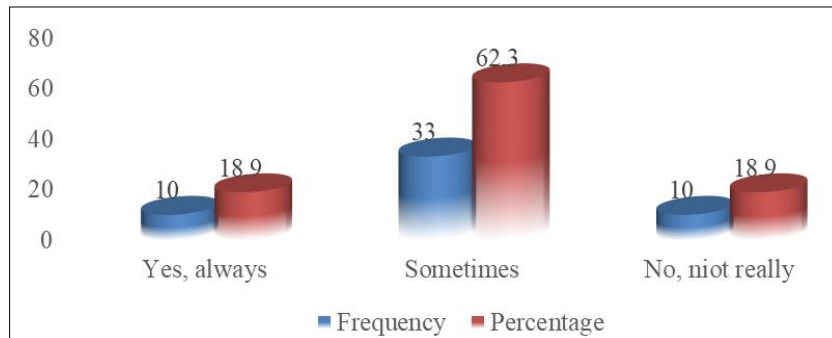
Source: Fieldwork, 2024

**Fig 1:** TikTok, fashion choices and trends

The finding in Figure 1 revealed that a significant proportion of the respondents (85% - strongly agree and agree combined) reported comparing their lives to the carefully curated images on Instagram to some extent. This suggests that Instagram's influence on individuals' self-perception and comparison to idealized representations is prevalent among the surveyed population. However, it is worth noting that a

small percentage of respondents (15% - neutral and strongly disagree combined) do not engage in this behavior or do not feel influenced by the curated images on Instagram.

**4.2. The pressure to create trends to gain popularity on TikTok**



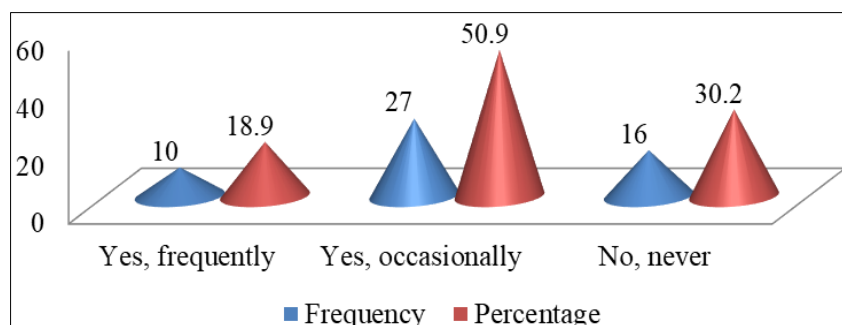
Source: Fieldwork, 2024

**Fig 2:** Pressured to create content on TikTok to gain popularity

The findings in Figure 2 indicate that most respondents (81.1%—yes, consistently, and yes, sometimes combined) reported feeling pressured to some extent to create content on TikTok to gain popularity. This suggests a significant influence of popularity-seeking behavior on the platform.

However, it is worth noting that a notable percentage of respondents (18.9%) do not feel this pressure and are not driven by the need for popularity on TikTok.

**4.3. The experienced cyberbullying on TikTok by youths**



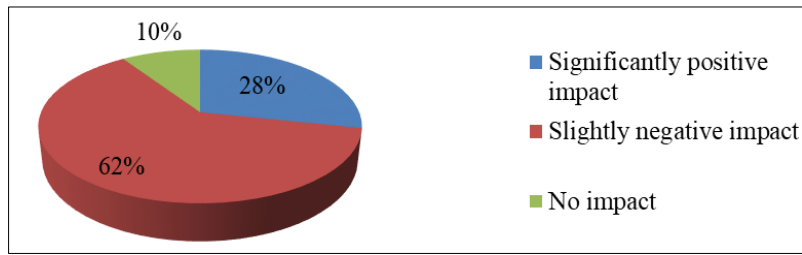
Source: Fieldwork, 2024

**Fig 3:** Experienced cyberbullying or pessimistic comments on TikTok

The result in Figure 3 revealed that a significant proportion of the respondents (69.8%—yes, frequently and yes, occasionally combined) have experienced cyberbullying or negative comments on TikTok to some extent. This suggests

that online negativity and potentially harmful behavior on the platform are prevalent. However, it is worth noting that a notable percentage of respondents (30.2%) have not encountered cyberbullying or negative comments on TikTok.

#### 4.4 TikTok has affected the self-esteem and body image of youths



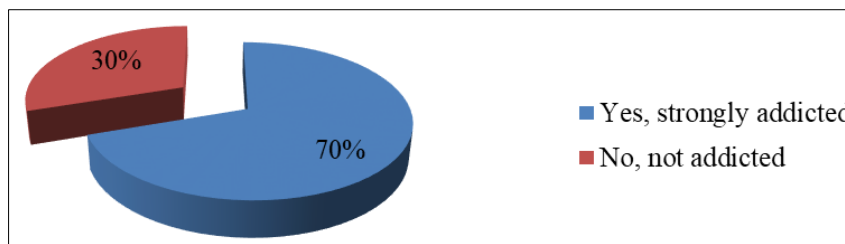
Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Fig 4: TikTok affected your self-esteem and body image

The finding in Figure 4 shows that most respondents (90.6%—significantly positive impact and slightly negative impact combined) have experienced some degree of impact on their self-esteem and body image due to TikTok. This suggests that TikTok can positively and negatively affect users' perceptions of themselves. However, it is worth noting

that a small percentage of respondents (9.4%) did not feel any impact on their self-esteem and body image due to using TikTok.

#### 4.5. Addiction to using TikTok



Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Fig 5: Feel addicted to using TikTok

The finding in Figure 5 revealed that most respondents (79.2%) reported experiencing difficulties managing their time due to excessive TikTok usage. This suggests that TikTok influences their daily routines and time allocation, potentially leading to challenges in effectively managing their time. However, it is worth noting that a minority of respondents (20.8%) do not perceive difficulties in time management despite their excessive use of TikTok.

#### 4.6. Presentation of regression results

The study uses linear regression analysis, and the results are interpreted according to the values of  $t$ ,  $R^2$ , and  $F$  at the 95% significance level. The regression analysis results are shown in Table 3 below, illustrating the first hypotheses of the study. In order to conclude the research hypothesis, inferential analysis was conducted, tested single relationships i.e., the impact of TikTok on youths' behavior as shown below:

Table 3: Result of the Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.699 <sup>a</sup>	.489	.479	.41249

a. Predictors: (Constant), Tiktok Instagram

The regression model used to analyze the relationship between the predictors (TikTok) and the dependent variable shows a moderate positive correlation ( $R = 0.699$ ). The

predictors can explain approximately 48.9% of the dependent variable's variance ( $R\text{ Square} = 0.489$ ). These results suggest that both TikTok significantly impact the dependent variable.

Table 4: Result of the ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.291	1	8.291	48.728	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	8.678	51	.170		
	Total	16.969	52			

a. Dependent Variable: Youths Behaviour  
b. Predictors: (Constant), Tiktok

The ANOVA table shows that the regression model is statistically significant ( $F = 48.728$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that the predictors (TikTok) significantly contribute to explaining the variance in the dependent variable (Youth behavior). The regression model explains significant variability in the

dependent variable, as evidenced by the sum of squares for the regression (8.291) compared to the residual sum of squares (8.678). The mean Square for the regression is 8.291, indicating that, on average, the model explains a substantial amount of variability in the dependent variable.

**Table 5:** Regression Analysis

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	-.090	.221		.405	.687
	Tiktok	.872	.125	.699	6.981	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Youths behaviour

The coefficient for the predictor Tiktok is 0.872, indicating that a one-unit increase in TikTok is associated with a 0.872-unit increase in the dependent variable (Youth behavior). This coefficient is statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that the combined effect of TikTok is significantly different from zero. This implies that for policy recommendation, the influence of social media on youths, TikTok, and Instagram should be given special consideration when making policy.

### 5. Conclusion and Policy Implication

Based on the results, it can be concluded that TikTok significantly influences youths' behavior. The strong positive correlation between patterns of TikTok usage and youths' behavior suggests that as TikTok usage increases, certain behaviors among youths are more likely to occur. However, it is important to note that correlation does not imply causation, meaning that social media usage may not directly cause these behaviors. Other factors and variables also influence TikTok platform usage, youths' behavior, access to the Internet, educational background, peer pressure, and the availability of these gadgets to log in to this TikTok app, seeking polarity and fame among friends. Nevertheless, given the statistically significant association between TikTok and youths' Behaviour, policymakers must consider the impact of these platforms when formulating policies related to youth well-being and mental health. This can be done by incorporating digital literacy and media literacy programs into school curricula to equip youths with the skills to navigate social media platforms effectively. Teach them how to evaluate and interpret the content they encounter critically, identify potential risks, and develop strategies for responsible online participation.

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