

# Public Perceptions toward TikTok : A Critical Analysis

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## Abstract

*This study looks at how people feel about TikTok, especially how they use it, how it affects their mental health, and how it affects their professional growth. TikTok is a popular social media site that is mostly known for its entertainment value. It has become a global phenomenon, especially among young*

*people. A quantitative methodology employing a descriptive research design was utilized, gathering data from 300 participants aged 18 and above. The results show that the main reason people used TikTok was for entertainment, with 81.5% of users saying it was fun. Other reasons, like making friends, being creative, and learning, were seen as less important. Even though many people liked TikTok, 78% of those who answered said they didn't think it helped them learn work-related skills. Also, 32% of users said that the platform could lead to addictive behaviors, even though it didn't have a completely bad effect on mental health. The study emphasizes TikTok's primary function as a source of entertainment, while also expressing apprehensions regarding its impact on productivity and mental health. Subsequent investigations ought to examine the enhanced application of TikTok in educational, corporate, and mental health domains.*

**Keywords:** entertainment, social media, young people, addictive behaviors, impact

## Introduction

The objective of this study is to explore public perceptions about TikTok. Akhtar et al.(2020); Bhandari and Bimo (2020); Anderson (2020) and Zulli and Zulli (2020) TikTok emphasizes the creation and sharing of content through imitation and replication, rather than focusing on messaging and following other users, which is typical of different social media platforms. Darvin (2020) states TikTok, one of the most frequently downloaded applications globally, is widely recognized for its lip-sync videos and meme remixes, where users creatively combine music and sound clips. Anderson (2020) and Darvin (2020) state that the social media platform TikTok allows users to create and share short videos with effect filters, comments, and shares to others' posts. Jain and Arakkal (2022) state that TikTok is a social media platform designed for a few seconds of video, allowing users to create, share, and remix content, often with musical elements. Its highly sophisticated algorithm curates a personalized experience by presenting videos tailored to individual preferences based on interactions such as likes, shares, and comments. Kovacs et al. ( 2022) found that TikTok effectively captures users' attention, which provides a competitive advantage in today's market. The study also showed that TikTok has many participants who have replaced time spent on other social media platforms while

extending screen time for others. Zhang (2024) states that TikTok is a widely used social networking platform launched in 2016 by ByteDance. The app has since expanded its reach, becoming available in over 150 markets worldwide. Battib ( 2023) states that TikTok boasts a global user base exceeding one billion active users. It is particularly popular among young individuals worldwide, with 39% of its users aged 18 to 24, the group often recognized as early adopters of emerging social media platforms. Zong (2023) affirms that TikTok videos provide an engaging alternative to traditional formats, effectively stimulating public discourse and social mobilization during key events. The platform plays an important role in shaping public options, broadening online discourse, and amplifying societal influence. It also highlights underlying social issues, fostering attention and critical discussions. Tech targe (2024) mentions that TikTok allows video recording, editing, filters, effects, sound voice-overs, live streaming, duets, stitching, video replies, hashtag challenges, and text-only posts. According to Hase et al (2023) and Schellewald (2023), TikTok has become widely popular and extensively embraced by young individuals and Generation Z, establishing itself as one of the leading applications.

## **Literature Review**

Khlaif and Salha (2021) emphasize that TikTok, one of the most widely downloaded platforms for short-format videos, offers valuable opportunities for educational content creators to deliver concise and informative material engagingly and enjoyably. Omar and Dequan (2020) claim that users primarily engaged with the TikTok platform as a source of entertainment and enjoyment. Shah et al. ( 2022) stated that 60.40% of respondents primarily viewed TikTok as a platform for entertainment. Additionally, 54.2% expressed positive perceptions of their self-esteem and self-image due to using TikTok, while only 2.2% rated it as a tool for educational purposes. Teo et al.( 2023) revealed that the visual appeal and practicality of products featured on TikTok enhance users' perceptions of enjoyment and usefulness. Consequently, these factors positively impact impulsive buying behavior, making TikTok users more inclined to make spontaneous purchases when they find the content enjoyable and beneficial. Handarani et al (2022) affirm that the findings indicate that TikTok serves as a powerful platform for influencing the market of their products; however, it is crucial for their influencers to be mindful of privacy constraints and to aim at setting a positive example for their audience. Pratami and Syafryadin (2023) mention results indicated that students agree on using TikTok as a learning tool. The TikTok application allows students to enhance their innovative thinking while learning English, allowing them to express their creativity via short videos. Sohid et al.( 2024) comprehensively analyzed TikTok's impact on consumers' intentions to make online purchases. The study reveals that TikTok significantly influences consumer behavior and decision-making processes. Ramsden and Talbon (2024) examine TikTok's impact on students' health and well-being. The findings indicated that although TikTok provided temporary relief from academic stress, it also promoted addictive tendencies and fostered upward social comparisons. Zun et al. (2024) explored the influence of TikTok engagement on university students' self-perceived cognitive and psychological understanding. The results revealed that shifts in identity altitude, emotional perception, and civil engagement are the most significant factors influencing youth's self-perceptions. Nurul et al.(2024) explored how TikTok plays a crucial role in shaping consumer decision-making by leveraging content created by influencers and the platform's distinctive features, such as including interactive elements and short videos. TikTok is a social media platform for entertainment, relationship building, and business promotion. It has a big effect on

how products and services are marketed and advertised. Ziegler (2024) examines perceptions of TikTok in the United States. The study focused on TikTok's ties to the People's Republic of China and how both presidents Donald Trump and Joseph Biden saw the app as a possible threat to the safety of U.S. citizens' data and national security. This issue relates to the broader views of China as an authoritarian competitor to the democratic United States. This perspective has spread into the online realm and has ignited worries about "technology-fueled authoritarianism. Beeres et al. (2021) revealed that frequent social media use could indicate potential mental health problems in adolescents. The study showed that individuals who engage more with social media are often more aware of the increased risk of experiencing higher levels of psychological distress. The study by Ryan et al. (2023) offers thorough insight into college students' views on TikTok, emphasizing its attractive features and the difficulties it poses for users. Ade and Sumarian (2023), in their research regarding user perceptions of the TikTok Shop application, emphasize that traders typically react positively to the platform. The results show that the app's easy-to-use interface greatly improves the user experience, making it easy and convenient for sellers to use. Additionally, the availability of supportive technical assistance contributes to a positive perception among traders, enabling them to navigate and utilize the platform effectively. These factors collectively underscore TikTok Shop's potential as a viable and efficient tool for facilitating online sales. Abhi et al. (2023) in their research results, indicated that students have a positive attitude toward TikTok as a learning tool for improving English vocabulary. Due to the variety of vocabulary levels available on TikTok, it significantly helps students to improve their English. Klug et al. (2023) the research results indicated that TikTok videos facilitated learning and parasocial interactions by employing recognizable audiovisual styles. (Dunn (2025, January, 4) says that TikTok is the fifth most popular social media site in the world. In 2022, it was the most downloaded entertainment app in the world, with 672 million downloads. This was much more than Netflix, which had 165 million downloads. By 2023, TikTok had 1.5 billion users, which was a 16% increase from the year before. The majority of people who use the platform are young. About 25% are between the ages of 10 and 19, 22.4% are between the ages of 20 and 29, 21.7% are between the ages of 30 and 39, and 20.3% are between the ages of 40 and 49. People over the age of 50 make up the last 10%.

## **Methodology**

This study employed a quantitative research methodology featuring a descriptive design to comprehensively analyze public perceptions of TikTok. From December 2024 to March 2025 in Nepal, a survey was conducted to collect quantitative data from individuals aged 18 and older who were familiar with TikTok, regardless of their level of engagement. A purposive sampling method was utilized to select 300 participants, ensuring diversity in age, gender, and TikTok usage. Primary data were collected via an online interview and a structured questionnaire comprising closed-ended and binary questions. A series of strict steps were taken to make sure that the research tool was reliable and valid. Two academic experts looked over the questionnaire in detail at first. Their helpful criticism was very important in making the questionnaire better, especially when it came to making the items clearer, more relevant, and better organized. This expert evaluation significantly contributed to the determination of content validity, confirming that the items accurately reflected the fundamental constructs being analyzed, such as TikTok usage patterns, professional implications, mental health considerations, and privacy concerns. A pilot test was executed with a group of 10 participants

who met the study's inclusion criteria. The pilot phase aimed to evaluate the questionnaire's clarity, reliability, and practical applicability. The insights gained from this preliminary testing guided critical adjustments, enhancing the instrument's overall effectiveness and confirming its suitability for extensive data collection. The final research tool had parts on demographics, how people used it, how it affected their jobs and careers, their mental health, and their privacy. We used percentages to look at the data we had collected.

## Results and Discussion

This study examined and interpreted data concerning individuals' perceptions of TikTok, emphasizing factors such as usage frequency, entertainment value, privacy concerns, and societal impact.

### Demographic Analysis

Demographics delineate populations and their attributes. Demographic analysis examines a population according to gender, age, and sex.

**Table 1**  
*Demographic Information of Respondents*

Gender	Percent
Male	52
Female	48
Age Group	Percent
18-24	39.3
25-34	37
35-44	12
45-54	3.6
Above 55	8.1

*Note: Survey 2025*

Table 1 presents demographic data that reveals a nearly balanced gender distribution, with 52% of respondents identifying as male and 48% as female. Regarding age distribution, there was a strong prevalence of younger individuals: 39.3% of respondents were aged 18-24, and 37% were aged 25-34. Those groups comprised 76.3% of the sample, indicating that the population was predominantly youth-oriented. This reflects the views of individuals in their educational and early career phases. The 35-44 age group accounts for 12% of respondents, while middle-aged individuals (aged 45-54) and older adults (aged 55 and above) comprised only 3.6% and 8.1%, respectively. According to Liu (2022), results indicated that 77% of TikTok users were under 30 years old, 15% were between 30 and 40 years old, and 8% were aged 41 and above. Ma (2024) the result indicated that younger TikTok influencers were more popular than older TikTok influencers. Dunn (2025, January,4) The platform's user demographics are largely composed of younger individuals, with 25% aged 10–19, followed closely by 22.4% aged

20–29, 21.7% aged 30–39, and 20.3% aged 40–49. The remaining 10% consists of users aged 50 and older.

This underscores a notable underrepresentation of older demographics. Thus, this composition may restrict the study's relevance to more developed populations. Nonetheless, it offers significant insights into the trends and behaviors characteristic of younger demographics, rendering it pertinent for comprehending this group.

### Used of TikTok

Demographics describe populations and their characteristics. Demographic analysis studies a population based on gender, age, and sex.

**Table 2**  
*Purpose of Using TikTok by Respondents*

Purpose of using Tik Tok	Percent
Entertainment and fun	81.5
Keeping up with friends and trends	6.5
Social connection	4.5
Creativity and expression	3.5
Learning and inspiration	2.5
Promoting business and monetization	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

*Note: Field survey 2025*

Table 2 shows the different reasons why people use TikTok. The main goal for 81.5% of users was to have fun and be entertained. This suggests that people mostly saw TikTok as a place to have fun, which fits with its reputation for offering short, interesting videos. Only 6.5% of users say they use TikTok to stay in touch with friends and trends. This shows that socializing and staying up-to-date were not the main reasons for some people to use the app. Additionally, 4.5% of users use the platform to connect with others, which shows that TikTok is good for making friends online. 3.5% of users said that creativity and self-expression were important to them, which shows that only a small number of people see the platform as a way to express themselves creatively. The least common reasons given were learning and inspiration (2.5%) and promoting business and making money (1.5%). This data shows that the main reason people use the platform is for entertainment, while educational content and business promotion are less important.

In conclusion, the findings indicate that TikTok's primary function is entertainment, whereas other purposes, such as social connection, creativity, and business promotion, are relatively less significant. This shows that TikTok can serve many purposes, but its main purpose is to provide entertainment and fun. Subsequent research could explore the ramifications of these findings, especially concerning how content creators and businesses may modify their strategies to effectively engage TikTok's entertainment-oriented user demographic.

**Table 3***The Impact of TikTok on Professional Development and Productivity*

	Responses %	
	Yes	No
1. Do you believe TikTok helps you learn new skills beneficial to your work?	22 %	78%
2. Do you think using TikTok during work hours affects your productivity?	73%	27%
3. Do you find TikTok helpful for professional networking?	15%	85%
4. Do you feel TikTok provides information that enhances your work performance?	19%	81%

*Note: Field survey 2025*

Table 3 displays data obtained from respondents, indicating a largely unfavorable perception of TikTok's influence on professional matters. The majority of participants (78%) did not perceive TikTok as a tool for acquiring work-related skills, whereas only 22% considered it advantageous in this regard. A large number of people who answered (73%) think that using TikTok at work makes them less productive, which means that the app is a major distraction. When asked if TikTok was useful for professional networking, only 15% of respondents said it was, which shows that the platform is not widely used for making professional connections. A large majority (88%) disagreed with the idea that TikTok provides information that helps people do their jobs better. Only 19% thought it was a good place to find useful content for improving their skills. The data suggests that TikTok was not regarded as a beneficial resource for professional development, with numerous participants considering it a distraction that impeded their workplace productivity.

**Table 4***The Impact of TikTok on Mental Health*

	Responses %	
	Yes	No
1. Does using TikTok increase negative mental health issues in users?	19 %	81%
2. Does using TikTok positively impact the user's mental health?	60%	40 %
3. Does TikTok provide information and messages related to mental health?	14%	86 %
4. Does using TikTok lead to addictive behavior in users?	32%	68%

*Note: Field survey 2025*

Table 4 shows data from people who answered questions about how TikTok affects mental health in different ways. Most of the people who answered (81%) didn't think that using TikTok made mental health problems worse, but 19% did. However, some studies suggest that excessive

social media use, including TikTok, could lead to anxiety, depression, and body image issues (Galanis et al., 2024; Rajaei & Abraham, 2024; Wicaksono et al., 2024). Adolescents who used social media more frequently report experiencing more mental health symptoms; however, there was no evidence of a long-term link between increased social media use and mental health issues (Beeres et al., 2021). TikTok had both positive and negative impacts on users' mental health (Ramsden & Talbon, 2024). A notable 32% of respondents concurred that TikTok fosters addictive behavior, whereas 68% disagreed. Research corroborates this apprehension, as TikTok influences the brain by altering the reward system, Default Mode Network (DMN), ventral tegmental area (VTA), amygdala, and hippocampus, resulting in diminished focus, impulsivity in decision-making, and addiction (Wicaksono et al., 2024). TikTok leads to addictive behavior (Wu, 2023).

## Conclusion

This study underscores TikTok's significant role as a platform primarily employed for entertainment, particularly among younger demographics. The demographic study shows that most TikTok users are between the ages of 18 and 34. The results show that TikTok's main goal is to entertain, while other goals, like making friends, being creative, and promoting businesses, are less important. Additionally, TikTok's impact on career advancement and productivity appears to be largely negative. Most of the people who answered don't think it's a good tool for learning new skills or making connections. A prevailing consensus asserts that engaging with TikTok during work hours reduces productivity. The results give a more complex view of mental health. Most users don't think that using TikTok is bad for their mental health, but many do see that it can lead to addictive behavior. This study emphasizes TikTok's primary function as a source of entertainment rather than a vehicle for professional advancement or mental health support. Subsequent research may examine strategies to enhance TikTok's effectiveness in education, commerce, and mental health, especially given its significant attraction to younger demographics.

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