Investigating TikTok Ramifications on Pakistani Zoomers

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Abstract

Background: TikTok is presently one of the most popular and widely used social networking applications that Zoomers is addicted to, which is causing a lot of social and psychological issues among Zoomers. This study aimed to determine the relationship between TikTok usage and social and psychological ramifications among Pakistani Zoomers.

Methods: A cross-sectional study method was used. A total of 384 Pakistanis born during the years (1997- 2006) were targeted via an online 18-item questionnaire. A convenient sampling technique was used, and the data was analyzed using innovative Partial Least Squares (PLS) software. Structural equation modelling and correlation were used to analyze the data.

Results: The study's results indicated a strong positive relationship between TikTok usage and social and psychological ramifications among Pakistani Zoomers. The results' significant P-values and beta values were positive and less than 0.05.

Conclusions: The study concluded that TikTok usage had resulted in cyberbullying, security threats and harassment issues, and also it had caused depression, insomnia, inattention and anxiety issues among the users. Henceforth, zoomers should be aware, guided, counselled and trained to overcome the adverse ramifications of TikTok. Policies to prevent cyberbullying and harassment should be planned, informed and implemented to promote peace and security.

Keywords: Anxiety, Cyberbullying, Depression, Harassment, Inattention, Threats, Tiktok.

1. INTRODUCTION

Zoomers or Generation Z are the people born during the years 1997-2012 (Dimock, 2019). They are the generation to have grown up in the ostensibly sophisticated digital age. Every aspect of zoomer's existence has depended on the internet, making their dependence on it eternally unparalleled. As technology develops quickly, people become increasingly dependent on social media and addicted to it. Even at social events, people spend more time on social media, and some use it to make money. Social media significantly impacts every person's life since it offers convenience and comfort, but it also has some detrimental effects on the mind and body. With excessive internet use and exposure to millions of entertaining applications, people are prone to anxiety, depression, overstretching one's online persona at the expense of one's life, health or other relationships, impulsive, savage purchasing, and social isolation. Zoomers is accustomed to using various social networking apps, and TikTok is currently one of the most well-known and addictive apps. TikTok is causing psychological and addiction issues among the young generation (Gulzar et al., 2024; Cuofano, 2020).

According to Meola (2020), TikTok is a platform for creating brief video clips that last 15 seconds or less and play continuously unless the user chooses to create a new one. Additionally, it offers the ability to make a 60-second video and add music, filters, stickers, and other editing features like cropping and add-ons. Most of its users are young adults between 20 years and 29 years. As a result, TikTok has a relatively small market share due to its limited positioning. It is not easy to generate a usually significant profit because many of the clients in this age group do not have a typical source of income. Moreover, TikTok is presently causing a variety of disputes, such as the dominant complex, the sensation of inadequacy, and the complex of attractiveness. Those who are motivated by TikTok recordings and those who create them are impacted by TikTok addictions. Globally, most individuals are regular users of TikTok, and Zoomer is among its frequent, active, and hooked users.

Consequently, it adversely impacts a person's life and physical and mental health, as the "fear of missing out" is why people participate in or play a part in social media (Hyacinth, 2021; Feng et al., 2019; Hermann, 2019). In addition to psychological ramifications, TikTok is also causing social effects like increased cases of cyber bullying, harassment, security threats, spreading of false information and compromised moral and ethical values (Rahman et al. 2022; Saleem et al., 2021). Therefore, considering the available literature, the study aimed to investigate the following objectives:

O1: To investigate the social ramifications of TikTok on Pakistani Zoomers.
O2: To investigate the psychological ramifications of TikTok on Pakistani Zoomers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Uses and Gratification Theory

According to Katz et al. (1973), the gratifications theory is a concept that aims to clarify the causes of people's media consumption and the underlying motives that propel such activity. To summarize, the idea identifies the aspects of media that positively impact the consumer's mental state. Technological advancements and lifestyle shifts have

changed everyone's perception of seeking gratification. Nowadays, people use social media as a primary interaction source and spend hours on different social media applications. Social gratification is achieved by successfully and efficiently communicating globally via different social media applications (Malloli, 2020). Hellemans et al. (2021) have investigated the several forms of satisfaction that TikTok provides, such as its capacity to relieve boredom, give distraction, and supply amusement. Some research has looked at the fundamental causes of TikTok users' widespread propensity to create, share, and repost content.

2.2 Social Ramifications of TikTok

Rahman et al. (2022) discovered that young people's social media usage might harm them by encouraging them to embrace attitudes that deviate from their cultural and religious standards. In addition, cyberbullying is widespread throughout Pakistani universities among young adults. However, language proficiency, socioeconomic status, and internet access play minor and vital roles in causing an impact on it (Saleem et al., 2021). Gröber et al. (2024) found that content creators are at more risk than the average Internet user. According to the findings, attacks that occur online often have an impact offline, particularly for gender minorities. More dangers are involved in producing information on delicate subjects, including politics, religion, and human rights. Considering the literature, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H1: There is a significant relationship between TikTok usage and social ramifications among Pakistani Zoomers.

2.3 Psychological Ramifications of TikTok

Jabeen et al. (2024) cited that Pakistani youth are using TikTok excessively, which exposes users to unachievable beauty standards and encourages self-comparison with others; it has been associated with increased anxiety, despair, and negative body image. Another key factor is the fear of missing out, which is why the Pakistani young generation gets addicted to social media (Zahoor, 2022). According to Safdar et al. (2024), TikTok usage is causing insomnia, phobia and physical health issues in Pakistani young females. In addition, Karim et al. (2025) suggested that TikTok is one of the most commonly used social media applications among Pakistani young adults, and it is causing inattention, insomnia, and phobia among users. Considering the literature, the following hypothesis is suggested: H2: There is a significant relationship between TikTok usage and psychological ramifications among Pakistani Zoomers.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Target Population

Zoomers (i.e. People born during the years 1997-2006) were targeted from all over Pakistan.

3.2 Sample Size

The sample size is calculated using Open epi version 3.0, considering 1 million populations, with a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence interval. The sample size was 384.

3.3 Sampling Technique

Respondents who were easily reachable through online surveys were analyzed using the convenient sampling technique.

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3.4 Data Collection Tool

Data was collected online through a self-administered questionnaire, which was made on Google Forms. Reliability of the questionnaire was analyzed through cronbach's alpha and was found to be reliable as the values for TikTok usage was 0.791, social ramifications was 0.801, and psychological ramifications was 0.723. The questionnaire was created on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4) and strongly agree (5). Demographic information such as age, sex, and the duration of application use and genre were included in the first section, and the variable-related 18-item questions were addressed in the second part.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using Smart PLS; various statistical techniques were used to analyze the data. The demographics were analyzed using descriptive statistics and frequencies. Moreover, Cronbach's alpha was used to examine reliability. Correlation and structural equation modelling were used for in-depth analysis. The conceptual model of the investigation is developed below:
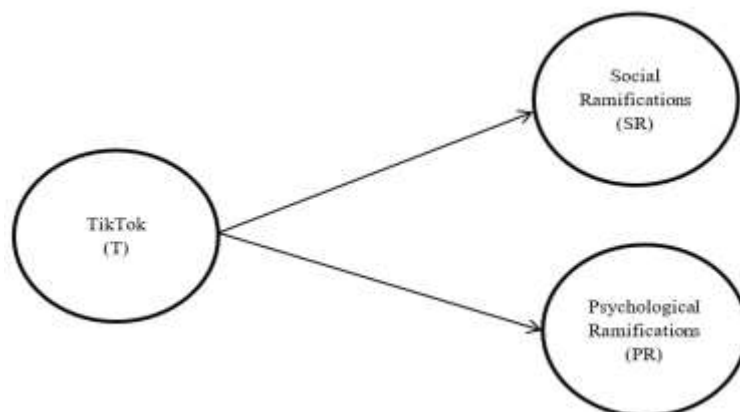

Fig.1 Conceptual Model

4. RESULTS

The study's population was 42.6% female and 57.4% male, according to the respondents' gender analysis. One hundred ninety-eight zoomers are between the ages of 19 and 20. Sixty people between the ages of 21 and 22 responded. Additionally, 50 and 4 participants were in the 25–26 and 27–28 age groups, while 72 Zoomers were in the 23–24 age group. When asked how often they use TikTok, 342 respondents said they use it for three to four hours daily. However, eight users use TikTok for five to six hours a day, four participants use it for seven to eight hours a day, and thirty Zoomers use it for one to two hours daily. After asking participants about the type of

videos, it was determined that 150 of them liked duets. 110 individuals used to view videos in the comedy/dance genre. Eighty participants enjoy observing trends and challenges. Additionally, only four people use TikTok for business-related goals, whereas forty Zoomers enjoy watching videos about beauty.

Table 1. Demographic Information

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	153	39.84%
Female	231	60.15%
Age		
19-20	198	51.56%
21-22	60	15.62%
23-24	72	18.75%
25-26	50	13.02%
27-28	4	1.04%
Daily TikTok Usage		
1-2 hours	30	7.81%
3-4 hours	342	89.06%
5-6 hours	8	2.08%
7-8 hours	4	1.04%
Genre		
Comedy/Dance	110	28.64%
Duet	150	39.06%
Challenges/trends	80	20.83%
Beauty	40	10.41%
Business	4	1.04%

4.1 Construct Reliability and Validity

Kalkbrenner (2023) cited Cronbach's alpha, which gauges how closely all the elements are connected and is used to determine internal consistency. A criterion of 0.71-0.91 was established for the items' high internal consistency (Mata-López et al., 2021). Table 02 concluded that the AVE for TikTok was found to be 0.817; for social ramifications, it was 0.765; similarly, for psychological ramifications, it was 0.780. The table further interpreted Cronbach's alpha values, which were found to be suitable for TikTok usage (0.791), social ramifications (0.801), and psychological ramifications (0.723).

Table 2. Reliability and Validity Note: T=TikTok, SR= Social Ramification, PR=Psychological Ramification

Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (Rho_A)	Composite Reliability (Rho_C)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

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T	0.791	0.890	0.906	0.817
SR	0.801	0.706	0.832	0.765
PR	0.723	0.823	0.809	0.780

4.2 Fornell-Larcker criterion

The Fornell-Larcker criteria stated that the primary value of AVE should be greater than its correlation with other factors. As a result, each variable's variance shared with the indicator block is more than the variance split by the different variables. The correlation is shown under the primary value of AVE, which is found inside diagonal cells. Therefore, there is discriminant validity if the top number (the prime value of the AVE) in any factor column is greater than the number (correlation) below. Every component has greater central AVE values than the ones below, as Table 03 demonstrates. The outcome showed that the study had complied with Fornell Larcker's requirements.

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion
Note: *T=TikTok, SR= Social Ramification, PR=Psychological Ramification*

Constructs	T	SR	PR
T	0.810		
SR	0.651	0.778	
PR	0.543	0.704	0.823

4.3 Cross Loadings

Cross-loading or cross-linking is a suitable loading signal for the intended parameters and additional aspects that are not explicitly designed to be easily measured. The loading factor determinant is >0.70, yet it might still fall between 0.50 and 0.70. On the other hand, cross-loading should be determined by 0.30 or 0.40. Cross-loading is also indicated as an alternative to AVE, and although if the cross-loading value is not acceptable, it is nonetheless allowed since the AVE value fits the requirements (Hair et al., 2021; Rasoolimanesh, 2022; Becker et al., 2023). Table 04 found that every cross-loading value complied with the specified standards.

Table 4. Cross-Loadings
Note: *T=TikTok, SR= Social Ramification, PR=Psychological Ramification*

	Tiktok	Social Ramification	Psychological Ramification
T1	0.813	0.270	0.318
T2	0.746	0.314	0.384
T3	0.713	0.392	0.234
T4	0.799	0.415	0.282
T5	0.726	0.376	0.323
T6	0.777	0.337	0.266

SR1	0.417	0.828	0.285
SR2	0.348	0.706	0.257
SR3	0.367	0.838	0.209
SR4	0.413	0.851	0.296
SR5	0.303	0.771	0.398
SR6	0.308	0.762	0.435
PR1	0.206	0.216	0.797
PR2	0.360	0.282	0.711
PR3	0.250	0.299	0.725
PR4	0.438	0.425	0.837
PR5	0.348	0.399	0.735
PR6	0.415	0.219	0.851

4.4 R Square

The value of the contribution between the variables is known as the R Square value. The R square value thresholds could be described as follows: a value is considered strong if its R square value is more than 0.67 (>0.67). Nonetheless, it is considered moderate if the R square value exceeds 0.33 (>0.33). Conversely, a variable is considered weak if its value is more significant than 0.19 (>0.19) (Henseler et al. 2015). According to the standard criteria mentioned, the R values for social ramifications (0.401) and psychological ramifications (0.381) were moderate.
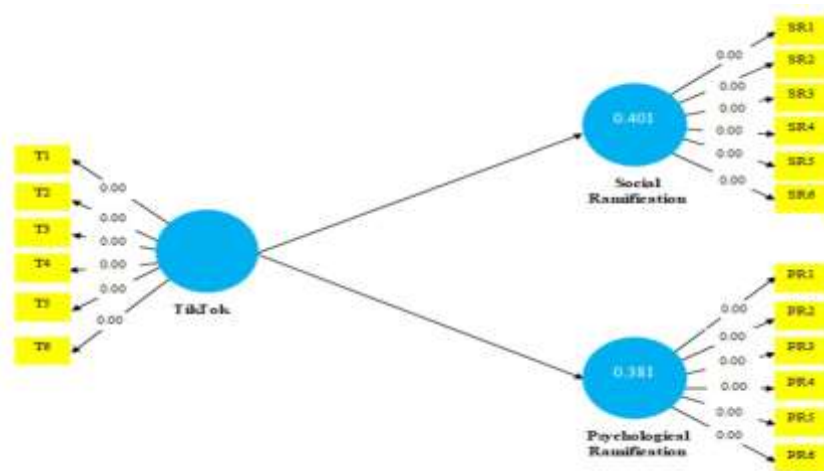

Fig.2 Path Analysis

4.5 SRMR

According to Pavlov (2021), a value less than 0.08 is considered a good fit for the model, and the SRMR value of the study was found to be 0.04.

Table 5. SRMR

SRMR	0.04

4.6 Total Effect

The degree to which the data supports the hypothesis is indicated by the p-value. Some suggest reducing the significance threshold to 0.005, while others advise dropping the p-value. A threshold of 0.005 may reduce research and raise sample sizes and expenses. According to Monti et al. (2024), authors ought to present actual p values rather than merely "p < 0.05" or "p ≥ 0.05." A significant positive relationship was found between TikTok usage and social ramifications, as the p-value was 0.00. Another noteworthy positive relationship was found between tiktok usage and psychological ramifications, as the p-value was 0.00.

Table 6. Total Effects

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
T -> SR	0.411	0.417	0.069	5.980	0.000*
T -> PR	0.123	0.124	0.059	2.061	0.001*

*Note: T=TikTok, SR= Social Ramification, PR= Psychological Ramification *Significant at ≤ 0.05 levels*

4.7 Hypothesis Analysis

According to Table 07, the positive beta values and t values for both hypotheses indicate a positive direct relationship between independent and dependent variables. In addition, the sig values for both hypotheses were less than 0.05; hence, both hypotheses were accepted.

Table 7. Hypothesis Assessment Summary

Hypothesis	Summary	Beta Value	Sig. Value	T Value	Empirical Results	Study Results
T → SR	TikTok usage leads to social ramifications among Pakistani Zoomers.	0.769	0.000	5.980	Positive effect	Accepted
T → PR	TikTok usage leads to psychological ramifications among Pakistani Zoomers.	0.878	0.001	2.061	Positive effect	Accepted

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5. DISCUSSION

The study used a cross-sectional study to determine the relationship between tiktok usage and social and psychological ramifications among Pakistani Zoomers. The study analyzed the impact of one independent variable (TikTok) on two dependent variables (social and psychological ramifications). Hence, two hypotheses were proposed for the study. A total of 384 Pakistani Zoomers participated in the study.

H1: There is a significant relationship between TikTok usage and social ramifications among Pakistani Zoomers
The results of hypothesis H1 suggested that regular and frequent use of TikTok had been causing social harm to Pakistani Zoomers. Despite the negative social ramifications of TikTok, zoomers continue to utilize it, especially university students who have faced cyberbullying mostly, while content creators or users have faced security threats physically. The app is increasingly being used as a platform for harassment and extortion, which is causing security issues for content creators (Gröber, 2024; Butt, 2019).

H2: There is a significant relationship between TikTok usage and psychological ramifications among Pakistani Zoomers
Moreover, the results of the second hypothesis, H2, concluded that TikTok usage leads to psychological ramifications among Pakistani Zoomers. People are getting addicted to it, which has been causing users to suffer greatly, and some users have even lost their lives. However, some acknowledged that TikTok watchers and users were sad, lonely, and isolated individuals who used the app to enjoy and lessen their worry and despair. As a result, the hypothesis was accepted and found to be accurate by the majority of the study's participants, who agreed that TikTok has been spreading psychological impacts among users as compared to the studies by Pandya and Lodha (2021) and Basu (2020) people who use social media for more than seven hours a day experience depression and are more likely to be receiving treatment and medication for behavioural and cognitive problems than those who use it for just an hour. Teenagers who use social media for more than three hours a day are more likely to have mental health issues, including anxiety, despair, anger, and loneliness. According to the study, 6600 US individuals between 12 and 15 were examined to determine how much time they spend on social media daily and whether they are at risk for cognitive health problems. The findings showed a link between increased social media use and a greater incidence of mental health problems.

6. CONCLUSION

According to the study's findings, Pakistani Zoomers' use of TikTok has serious social and psychological ramifications. Socially, the site has led to a rise in cyberbullying, harassment, and security risks, especially for content creators and college students. Users keep using the program despite these dangers, frequently ignoring its negative consequences. Many people have been exploited online, which raises questions about digital safety. In terms of psychology, excessive TikTok use has resulted in despair, anxiety, loneliness, and addiction. Long-term usage of the site has been connected to declining mental health, even though some users utilize it to reduce stress temporarily. Many people who use social media excessively suffer from increased mental anguish, mood fluctuations, and behavioural abnormalities. Negative psychological impacts have been exacerbated by social

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isolation brought on by the growing reliance on digital contacts. TikTok use has been linked to adverse social and psychological effects, which highlights the urgent need for awareness, digital literacy, and possible solutions to reduce these hazards. Overusing screens and reliance on social media can have long-term effects, especially for young people. Despite being a platform for creativity and fun, TikTok use that is uncontrolled and prolonged can have a detrimental impact on social connections and mental health.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION AND DECLARATIONS

Conception or Design: Syeda Zeerak, Syed Zain Hassan

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Analysis or Interpretation of Data: Fasiha Shah, Syed Arfa Fatima

Manuscript Writing & Approval: Syeda Zeerak, Syed Zain Hassan, All Authors

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Furthermore, this research did not involve the use of animals, plants, or any biological specimens requiring ethical approval. Therefore, ethical clearance from an institutional review board, prior informed consent (PIC) from respondents, or animal/plant welfare approvals are not applicable to this study.

The author(s) affirm full compliance with international ethical standards for research and publication.

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