

The Journal of Social Media for Learning

Social Media as a Pedagogical Tool in Class: Tiktok Case Study.

Sarah Seif

The American University in Cairo, New Cairo, Egypt.

Abstract

Social media has been an ever-growing medium with the expansion of multiple platforms and user adoption around the globe. According to Hootsuite's Annual Digital Data Report for the year 2022, there are 4.62 billion users of social media across the globe, with a 10.1% increase from the subsequent year. This paper aims to explore Tiktok platform as a pedagogical tool for learning in the classroom for University Students in an "Online Behavior Class" at a University in Egypt. Results show that Gen-Z University students indeed prefer integrating social media to their educational experience, and even prefer expressing through short video content over other assessment alternatives. Beyond that, short video content creation allowed them to express more creatively, and also reflecting on the class curriculum through using short video content production, was a more effective method of material reflection than other reflective methods.

Keywords

Social Media, Tiktok, Reflection, Case Study

Social Media as a Pedagogical Tool in Class: Tiktok Case Study.

Introduction

Social media has been an ever-growing medium with the expansion of multiple platforms and user adoption around the globe. According to Hootsuite's Annual Digital Data Report for the year 2022, there are 4.62 billion users of social media across the globe, with a 10.1% increase from the subsequent year. The report also sheds light on social media time usage per day in Egypt, which has an average of 3 hours and 13 minutes of daily social media consumption for people aging from 16 to 64 years.

The report states that the top reasons why people globally use social media are:

- Keeping in touch with friends and family
- Filling Spare time
- Reading News & Finding Content about diverse topics

Not only that, but the report has an exclusive analysis on Egypt's social media usage, stating that 51% of the population is on social media, with TikTok coming 5th place as the most social media used platform, right after Instagram and WhatsApp with a total usage of more than 50% adoption out of all social media users in Egypt.

Having stated the above, it is vital to explore the impact of such social media high adoption rates and usage, particularly amongst youth since social media has become an integral part of their everyday life, source of information and influence on their culture and behavior.

Since social media is a main source of time and knowledge consumption by youth, the researcher aimed at developing a case study on how integrating TikTok as a pedagogical tool for Integrated Marketing Communication Students impacted their learning experience as well as enhance their creative expression of the knowledge gained in class or any other discipline the students were interested in creating Edutainment content for their audiences and followers about.

The case study was implemented on two classes, with 42 students taking the "Online Behavior and Web Analytics" course at the American University in Cairo in the Journalism & Mass Communication Department, over the course of 8-weeks, with weekly videos to be created and produced by the students.

For the first three weeks and the three videos created, content was created around reflecting on the curriculum and material discussed in class, where the students reflected on class material using short-video content as a means of expression and reflection. For the following five weeks, the students were required to create original educational content around any topic they were interested in, providing content that educates audiences around certain topics and is entertaining as well; producing Edu-tainment content using the skillset gained in class on how to create social media content and for students to become content creators. Lastly, the student's final presentation was to create a 3-minute TikTok video to showcase their final projects using short-video content.

Background

Social media networks are currently shifting towards the direction of critical short video creation, as they allow users to express and share memorable moments of their day and share it with their audiences using their mobile phones (Zhang et al., 2019). There are various social media applications that allow users to use short video as a means of showcasing new ideas, moments, content, entertainment or educational to be shared for a short period of time ranging from 16 seconds to three-minutes. Where this as a concept is coherent with the principles of micro-learning in academia.

One of the most used platforms for short-video content creation, is TikTok. Since its launch in 2017, it has been the fastest growing social media application. TikTok was the most downloaded application in 2020 with the rise of the pandemic, and on average users spend almost 41 minutes using the application daily. Most users that use TikTok are aged between the 14 and 30, making the application an educational tool (Yang, et al., 2019). Studies conclude that there are three categories of TikTok users, the content creators, the content browsers, and learner- creators (Qivang & Jung, 2019).

TikTok generally attracts young users born after 1996, referred to as Gen- Z, where more than 60% of the users of TikTok are Generation-Z (WallRoom Media 2022). The application not only encourages users to consume content or create entertaining content such as dance and since but also, allows youth to produce creative educational content as well.

As TikTok is a short-video only platform, its interface makes it easy for users to continuously create and share as well (Syah et al., 2020). TikTok content is used nowadays for Edu-tainment, meaning to share creative content as well as teach audiences about various topics or interests such as cooking, travel, lifestyle, fashion, sports, drawing, and more. There are multiple research studies and case studies on how such short video creation on TikTok has been used by educators in schools as well as higher education institutions to teach a variety of topics (Yang, 2020). Not only that, but some of the high traction hashtags on TikTok such as the #ProfessorsOfTikTok hashtag, gaining more than 170M views until this very day, where professors share educational content to audiences in their subjects. On the contrary, another hashtag that has been rising, is the #FinalProject hashtag, used by students to use TikTok as part of their final project submissions. This hashtag has attracted more than 10M views.

Methodology

The method used for this study was a case study approach entailing all 42 students enrolled in two of the researchers' classes at the Journalism and Mass Communication Department at the American University in Cairo, with 43 participants for the application of TikTok for the class, yet the questionnaire only received 42 responses (N=42). Participants were in their third or fourth year of study (juniors or seniors) with age ranging between 18-25, based in Cairo, Egypt.

Participants were asked to create new accounts for the course, as not to interfere with their personal accounts.

- Total content created by every participant was 9 short videos.
- Three content videos reflective on the class material.
- Five content videos on creating educational content in any discipline the participants preferred.
- One final project presentation video done as a group for presenting their final project outcome.

Following the application of creating content by the students and participants a digital qualitative survey questionnaire was distributed amongst the participants for exploring the following research areas:

- Age & Gender
- Determining Prior Engagement with TikTok Application Before using it in class
- Effectiveness of Using Short-video content as a reflection tool
- Interest of Using Short Video as an assessment tool
- Interest of Using Short Video as an assessment tool in comparison to other assessment methods
- Assessing interest of trying new creative expression tools
- Evaluation of Interest and ways of using TikTok further beyond class assignments
- General Feedback on their experience

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval has been received for this research.

Main Findings

Findings were assessed through a questionnaire (Appendix 1), and the results mostly were in the favor of using TikTok as a pedagogical tool and for creative expression for students.

Main Results

- 45.2% of participants had prior experience in using the TikTok app before class.
- 81% of participants stated that reflecting on class material via creating short videos helped them understand the material more.
- 67.1% rated a 4 & 5 on a Likert scale (5 being the highest) for preference of being assessed via short-video content over other assessment methods.
- 83% of respondents preferred being assessed via short-video content creation over other assessment methods.
- 78.6 % of the participants highlighted that such an assignment increased their creative communication and expression.
- 81% of participants enjoyed creating educational content around topics they were personally interested in.
- 76.2% now use TikTok even more after using it for class.
- 88.1% of respondents agreed that having a video-content final presentation as a complimentary activity to public speaking presentations inspired more creativity to the content being presented

The last question in the survey asked the respondents to describe their TikTok experience in 1-3 words (Appendix 2), the recurrent words were: “Interesting, Exciting, Fun, New, Useful, beneficial & Creative.”

Conclusion

As the findings have shown, that Gen-Z University students indeed prefer integrating social media to their educational experience, and even prefer expressing through short video content over other assessment alternatives.

As well as that, short video content creation allowed them to express more creatively, and also reflecting on the class curriculum through using short video content production, was a more effective method of material reflection than other reflective methods.

To conclude, Short social media videos on TikTok are changing the way people are taught and how they learn. With the ever-rising popularity and future educational potential of TikTok, educators should consider methods for integrating the creation of TikTok videos into pedagogical approaches for their class.

References

- Qiyang, Z., & Jung, H. (2019). Learning and sharing creative skills with short videos: A case study of user behavior in tiktok and bilibili. *International association of societies of design research (IASDR), design revolution.*
- Syah, R. J., Nurjanah, S., & Mayu, V. P. A. (2020). Tikio (TikTok App Educational Video) Based on the Character Education of Newton's Laws Concepts Preferred to Learning for Generation Z. *Pancaran Pendidikan, 9(4)*. doi:10.25037/pancaran.
- WallRoom Media (2022). TikTok Statistics. Retrieved from: <https://wallaroomedia.com/blog/social-media/tiktok-statistics/> (Last accessed 13th December 2022).
- Yang, H. (2020). Secondary-school Students' Perspectives of Utilizing Tik Tok for English learning in and beyond the EFL classroom. In *2020 3rd International Conference on Education Technology and Social Science (ETSS 2020)* (pp. 163-183). Retrieved from: <https://clausiuspress.com/conferences/AETP/ETSS%202020/G7605.pdf> (Last accessed 13th December 2022).
- Yang, S., Zhao, Y., & Ma, Y. (2019, July). Analysis of the reasons and development of short video application-Taking Tik Tok as an example. In *Proceedings of the 2019 9th International Conference on Information and Social Science (ICISS 2019), Manila, Philippines* (pp. 12-14). doi:10.25236/iciss.2019.062
- Zhang, X., Wu, Y., & Liu, S. (2019). Exploring short-form video application addiction: Socio-technical and attachment perspectives. *Telematics and Informatics, 42*, 101243. doi:10.1016/j.tele.2019.101243

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Survey Questionnaire

- 1) **Age**
 - 18-21
 - 21-25

- 2) **Gender**
 - Female
 - Male

- 3) **Was it the first time you used Tiktok for this class?**
 - Yes
 - No

- 4) **Did Using Tiktok in the first 3 weeks (reflecting on class material) help you understand the material more?**
 - Yes
 - No

- 5) **Was using Tiktok to reflect on class material more interesting than written assignments or examinations?**
 - Yes
 - No

- 6) **Did using Tiktok for all weeks help you express and communicate in more expressive ways and help you never tried before?**
 - Yes
 - No

- 7) **Did you enjoy creating content about things you love (your passions) and sharing it , with video?**
 - Yes
 - No

- 8) **Do you find video content sharing on the things you love inspiring to others?**
 - Yes
 - No

- 9) **Would you like to have more Tiktok video assignments as an alternative to writing assignments or examinations for reflection?**
 - Yes
 - No

10) Did having a video-content final presentation as a complimentary activity to public speaking presentations inspire more creativity to the content youre presenting?

- Yes
- No

11) Do you use Tiktok more often now after the class?

- Yes
- No

12) What do you use it for?

- Content Consumption
- Content Creation

13) If you use it more for content creation, what kind of content do you create?

- Entertainment: Lip Sync / Dancing & Singing
- Edutainment Content (Entertaining yet educational content)

14) Describe your class Tiktok experience in 1-3 words or a sentence (Open Ended Short Question)

Appendix 2: Responses to Question 14 On Describing the TikTok Experience

Describe your class Tiktok experience in 1-3 words or a sentence

42 responses

Good
Different and creative
It was challenging at the first but then i was actually enjoying it.
Challenging but beneficial, never though I'd be creating tik tok videos alone beyond the class.
Honestly, I think its an embarrassing assignment since I do not know how to create useful content on TikTok but i will still do my best before the semester ends to create some TikTok videos
Amusing, interesting, and educational
Hard but fun
Entertaining-creative-new
Funny
It was challenging, thought-provoking, and taught me how to be more brief in delivering content
Challenging but nice
Hard , beneficial
Useful Fun Interesting
different, interesting, creative
Loved it it is truly enjoying and it is a creative idea to use it in class.
Fun, new, entertaining
Creative experience from which i learned a new platform.
Hardt at the beginning and then very enjoyable
Fun, thoughtful, and helpful
Super fun and enlightening
fun, different, worth it!
A fun upgraded interesting concept to step out from the ordinary learning environment.
It was really
I lose time on it, just keep watching the videos and can't stop, however I don't really fancy the content on it
Engaging, flexible, integrating creativity, betsha3'al dema3' in a way
Embrace my creativity

Fun, new, creative
Interesting, fun, challenging
It was perfect experience
Best experience
It started off being very interesting but then trying to remember to post Tiktoks was difficult
Very exciting and effective
Creating something out of my comfort zone
Fun De stressing Beneficial
Interesting, creativity booster, motivation
experiential, eye opening & experimental.
It needs creativity, persistence and passion which is somehow harder than i expected.
fun- up to date - beneficial
Challenging, not all of us are content creators or enjoy creating content so that was the iffy part of it however it did expand my creative boundaries and made me step out of comfort zone a bit
Pretty good
It helped me get encouraged to share content online, since I'm not on social media a lot I always hesitated to start posting freely, so I found it nice to put out content that I was passionate about.