



## ASSESSMENT ON THE USE OF YOUTUBE, INSTAGRAM AND TIKTOK AFFECT STUDY HABIT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG UNDERGRADUATES STUDENTS OF ABUBAKAR TAFAWA BALEWA UNIVERSITY, BAUCHI

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**ABSTRACT.** *This study examined the use of YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok affect study habit and academic performance among undergraduate students of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi. The study adopted the survey method using a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms. A total of 387 responses were collected and analyzed using bar and pie charts to represent demographic data and patterns of usage. Findings revealed that while all three platforms are actively used, YouTube emerged as the most preferred, especially for educational and informational purposes. Instagram and TikTok were more associated with entertainment and social interaction. However, YouTube showed the most positive influence on academic performance, whereas Instagram and TikTok were more likely to cause distractions. The study concludes that students of ATBU, Bauchi utilized each platform to satisfy different needs ranging from learning and relaxation to self-expression and trend participation. The study recommends that students adopt more intentional use of social media, especially platforms like YouTube, to support academic goals, while being mindful of the distractions that may arise from overuse of entertainment-based platforms.*

**Keywords:** Gratification, Instagram, Students, Tiktok, Undergraduate, Uses, Youtube

**ABSTRAK.** Studi ini meneliti pengaruh penggunaan YouTube, Instagram, dan TikTok terhadap kebiasaan belajar dan prestasi akademik di kalangan mahasiswa S1 Universitas Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (ATBU), Bauchi. Studi ini menggunakan metode survei dengan kuesioner terstruktur yang diberikan melalui Google Forms. Sebanyak 387 tanggapan dikumpulkan dan dianalisis menggunakan grafik batang dan grafik lingkaran untuk mewakili data demografis dan pola penggunaan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun ketiga platform tersebut aktif digunakan, YouTube muncul sebagai platform yang paling disukai, terutama untuk tujuan pendidikan dan informasi. Instagram dan TikTok lebih terkait dengan hiburan dan interaksi sosial. Namun, YouTube menunjukkan pengaruh paling positif terhadap prestasi akademik, sedangkan Instagram dan TikTok lebih cenderung menyebabkan gangguan. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa mahasiswa ATBU, Bauchi menggunakan setiap platform untuk memenuhi kebutuhan yang berbeda, mulai dari belajar dan relaksasi hingga ekspresi diri dan partisipasi dalam tren. Studi ini merekomendasikan agar mahasiswa mengadopsi penggunaan media sosial yang lebih terencana, terutama platform seperti YouTube, untuk mendukung tujuan akademik, sambil tetap waspada terhadap gangguan yang mungkin timbul dari penggunaan berlebihan platform berbasis hiburan.

**Kata Kunci:** Kepuasan, Instagram, Mahasiswa, TikTok, Sarjana, Penggunaan, YouTube

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## INTRODUCTION

Communication is a crucial part of society. The evolution of communication has brought about the various means humans use to communicate, one of which is social media. “Modern technology has helped in connecting people, it has brought about the emergence of an open social platform in the form of social media” (Subhair *et al.*, 2019 p 53). Social media have revolutionized the way people communicate, share information, consume content. From its early days as simple online forums and networking sites, it has evolved into multifaceted ecosystem encompassing platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Tiktok. These platforms have transformed users from passive recipients of information into active participants who create and disseminate content. Social media platforms like Tiktok and Instagram have become prominent mediums for communication, interaction and expression. Social media have become the most widely known means for maintenance of relationship and reaching out to a large heterogeneous audience.

In the past, media was seen to have a strong direct influence on people. Theories like the Stimulus-Response theory suggest that media content were like injections that has the same effect on everyone leading them to act in similar ways. Overtime, researchers realized that people are not just passive consumers and the effect of media towards its users varies. This was when theories like the Uses and Gratifications theory emerged, proposing that individuals actively choose media that meet their specific needs. Uses and Gratifications (U&G) is a media theory that explains how people use social media not the other way round, where the audience is seen as passive. The theory presents audience as active users of media product, It was first introduced by Herta Herzog in the 1940’s through her research on why audiences listened to radio serials, and was later formalized and popularized by Elihu Katz, Jat G. Blumer and Michael Gurevitch in the 1970’s (Herzog, 1944; Katz, Blumer, & Gurevitch, 1973). It describes the reasoning behind a person’s selection and use of media to satisfy specific needs (Bhatiasevi, 2024). Observation has shown that the most used social media platform among undergraduates is Tiktok and the purpose of it is for entertainment and creating trending contents. This study aims at looking into media platforms like YouTube, Instagram and Tiktok and finding out the most preferred social media platforms between them and the reasons for such preference among students of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU).



ATBU is a Federal University of Technology named after Nigeria's first Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. The school was established in 1980 and has over 30 academic departments, and six faculties with an undergraduate student population of over 10,000 (ATBU Student Portal, 2025).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Brief History of Social Media***

The emergence of social media has transformed communication in societies, evolving from early online communication services like CompuServe to interactive platforms such as Six Degrees in 1997 which allows users to create profiles and connect with friends. In the early 2000s, platforms like MySpace and Facebook introduced more interactive features and expanding social networking. Subsequently, platforms like Linked-in, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest were created. The widespread adoption of smartphones and high-speed internet in the 2010s made social media accessible virtually anywhere.

YouTube was founded in 2005 by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim, exemplifies this evolution. Initially a platform for sharing home videos, it expanded to include diverse content. Google acquired YouTube in 2006 and it now operates as one of Google's subsidiaries setting the stage for further growth and innovation in online video sharing. YouTube allows users to upload, view, rate, share, comment on and subscribe to videos. The platform features a wide range of user-generated and corporate media, including video clips, TV show clips, music videos, short films, audio recordings, movie trailers, live streams, and educational content. YouTube's slogan, "Broadcast yourself", highlights its foundational premise of enabling anyone to operate a personal broadcasting station. Following YouTube's success, other video-sharing platforms emerged, including Instagram and TikTok.

Instagram, created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, launched in 2010, originally a photo sharing app for mobile devices, Systrom and Krieger later shifted their focus to creating a platform centred around visual content introducing features like stories and direct messaging, diversifying its content offerings beyond its initial focus and contributing to the broader landscape of social media engagement. Instagram quickly gained traction, amassing one million users within the first three months. It was purchased by Facebook in 2012.



TikTok origins trace back to 2014 with the launch Musical.ly by Alex Zhu and Luyu Yang, which later acquired and merged with Douyin to create TikTok in 2018 by Byte Dance. TikTok's "For You Page" (FYP) uses AI to deliver personalized content streams to users, contributing to its rapid growth. By late 2018, TikTok became one of the most downloaded apps worldwide.

The study seeks to examine the most preferred among Youtube, Instagram and Tiktok and the purpose to which they are used for. Even though, social media platforms can be used for learning, studies have shown that undergraduates in Nigerian universities use social media particularly Instagram for interaction, recreation, and communication rather than for academic purposes (Ezeah *et al.*, 2013). The study conducted by Subhair *et al* 2019, show that the social media platform mostly used are Whatsapp, Facebook and YouTube which are mainly used to socialize, inform and for academic purposes. These studies have not concentrated on platforms like Tiktok and YouTube which have revolutionized content creation and social media environment. Therefore, this study seeks to find out how undergraduates in North-east region of Nigeria use YouTube, Instagram and Tiktok and which of them, do they use the most and also whether the usage patterns differ among undergraduates in the region.

### ***Concept of Social Media***

Berthon *et al.*,(2012) defined online networking platforms as "the perception of technological advancement with respect to both hardware and software platform for affordable content creation, engagement and compatibility among internet utilizers." This definition sheds light on people who use online communities and digital platforms for personal purposes and organizations, business companies and institutions who also use digital platforms for various purposes. The new media are new communication technologies that combine computer and telecommunication technologies which are used as channels of information dissemination to heterogenous audiences without the constraints of time, space or distance. Ikpe and Olise,(2010) Social media is defined as web based platforms that permits users to interact and interrelate among each other in several ways by sharing information, thoughts, and knowledge and interests online (Ford & Ravensari, 2017). In various ways, social media is modeling human interactions for example it has been assessed that 94% of adults globally possess a social media site account and have visited and used at



least one in the last month (Chaffey, 2016). The use of social media by university students in Nigeria is also increasing rapidly.

According to Ojo (2022) Social media are a means of interaction among people in which they create, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and network. They depend on mobile and web based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, comment, discuss, and modify user generated content. Social media allows users to keep in touch with others. They accelerate communication among students as they can express themselves by posting status and story updates, links, videos and pictures. They also permit users to follow others online keeping track of regular updates and notifications about their family, friends, classmates, and acquaintances (Smock *et al.*, 2011). Social media facilitate the development of online social networks by connecting a users profile with those of other individuals or groups (Obiajulu *et al.*, 2022).

#### ***Social networking Platforms (e.g. Facebook)***

Social networking platforms are websites and applications that enable users to connect with others, share information, and build relationships. These platforms provide opportunities for social integration and easy transmission of messages . The study focused on three (3) content community platforms, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. All three platforms emphasize content created by its users, fostering an environment where individuals can express themselves and connect with vast audiences. Each platform is unique to its features, YouTube community tab enables engagement through posts and polls, Instagram allows comment, likes, hashtags and now group chats opened by popular people to directly message and interact with their fan base, TikTok on the other hand emphasizes trends and challenges. All these platforms use algorithms to personalize user experiences, allowing different types if content like photos, videos, and live streams.

Furthermore, they provide tools like filters, special effects that can help creators make content while also offering monetization mechanisms through ads, partnerships, and sponsorship.

#### ***Review of Related Empirical Studies***

This section presents a review of empirical studies related to the research topic, with the aim of situating the current study within the existing body of knowledge. The review is organised



into themes that align with the specific objectives of the study, ensuring that each theme directly addresses one research objective. This thematic approach enables a clearer understanding of how previous studies relate to the popularity, uses and gratifications, academic impacts, and motivations for the selection and use of YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok among students. By structuring the review in this way, the discussion highlights not only areas of agreement and divergence in past research but also gaps that the present study seeks to address.

### ***Popularity of YouTube, Instagram and TikTok among students***

Understanding which social media platforms are most popular among students has been a recurring focus of research, as platform preference often determines patterns of usage and potential impacts on academics. Subair *et al.* (2019) found that WhatsApp and Facebook were the most frequently used platforms among undergraduates, with students spending an average of two to three hours daily on social media. This aligns with Uwazie *et al.* (2013), who discovered that students in Imo State actively used social media tools, particularly for sharing information, although they did not fully explore them for academic purposes. These findings suggest that popularity may be linked more to convenience and social interaction than to educational benefits. Whiting and Williams (2013) expanded this perspective by showing that individuals gravitate toward social media for a variety of motivations, including entertainment, information-seeking, and self-expression. Such motivations play a role in determining which platforms dominate students' daily routines. In a comparative study, Alhabash and Ma (2017) revealed that among Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat, Instagram recorded the highest daily usage, followed closely by Snapchat. This preference for visually rich platforms could be tied to their ability to combine entertainment with social connection. Similar trends have been reported outside Nigeria. In Malaysia, Mustafa and Hamzah (2011) noted that students preferred platforms that allowed chatting, reconnecting with acquaintances, and maintaining friendships. Ezumah (2013) added that students' platform choices are influenced by features such as interactivity, ease of use, and content-sharing capabilities. This is reinforced by Hong *et al.* (2014), who reported that tertiary students spent an average of over four and a half hours daily on social media, suggesting that the most popular platforms are those that keep users engaged for extended periods.

Hanson and Haridakis (2008) further explained that popularity can be linked to the type of content a platform offers. They found that motives for watching and sharing videos varied,



with certain platforms particularly YouTube attracting users for both information and entertainment purposes. While the studies above point to platforms like Instagram and YouTube as dominant choices, Ogechukwu and Odah (2024) warned that high popularity does not necessarily translate into academic value, as time spent on such platforms can sometimes reduce time for reading or studying.

Overall, the reviewed studies in this subsection indicate that platform popularity among students is shaped by a combination of content appeal, interactivity, and opportunities for social connection. Visual-based and interactive platforms such as Instagram and YouTube tend to attract sustained engagement, while newer entrants like TikTok are increasingly gaining ground due to their short, engaging video formats that resonate with students' lifestyles.

### ***Impact of YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok Usage on Academic Performance***

The influence of social media on students' academic performance has been widely debated, with studies showing both positive and negative outcomes. Chen and Xiao (2022) examined the emotional impact of social media, noting that while these platforms can provide spaces for sharing ideas and emotions, they may also lead to increased stress, anxiety, and depression when interactions are superficial or overly time-consuming. This emotional strain can indirectly affect academic focus and performance. Junco and Colten (2012) highlighted a slight negative correlation between time spent on social media and time spent studying, implying that excessive use can reduce academic productivity. Similarly, Pempek *et al.* (2009) observed that many students spend valuable daily hours on social media, often at the expense of academic tasks. Ogechukwu and Odah (2024) found that students who spend more time on social media tend to read less frequently and for shorter durations, suggesting that prolonged engagement with platforms like YouTube, Instagram, or TikTok can limit the time allocated to academic reading.

However, not all studies view social media use as harmful to academic performance. Simbiat (2014) reported that when used moderately, social media can enhance academic outcomes by providing access to learning resources and fostering knowledge sharing. Rafiq *et al.* (2019) similarly found that in Pakistan, social media improved reading habits for some students, despite its potential to cause distractions. Ngonso *et al.* (2018) also identified a positive relationship between Twitter use and cognitive development among Nigerian



youths, illustrating that the impact depends on the nature of engagement. Leyrer-Jackson and Wilson (2017) pointed out that the ease of accessing information on social media allows students to quickly find answers and exchange knowledge with peers, though they acknowledged the risk of distraction. Gupta (2013) supported this, noting that online interactions help students stay connected academically, but do not always translate into improved grades. Manjunatha (2013) further observed that while social media facilitates information sharing and maintaining relationships, it can also divert attention away from studies if not managed effectively.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study examined the use of YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok affect study habit and academic performance among undergraduate students of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi.. Descriptive survey design using probability sampling was adopted because it gives every member of the population an equal chance of being selected for the study. To achieve this, the researcher collected data from a sample size of 387 students (male/female) studying in ATBU, Bauchi, Nigeria, registered in the 2024/2025 session via Survey Monkey forms. They are suitable for this study as they are well acquainted with social media platforms, their features and motivation for its uses. The instrument for data collection for this study was a five (5) sections self-developed structured questionnaire in line with the research objectives. The questionnaire used was a five (5) point likert scale ranging from frequencies of options of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree carrying points of 5, 4,3,2 and 1 respectively and their individual mean and standard deviation computations. Their mean was cumulative in each table and compared with a decision/standard mean of 2.500. The decision mean is based on the 4 Likert scale options of each of the item, thus:  $(5+4+3+2+1)/5 = 3.00$ . The data collected from the research questions was analyzed using descriptive statistics into mean, and standard deviations. The statistical package of version 26 was used to analyze the data collected from the respondents.

This study will provide answer to the research question:

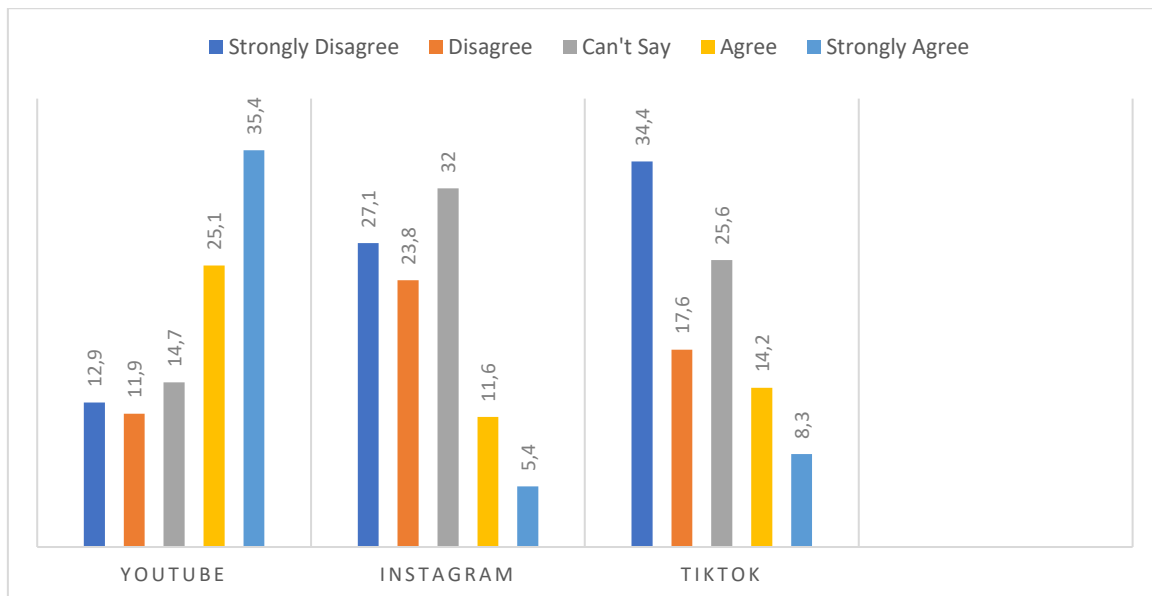
1. How does the use of YouTube, Instagram and TikTok affect the study habit and academic performance of ATBU students?

**RESULTS**

**Table 1.** Demographics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	51.7%
	Female	48.3%
<b>Age</b>	16-20 years	16.5%
	21-25 years	60.5%
	26-30 years	18.6%
	30 years and above	4.4%
<b>Level of Study</b>	100 level	5.8%
	200 level	15.2%
	300 level	14.2%
	400 level	5.9%
	500 level	23.5%

Table 1 on the demographic information of the respondents showed that the majority were aged 21–25 years (61%), indicating that most participants were in the typical undergraduate age range. Gender distribution was fairly balanced, with males slightly more represented (52%). In terms of academic level, 500-level students formed the largest group (24%), suggesting higher participation from students in their final year.



**Figure 1.** YouTube, Instagram and TikToc Impact on Academic Performance

Figure 1 on the use of YouTube, Instagram and TikToc affect the study habit and academic performance of ATBU students indicated that YouTube appears to have the most positive academic influence among the three platforms, with a significant proportion of students



agreeing it benefits their studies, likely due to the availability of educational resources and tutorials. In contrast, Instagram is generally not viewed as academically useful, with most respondents associating it more with social and entertainment purposes. TikTok records the lowest perceived academic benefit, as the majority of students strongly disagreed that it positively affects their studies, suggesting it is largely seen as a platform for leisure rather than learning.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

### ***RQ1. How does the use of YouTube, Instagram and TikTok affect the study habits and academic performance of ATBU students?***

To answer this question, data from Figures 1 is analyzed, covering students' perceptions of each platform's impact on academic performance, its role as a distraction, and its use for academic-related tasks.

From Figure 1, YouTube emerged as the platform most positively associated with academic performance. A clear majority of students agreed that it enhances their studies, suggesting that the platform's wealth of tutorials, lectures, and educational resources meets their academic needs. This contrasts sharply with Instagram and TikTok, where most respondents felt these platforms do not significantly contribute to their academic success. These findings echo Chibueze (2025) and Hong *et al.* (2014), who identified YouTube as a strong academic aid, while more socially and entertainment-oriented platforms had weaker academic relevance. When considering distractions (Figure 1), students largely disagreed that YouTube hinders their study habits, indicating purposeful use for learning. In contrast, Instagram and TikTok attracted more agreement that they can divert attention from academics, reflecting the potential time-draining nature of their entertainment-focused content. This observation is consistent with Junco and Colten (2012), who reported that frequent use of leisure-driven platforms could reduce academic concentration.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In relation to the findings of the study, it is concluded that social media plays a dual role in the academic life of undergraduates. On one hand, it provides opportunities for academic advancement through access to educational materials, group interactions, and knowledge-



sharing communities. On the other hand, excessive or misdirected use of social media contributes to distractions, procrastination, and in some cases, reduced academic performance. The study also confirms that the influence of social media on academic performance is not entirely negative or positive; it largely depends on the purpose and pattern of use. It is therefore important for students to adopt more intentional and balanced usage habits, and for educational institutions to integrate social media into academic activities in more structured ways. That way, its full academic potential can be harnessed while minimizing its harmful effects.

### ***Recommendations***

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are suggested:

- i. Students should be encouraged to make better use of *YouTube* for academic purposes. The study showed that many already engage with the platform for learning, so promoting educational channels and content can further support their academic growth.
- ii. Lecturers and academic staff can integrate relevant *YouTube* videos into their teaching methods to complement classroom learning. This could improve student engagement and understanding.
- iii. Since *Instagram* and *TikTok* are widely used but more for entertainment, students should be guided on how to manage their time and content consumption effectively, so these platforms do not negatively affect their academic performance.
- iv. Media literacy campaigns should be introduced at the university level to help students understand how to use all three platforms *YouTube*, *Instagram*, and *TikTok* more responsibly and productively.
- v. Universities and student bodies can also explore these platforms as tools for spreading educational content in fun, relatable formats that align with student interests and trends.
- vi. Lastly, future research should consider investigating how specific types of content on these platforms influence study behavior and academic outcomes, to deepen the understanding of social media's educational potential.



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