



## Research Article

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# Dependency on TikTok and Social Alienation Among Gen Y & Z

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## Abstract

The current generation is biased to social media and has shown great inclination towards social networking apps like Facebook, Instagram or video sharing app TikTok. These services offer significant opportunities to the user to showcase their creativity. However, it is also noted that exposure to these apps has incalculated adverse effects on their attitude making them alienated from individuals and groups. This study investigates the various effects of this video sharing app on the attitudes of the user through survey research method. The designed model tries to explain the levels of social alienation through the concepts of correlation and hypothesis testing between the various variables. The data has been collected from a section of the Bahraini society through questionnaire and the likert scale data has been transformed and analyzed using statistical software.

**Keywords:** TikTok; Social alienation; Media system dependency theory; Statistical analysis

## 1. Introduction

TikTok is one of the most popular video-sharing platforms and social media applications among teens and youth. It becomes a popular form of sharing creative videos about cooking, drawing, dancing, singing and exciting games. It uses artificial intelligence techniques to display personalized content to special users without having any troubles, by analyzing the users' interests, preferences and interactions with the app content. (Haleem, Javaid, Qadri, Singh, & Suman, 2022). TikTok is a significant aspect of today's young people lives. They are attracted to this application for many reasons; it enables them to self-express, to have fun and enjoyment, to share information and interests, to build social relationships, to record moments and memories and to make short videos that last for a few seconds with various contents. (Cervi, 2021; Palupi, Meifilina, & Harumike, 2020;

Yang, Zhao, & Ma, 2019).

As the coronavirus has spread, the application has taken a higher position, its download and use rates have increased. The most recent data shows that 2020 had the highest rates of downloading this application on Google Play Store. (Banskota, Healy, & Goldberg, 2020) With the increase of using social networking applications, the traditional communication has changed and the cross-cultural communication has grown and provided tools to collaborate and share information. As a result, citizens are now faced with values, roles, thoughts, identities and ideas that may be very different from what they are used to (Liaw, 2019).

Concerns have been raised about the threats and risks of using social networking applications, namely TikTok. Discussions have centered on whether TikTok tracks its users' online behavior without their consent and whether it collects more user personal data and misuses them (Montag, Yang, & Elhai, 2021). Studies have shown that high use of social media applications may result in person feeling more socially isolated, as he feels alone and remains physically cut off from people and objects that provide him with support resulting in physical and psychological isolation. Also, they have confirmed that these applications alienate people from their own culture and society. (Dainow, 2016)

Thus, social media applications cause social alienation which can be defined as an estranged relationship between individuals and their social environment. (A. Erdner, A. Magnusson, M. Nyström, & K. Lützen, 2005) The alienated person feels disconnected with the people around him and suffers from feelings of loneliness and estrangement. Also, he doesn't feel belonged to his community and becomes unable to focus on himself and his own actions. (Gottschalk, Fronczek, Abel, & Buchsbaum, 1992).

## 2. Literature Review

TikTok is a social network for sharing short videos. It relies on creating short videos ranging from 3 seconds to 3 minutes. It is owned by the Chinese company ByteDance. It is the international version of Douyin, which was released in the Chinese market in September 2016. It launched outside China in 2017, then became available worldwide after merging with Musical.ly in 2018 (Anderson, 2020). The TikTok application enables the user to produce and share visual content through short videos, socialize with others and meet new friends (Susilo, 2020). The number of this application accounts, according to Statista website in 2022, is about 755 million users, and it is expected to be 955 users by 2025. \*Young people find a sense of fun, happiness and satisfaction when using TikTok, due to its ease of use, the diversity of its entertainment content and its interactive elements. (Al-Marroof et al., 2021) TikTok has many advantages; it asks the user - before creating his account - to determine his interests through a list that includes many items (travel, sports, animals, beauty, singing and else) to meet his goals. It has the feature of parental control and video filters to help protect children and adolescents from inappropriate content. It requires everyone to be at least 13 years old to have an account on it. Also it provides the ability to save and download videos. (Wang, 2020) In addition, it has small storage, so it can be downloaded on various phone types and versions. It is a safe program and doesn't contain viruses or infect the phone with malware. (Chung & Wei, 2020)

On the other hand, TikTok has some disadvantages; it wastes time and disseminates strange ideas. Some girls use it immorally through presenting sexual videos. (Tan & Wegmann, 2021) Its users may get bullied and ridicule through comments and private messages. (Zulli & Zulli, 2022) They may do destructive behavior to attract more views. (Su, Baker, Doyle, & Yan, 2020) Most of them are usually self-obsessed and have high levels of narcissism and self-admiration. They may perform strange actions in the videos to attract more viewers and achieve fame (Swathi & Devakumar,

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\* Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1327116/number-of-global-TikTok-users/>

2020). The intensity of dependence on social media leads to addict it causing high levels of interaction with virtual reality. Abuse in social media can lead to a state of mental illness where users feel detached from their surroundings (N. Karizat, D. Delmonaco, M. Eslami, & N. Andalibi, 2021).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau believes that despite the advantages of civilization, it has enslaved and corrupted the human and made him unnatural because it increased materialism and consumption. Also, Rousseau believes that urbanization has changed human nature, as modern society depends on reification and the power of capital which increases the individual's feeling of alienation (Nicolas, 2020; Ortiz, Chih, & Tsai, 2018). Hegel sees that the concept of alienation is linked to person's estrangement from his own self, community, culture, values and morals on which he was raised As a result of being affected by the cultural invasion of alien cultures and ideas (Sayers, 2011).

Karl Marx determined three types of alienation in human kind. The first is the alienation of worker as he loses the ability to determine his life, destiny, and work by feeling powerless and being deprived of his right to think, the second is alienation from others as the person loses his ability to develop his social relationships, and becomes isolated from others, and the third is self-alienation as the person feels separated from his own self due to his ineffectiveness in making life better and his feeling of helplessness.(Marx, 2019)

Sartre believes that the individual's feeling of social alienation is resulted from the huge technological development which has made man a slave to the machine. Thus, technology has destroyed human values and affected his social relations negatively. It has caused the absence of human activity and made people feel alienated. Kensington considers that alienation is the rejection of the prevailing trends, values and foundations, which are translated by behaviors such as withdrawal from society or rebellion and revolution against it (Birt, 1986).

According to Ducharme, alienation is the feeling of loss, disintegration, isolation and failure to adapt to the surrounding social conditions, which makes the individual separate from his social environment and its interactions. It is a social and psychological state resulting from the individuals' opposition of values and traditions which leads to various reactions such as withdrawing from reality, being unable to interact with social situations (loss of control), feeling isolated from cultural goals (social isolation) and then being unable to self-adjusting and self-satisfaction (psychological isolation) (Wu et al., 2022).

The social alienation has four varieties; the innovative type is a kind of rejecting the social norm in creative ways, the ritualistic type is a kind of rejecting local cultural goals as a result of boredom and attracting to another culture, the withdrawal type means complete separation from the society and its culture, and the rebellious or revolutionary type means rejecting the social and cultural system and revolting against it by organizing protests and defamation campaigns and replacement of new social and cultural systems.(O'ralovna, 2022; Wu et al., 2022).

Social alienation has several dimensions that sociologists are still arguing about. These most important dimensions are: (Bolmsjö, Tengland, & Rämgård, 2019; A. Erdner, A. Magnusson, M. Nyström, & K. J. S. J. o. C. S. Lützen, 2005; Frymer, 2006)

**Normlessness:** It is a state in which there are no shared social norms. It is the breakdown and blurring of societal norms which regulate individual conduct. The individual rejects the values, standards and rules prevailing in society due to his lack of trust in society and its institutions. It can also be defined as the sense that social norms regulating individual conduct have broken down or are no longer effective as rules for behavior. It is a state of rebelliousness and the desire to stay away from reality.

**Social Isolation:** It is the lack of social contacts and having few people to interact with regularly. It means that the individual feels lonely, lives in emotional emptiness, lacks social relations with other people and desires to distance himself from others. This isolation is also accompanied by a feeling of social rejection.

**Reification:** It is the act of treating something abstract, such as an idea, relation, system and quality. It is the process by which social relations are perceived as inherent attributes of the people involved in them. According to Luchache, the alienation under capitalist relations means slavery in

its new shape, as the human becomes a slave to the things that he aspires to possess, so he loses his identity and becomes a commodity.

**Aimlessness and Meaninglessness:** It is a pervasive sense of the absence of significance, direction or purpose. The individual feels that his life has no value, meaning or purpose. He feels lost and unambitious.

**Powerlessness:** it is the condition or feeling of having no power. The individual feels that he has no impact on the existing situations and he is unable to make fateful decisions. His will and destiny become out of his control. He feels frustrated and incapacitated.

The phenomenon of alienation is linked to the addiction of Internet and mobile devices. The Internet addicts have more symptoms of alienation than others, they suffer from social withdrawal, mood changes, loneliness, isolation, and general distress (Alhassan et al., 2018). The negative aspects of Internet addiction make individuals feel lonely, unbalanced and shy at direct contact (Ershad & Aghajani, 2017). This causes a lack of self-confidence and a feeling of low self-esteem creating a virtual world which leads to the weakening of social and family participation (Dwyer & Fraser, 2016).

During the outbreak of Corona virus, the addiction to smartphones and social networking applications has increased (Hu, Liu, & Wang, 2022). The exposure rates to TikTok clips have also increased, especially dancing and immoral contents, which has affected social relations negatively causing introversion, isolation, dissatisfaction with life and depression (Zhaoying & Sciences, 2021). Also, TikTok increases consumerism by promoting the acquisition of goods and focusing on materialism and competition (Qureshi & Studies, 2022).

From there, this study seeks to examine the Gen Y and Z dependency on TikTok application and its relationship to their level of social alienation, by identifying their preferences, their forms of interaction and their attitudes towards TikTok and its contents.

### 3. Problem Description

This study aims at investigating the extent to which Gen Y and Z in Bahrain depend on TikTok, and how this affects their level of social alienation with its five main dimensions (Normlessness - Social Isolation - Reification - Meaninglessness - Powerlessness).

### 4. The Theoretical Framework

The present study applies Media System Dependency Theory (MSD) to explore the level of dependence on TikTok as a social media platform among Gen Y & Z by determining their dependency motives (understanding - entertainment - guidance) and its effects (cognitive - emotional - behavioral), in addition to testing the relationship between TikTok dependency and the level of social alienation among them.

This theory was first introduced by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur explaining the interaction between society and media as open systems which influences each other (Otto & Stausberg, 2014). It is a well-known fact that media system is an important part of the social structure, and has multiple significant relationships with individuals, groups and other social systems. (McQuail & Windahl, 2015). According to this theory, individuals rely on the media as a source of information to achieve their various personal and social goals. (Baran, Davis, & Striby, 2012). It has been observed that the nature of these relationships may be strong or weak, static or dynamic, cooperated or conflicted. The theory determines motives of dependency on media in understanding different topics and issues, having fun and entertainment as well as guiding behavior. (Severin & Tankard, 1997). As per the theory, cognitive effects, affective effects and behavioral effects are the three types of media influences on the audience (Ball-Rokeach, 2008). According to the theory, the cognitive effects of the media include the following:

**Ambiguity:** the person faces the problem of ambiguity in the event of a lack of available information, which leads him to resort to various media to remove this ambiguity, especially in times

of crisis.

**Attitude Formation:** the media plays its role in the process of shaping the attitudes of individuals towards various topics and issues by pushing them with many opinions, ideas and personalities that influence their opinion on individuals, especially in exceptional circumstances times of wars and unrest.

**Arranging priorities:** through the role of the media in arranging public interest in the issues and topics raised.

**Values:** The media affects the societal system of values, and it may have a positive impact by developing positive values such as tolerance, equality, peace, or a negative impact by destroying these values.

The second effect of this theory is affective effects which is related to feelings and sensations such as love, hate, etc., the media plays a major role in the affective and emotional impact through these effects.

**Desensitization:** It occurs because of excessive exposure to topics and scenes of violence in media content, which may result in a kind of apathy and unwillingness to help others.

**Fear and anxiety:** when individuals are exposed to media materials that provoke fear, terror, and feelings of anxiety, this is reflected in the recipients, and they become more anxious and fearful as a result of the fear of falling as victims of actions similar to the events they see.

**Moral support and social alienation:** the media plays communication roles to raise the morale of the collective feeling and support integration and community unity, or the media may increase the social alienation of the individual when it does not provide expressive information about societal and national culture and ethnic, religious and political affiliation, but rather contributes to the dissemination other cultures are strange and abnormal.

**Behavioral Effects** is the third effect of media on individual as per the discussed theory. One of the most important behavioral effects of the media is doing a certain action or losing the desire to do this action, and these two effects are a direct result of the cognitive and emotional effects. Behavioral effects are further divided into activation and deactivation. Activation means that the individual does something as a result of exposure to the media, and it may be a socially beneficial action, as in quitting smoking, political participation, or socially harmful, as in simulating bad behaviors such as violence and crime. Deactivation means avoiding action, such as avoiding electoral participation.

The theory is employed in many recent studies that are concerned with studying the motives of consuming social media sites, the degree of dependence on them as a source of information, and their effects on users. (Braun, 2017; Han, Han, Qu, Li, & Zhu, 2019; Hu et al., 2022; Jones, Reppa, & Reed, 2022; Lee, Choi, & Informatics, 2018; Li, Yang, Zhang, Zhang, & Informatics, 2019; Mahmud, Ramachandiran, & Ismail, 2018)

## 5. Methodology & Sampling

This study is a quantitative descriptive one. It is conducted in December 2022 to January 2023. It adopts the **survey research method** with the **online questionnaire** via Google form as an instrument for gathering data. The population of the study comprised of TikTok users of Gen Y and Z in Bahrain. The study is conducted in the Kingdom of Bahrain, where the researchers currently resides due to their academic work in one of its universities. There were no previous studies conducted on the uses of Tik Tok and its effects on Bahrainis, therefore this study becomes the first of its kind.

In Bahrain, Datareportal website has indicated that the number of TikTok users in Bahrain is about 699.5 thousand users in 2022, which is approximately half of the population of the Kingdom in the same year (1.77 million people)\* Therefore, it is important to study the Bahraini society and its use

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\* Available at : <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-bahrain>

of TikTok due to the steadily growing number of users. A purposive sample of 450 respondents is used who have an active TikTok account were deliberately selected. The sample includes 184 of Gen Y respondents (in the age from 26 to 45 years old), and 266 of Gen Z respondents (in the age from 11 to 25 years old). The study also adopts the **comparative method** to explain and gain a better understanding of Gen Y and Z's dependency on TikTok, their attitudes towards it and their level of alienation. The survey instrument is validated by experts from media academics and practitioners to be sure that it accurately measures what it intends to measure.

The questionnaire included a variety of questions that can be divided according to the following axes:

- The level of dependency on TikTok: by identifying the weekly usage intensity and the number of daily hours.
- Habits of TikTok use: by identifying the favorite times to use TikTok, the favorite places to use TikTok, the motives of depending on TikTok, the gratifications from TikTok, the interactivity on TikTok, the Favorite videos to watch and the favorite Tiktokers.
- The attitudes towards the TikTok application.
- The social alienation dimensions.
- The demographics.

The following Table shows the demographic characteristics of the study sample:

**Table 1:** The demographic characteristics of the study sample

Demographic element		Generation Z		Generation Y		Total	
		T	%	T	%	T	%
		266	59.1	184	40.9	450	100
Gender	Male	98	36.8	70	38	168	37.3
	Female	168	63.2	114	62	282	62.7
	Total	266	100	184	100	450	100
Education	Middle Preparatory School	12	4.5	0	0	12	2.7
	High secondary school	52	19.5	26	14.1	78	17.3
	University education	198	74.4	132	71.7	330	73.3
	Post graduate education (Master and Ph.D.)	4	1.5	26	14.1	30	6.7
	Total	266	100	184	100	450	100
Socioeconomic status	Low	96	36.1	68	37	164	36.4
	Medium	136	51.1	92	50	228	50.7
	High	34	12.8	24	13	58	12.9
	Total	266	100	184	100	450	100

## 6. Data Analysis and Measures

The researchers have used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program to analyze the collected data and draw conclusions from his findings. In order to evaluate the data, frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviation are some of the descriptive statistics which have been used in this research model. Some of the statistical tests like Independent-Samples T-Test, Chi-square and One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were also conducted to confirm our analysis results. In order to explain the relation between the independent and dependent variable Pearson correlation coefficient have been considered.

The study's questionnaire included several operational definitions to establish the used rules and procedures to measure the variables and provide consistent meaning to the variables that can be interpreted differently. These definitions were derived from prior studies and adapted in accordance with this study.

The study includes the following scales:

TikTok dependency scale: It includes two questions; the first to detect the extent of use and the second to determine the hours of use. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for TikTok dependency scale is 0.89.

User attitude towards TikTok application: A 3-point Likert scale is used to assess the attitudes of respondents. It consists of 14 statements (7 statements express positive opinion and 7 statements express negative opinion). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for attitude towards TikTok scale is 0.91.

Social alienation scale: A 3-point Likert scale is used to assess the level of social alienation among respondents. It consists of 30 statements for the five dimensions of alienation including 6 statements for each dimension (Normlessness - Social Isolation- Reification - Meaninglessness - Powerlessness). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the social alienation scale is 0.87. As Cronbach's  $\alpha$  measures internal consistency between the various surveys items in a set, so the higher value indicates higher degree of agreement between the items.

## 7. Research Questions and Hypotheses:

### 7.1 Research Questions:

The following questions guided the study:

Q1: What is the TikTok dependency level among Gen Y and Z? What are their habits of use?

Q2: What are the advantages and disadvantages of using TikTok from the respondents' point of view?

### 7.2 Research Hypotheses:

The researcher posed the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a significant relationship between the TikTok dependency level among Gen Y and Z and their level of social alienation.

H2: There is a relationship between Gen Y and Z's attitudes towards TikTok and their level of alienation.

H3: The social alienation level of the study sample varies according to their demographic characteristic (generation - gender - educational level - socioeconomic level).

## 8. Results and Discussion

The findings of the study are presented in the light of answering its questions and testing its hypotheses.

Q1: What is the TikTok dependency level among Gen Y and Z? What are their habits of use?

**Table 2:** The level of dependency on TikTok

The level of dependency on TikTok	Gen Z		Gen Y		Total	
	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%
low	60	22.6	112	60.9	172	38.2
Meduim	54	20.3	20	10.9	74	16.4
High	152	57.1	52	28.3	204	45.4
Total	266	100	184	100	450	100
$\chi^2: 33.833$ $df:2$ $Sig: 0.000^*$ Coefficient of contingency (C): 0.362						

As seen in table (2), Gen Z has more dependency on TikTok than Gen Y; the percentage of heavy use among Gen Z reaches to (57.1%), compared to (28.3%) among Gen Y who use TikTok with a low level by (60.9%).

Also, there is a significant difference between Gen Z and Y regarding the dependency level on

TikTok in favor of Gen Z ( $X^2= 33,833$ ,  $df= 2$ ,  $\alpha= 0.000$ ,  $C=0.362$ ).

**Table 3:** Habits of TikTok use

Habits of TikTok use	Z N=266		Y N=184		Total N=450	
	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%
<b>A- Favorite times to use TikTok</b>						
Evening time	158	59.4	104	56.5	262	58.2
After midnight	188	70.7	74	40.2	262	58.2
Morning time	70	26.3	40	21.7	110	24.4
Noontime	82	30.8	26	14.1	108	24.0
<b>B- Favorite places to use TikTok</b>						
The house	246	92.5	152	82.6	398	88.4
The café shop	80	30.1	34	18.5	114	25.3
The Workplace	48	18.0	34	18.5	82	18.2
The School/university	56	21.1	4	2.2	60	13.3
<b>C- Motives of depending on TikTok</b>						
To have fun and entertainment.	208	78.2	118	64.1	326	72.4
To pass free time	202	75.9	108	58.7	310	68.9
To know the latest news	66	24.8	20	10.9	86	19.1
To escape from reality	60	22.6	26	14.1	86	19.1
To develop my skills and knowledge	42	15.8	22	12.0	64	14.2
To show my talent to others	40	15.0	6	3.3	46	10.2
To express personal status and opinions	34	12.8	6	3.3	40	8.9
To gain new friendships	30	11.3	6	3.3	36	8.0
<b>D- Interactivity on TikTok</b>						
I just watch the videos	214	80.5	150	81.5	364	80.9
I give a like to some videos	160	60.2	76	41.3	236	52.4
I add some videos to my favorite list	134	50.4	46	25.0	180	40.0
I share or explore some videos	82	30.8	28	15.2	110	24.4
I write comments on videos	72	27.1	16	8.7	88	19.6
I produce short videos	68	25.6	8	4.3	76	16.9
I look for specific videos or hashtags.	56	21.1	18	9.8	74	16.4
I chat with others	60	22.6	2	1.1	62	13.8
I make a live video	26	9.8	2	1.1	28	6.2
I do challenges and duets with others	10	3.8	-	-	10	2.2
<b>E- Favorite videos to watch:</b>						
Comedy videos	218	82.0	122	66.3	340	75.6
Travel and discover new places videos	126	47.4	60	32.6	186	41.3
Cooking videos	92	34.6	70	38.0	162	36.0
Religious videos	82	30.8	60	32.5	142	31.6
Beauty and cosmetics videos	100	37.6	38	20.7	138	30.7
Sports and fitness exercises videos	90	33.8	42	22.8	132	29.3
Fashion videos	96	36.1	34	18.5	130	28.9
Home daily routine videos	94	35.3	24	13.0	118	26.2
Live videos of other users	84	31.6	26	14.1	110	24.4
Singing and lip-syncing videos	58	21.8	14	7.6	72	16.0

Table (3) shows the usage habits of TikTok among Gen Y and Z, as follows:

- **Favorite times to use TikTok:** The majority of Gen Z (70.7%) uses TikTok after midnight, and the majority of Gen Y (56.5%) uses TikTok in the evening.
- **Favorite places to use TikTok:** The house comes at the first place for Gen Z & Y by (92.5%) and (82.6%), respectively.
- **Dependence motives:** The ritual motives of Gen Y and Z's dependency on TikTok come in the first place, followed by the utilitarian ones. In terms of ritual motives, (78.2%) & (64.1%) of Gen Z and Y respectively depend on TikTok for fun and entertainment. As for utilitarian motives, (24.8%) of Gen Z depends on TikTok to know the latest news, while (12.0%) of Gen Y depends on TikTok to develop skills and knowledge.



- **Interactivity on TikTok:** Gen Y and Z say that they only watch videos on TikTok by (81.5%) and (80%), then give a “like” to some videos by (41.3%) and (60.2%), then add some videos to their favorite list in the third place by (25%) and (50.4%).
- **The favorite videos:** Comedy videos rank first by (66.3%) for Gen Y and (82%) for Gen Z, followed by travel videos by (32.6%) for Gen Y and (47.4%) for Gen Z, then cooking videos by (38%) for Gen Y and (34.6%) for Gen Z. (shown in Figure 1).

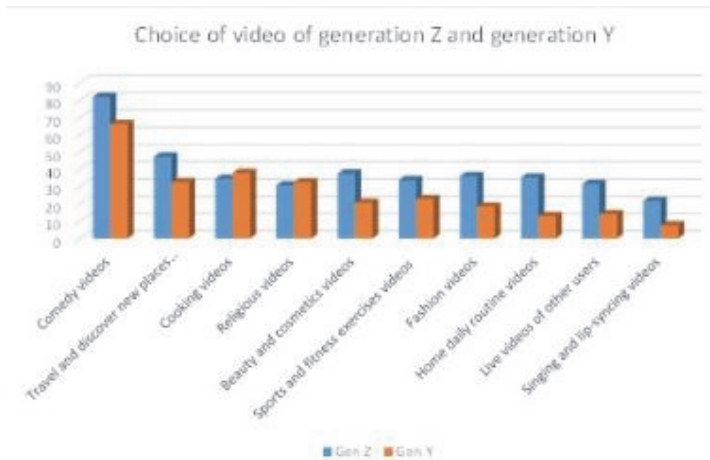
Q2: What are the advantages and disadvantages of using TikTok from the respondents’ point of view?

**Table 4:** Sample attitudes towards TikTok

Likert scale	Z		Y		Total	
	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%
Negative attitude	20	7.5	44	23.9	64	14.2
Neutral attitude	164	64.7	116	63	280	62.2
Positive attitude	82	30.8	24	13	106	23.6
Total	266	100	184	100	450	100
X <sup>2</sup> :17.595		df: 2	Sig: 0.000 *		Coefficient of contingency(C): 0.260	

As seen from table (4), the respondents see that Tiktok has advantages and disadvantages; they express their "neutral opinions" in the first place by (62.2%), of which (64.7%) for Gen Z and (63%) for Gen Y, then they express their "positive opinions" by (23.6%), including (30.8%) for Gen Z and (13%) for Gen Y, while their "negative opinions" come in the last place by (14.2%), of which (7.5%) for Gen Z and (23.9%) for Gen Y.

It is noted that Gen Z has more positive attitudes towards TikTok than Gen Y by (30.8%) versus (13%). Also, it is noted that Gen Y has more negative attitudes towards TikTok than Gen Z by (23.9%) versus (7.5%).



**Figure 1.** Choice of video of generation Z and generation Y

It is also to be mentioned that the effect of some of the variables on each other were also tested through Pearson’s correlation coefficient. We tried to find the dependency of the frequency of the use of Tiktok with its easy accessibility and simple interface. From the Pearson correlation value (0.310) we state that there exists a moderate and significant relationship between these variables. Also

from the the Pearson correlation result in Table 5 it can be commented that the use of TikTok has a moderate but significant affect in developing creative skills and enhancing the talents of its employees. However it may not be a good platform for the marketing of various businesses.

**Table 5:** Pearson coefficient of some of the variables

Vo How often do you use TikTok?	V14 (Easy to use and has a simple interface).		V20 (develops creative skills and enhances the talents of its employees).		V22 An excellent marketing tool for various businesses.	
	Pearson coefficient	Significance value	Pearson coefficient	Significance Value	Pearson coefficient	Significance Value
	0.310	0.000	0.407	0.000	0.221	0.000

The mentioned positive aspects are:

- It is easy to use (88.7%).
- It is a source of income (83.0%).
- It provides entertaining and funny contents (82.3%).
- It is an excellent marketing tool for various businesses (82.3%).
- It offers new information and skills to users (78.0%).
- It develops creative skills and enhances talent users (75.0%).

The mentioned negative aspects are:

- It wastes time and teaches things of no worth (61.7%).
- It has poor and vulgar content (58.0%).
- It increases the social alienation among its users (57.7%).
- It destroys social values and morals (56.0%).
- It disseminates immoral behaviors (54.7%).

H1: There is a significant relationship between the TikTok dependency level among Gen Y and Z and their level of social alienation.

**Table 6:** The relationship between the level of dependency on TikTok and the level of social Alienation

Level of dependency on TikTok / Level of social Alienation	Pearson correlation coefficient	significance level
Normlessness	0.094	0.162
Social Isolation	0.198**	0.003
Reification	0.174**	0.009
& Aimlessness Meaninglessness	0.229**	0.001
Powerlessness	0.162**	0.015
(n)	450	

The table (6) shows a statistical relationship between TikTok dependency level among Gen Y and Z and their level of social alienation.

**Regarding Normlessness**, the value of PCC is (0.094) at a significance level of (0.162), so there is no significant relationship between the dependency level of Gen Y and Z on TikTok and their level of Normlessness.

**For social isolation**, the value of PCC is (0.198) at a significance level of (0.003), so there is a positive, weak but significant relationship between the dependency level of Gen Y and Z on TikTok and their level of social isolation.

According to reification, the value of PCC is (0.174) at a significance level of (0.009), so there is a significant relationship between the dependency level of Gen Y and Z on TikTok and their level of reification.

Regarding meaninglessness or aimlessness, the value of PCC is (0.229) at a significance level of (0.001), so there exists a weak positive significant relationship between the dependency level of Gen Y and Z on TikTok and their level of meaninglessness.

For powerlessness, the value of PCC is (0.162) at a significance level of (0.015), so there is a significant relationship between the dependency level of Gen Y and Z on TikTok and their level of powerlessness.

Thus, this hypothesis is partially accepted, as it is proven that there is a statistically relationship between the dependency level of Gen Y and Z on TikTok and their level of alienation in terms of social isolation, reification, meaninglessness and powerlessness, while there is no significant relationship between the dependency level of Gen Y and Z on TikTok and their level of normlessness.

**H2: There is a relationship between Gen Y and Z's attitudes towards TikTok and their level of alienation.**

**Table 7:** The relationship between the attitudes towards TikTok and the level of social Alienation

Sample attitudes towards TikTok	Pearson correlation coefficient	Sig.
Social alienation level		
Normlessness	0.028	0.676
Social Isolation	0.072	0.281
Reification	0.062	0.352
& Aimlessness Meaninglessness	0.039	0.563
Powerlessness	0.006	0.932
(n)	450	

Table (7) shows that the hypothesis is rejected because there is no statistically significant relationship between the study sample's attitudes towards TikTok and their level of alienation.

H3: The social alienation level of the study sample varies according to their demographic characteristic (generation - gender - educational level - socioeconomic level).

**Table 8:** The statistical differences between the sample social alienation levels according to demographic characteristics

Demographics		Numbers	Mean	Standard deviation	Statistical indicators		
Alienation level					Test	DF	Sig
Gender	Male	168	2.4643	.59001	t = 0.465	448	0.496
	Female	282	2.5177	.55553			
Generation	Z	266	2.3534	.57991	t = 23.101	448	0.000 **
	Y	184	2.7065	.48125			
Education	Middle preparatory School	12	1.6667	.51640	F = 6.098	3 446	0.001 **
	High secondary school	78	2.4872	.55592			
	University education	330	2.5030	.55901			
	Post graduate education (Master and PhD)	30	2.8000	.41404			
	Total	450	2.4978	.56793			
Socioeconomic status	Low	58	2.4138	.68229	F = 0.406	2 447	0.667
	Medium	228	2.5000	.58370			
	High	164	2.5244	.50248			
	Total	450	2.4978	.56793			

As seen from the table (8), there are differences in the level of social alienation among the study sample according to their demographic variables (generation - gender - educational level - socioeconomic level).

**Regarding gender**, T-test value is (0.465) at a degree of freedom of (4) and a significance level of (0.496), so there are no differences in the social alienation level among the study sample according to gender.

**For generation**, T-test value is (23.101) at a degree of freedom of (448) and a significance level of (0.000), so there are differences in the level of social alienation among the study sample according to their generation. The statistical differences are in favor of Gen Y with an arithmetic mean of (2.7065), followed by Gen Z with an arithmetic mean of (2.3534).

**According to the educational level**, F-test value is (6.098) at degrees of freedom of (3) and (446) and a significance level of (0.001), so there are differences in the social alienation level among the study sample according to their educational level. The differences are in favor of who have postgraduate education with an arithmetic mean of (2.8000), followed by who have university education with an arithmetic mean of (2.5030), then the students of high secondary schools with an arithmetic mean of (2.4872), and finally the students of middle preparatory schools with an arithmetic mean of (1.6667).

**For the socioeconomic level**, F-test value is (0.406) at degrees of freedom (2) and (447) and a significance level of (0.667), so there are no differences in the level of social alienation among the study sample according to their socio-economic level. Thus, this hypothesis is partly accepted.

## 9. Conclusion

This study has aimed to identify the extent to which Gen Y and Z in Bahrain depend on TikTok and how this affect their level of social alienation. It has adopted the survey research method with the online questionnaire applying to a purposive sample of 450 respondents. It has employed Media System Dependency Theory (MSD). It is considered one of the first studies concerned with the impact of TikTok as a social media platform on the rate of social alienation of Gen Y & Z. We are pioneer in applying this study on the Bahraini society as a research community using this platform. The study tested the new orientation of Media System Dependency Theory, which examines the motives of dependence on social networking sites and the emotional, cognitive and behavioral effects of them.

The main results of the study:

1. Gen Z has more dependency on TikTok than Gen Y; the percentage of heavy use among Gen Z reaches to 57.1%, compared to 28.3% among Gen Y who use TikTok with a low level by 60.9%
2. The ritual motives of Gen Y and Z dependency on TikTok come in the first place, followed by the utilitarian ones. The respondents express that they only watch videos on TikTok by (81.5%) and (80%), then give a "like" to some videos by (41.3%) and (60.2%), then add some videos to their favorite list in the third place by (25%) and (50.4%).
3. For the preferred videos by the study sample, comedy videos ranked first by (66.3%) for Gen Y and (82%) for Gen Z, followed by travel videos by (32.6%) for Gen Y and (47.4%) for Gen Z, then cooking videos by (38%) for Gen Y and (34.6%) for Gen Z.
4. The positive aspects of TikTok are determined in its ease of use (88.7%) and being a source of income (83.0%). The TikTok negative aspects are determined in wasting time (61.7%), disseminating poor content (58.0%), and increasing social isolation (57.7%).
5. There is a relationship between the dependency level of Gen Y and Z on TikTok and their level of alienation in terms of social isolation, reification, meaninglessness and powerlessness. While there is no significant relationship between the dependency level of Gen Y and Z on TikTok and their level of normlessness.
6. There is no statistically significant relationship between the study sample's attitudes towards TikTok and their level of alienation.

7. There are no differences in the social alienation level among the study sample according to gender and their socio-economic level, while there are differences in the level of social alienation among the study sample according to their generation and educational level.
8. This study also established the fact that the inclination of people to Tiktok is moderately influenced by its easy and simple interface while making a feeble contribution in developing and enhancing the creativity skills of the people.

The results of this study partially agreed with some previous studies conducted in other societies, such as (Alhassan et al., 2018; Dwyer & Fraser, 2016; Ershad & Aghajani, 2017; N. Karizat, D. Delmonaco, M. Eslami, & N. J. P. o. t. A. o. H.-C. I. Andalibi, 2021) according to the results of these studies, there is a correlation between heavy dependency on the Internet (Usage addiction) particularly social networking sites and an increase in the feeling of alienation and social isolation among users.

This study also agreed with the study of (Belpasso, 2021), which shows that there is a positive relationship between the intensity of dependency on TikTok and the increase in reification and consumerism level among the study sample.

## 10. Limitations and Future Research Recommendations

Finally, the spatial and temporal limitations of this study were limited to the Kingdom of Bahrain on a purposive sample of TikTok users, during December 2022. It has been applied on two generations only (Y & Z).

Therefore, the researcher suggests conducting the same study on Gen Alpha and Gen X also, conducting more studies on TikTok and its psychological and social effects on its users, as well as studying TikTok as a marketing and advertising tool to measure its effectiveness in creating purchasing responses. The credibility of TikTokers and users' attitudes towards them can also be studied, as well as other competitor applications, such as Kwai application.

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