An Analysis of TikTok Addiction in Elementary School Students and Perceptions of Decreased Academic Achievement

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Abstract: *This study aims to analyze the level of TikTok addiction in elementary school students and its relationship with parental perceptions of their children's declining academic achievement. This study used a descriptive quantitative approach with a non-experimental correlational research type. The results of the analysis indicate that students' levels of TikTok addiction tend to be quite significant. Meanwhile, parental perceptions of their children's declining academic achievement varied, with most agreeing that TikTok affects their children's learning. Although no statistically significant relationship was found between the two variables, supporting data from teachers indicated that the majority of students experienced disruptions in learning time and decreased academic motivation due to TikTok use..*

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Keywords: *TikTok Addiction, Elementary School, Academic Achievement*

INTRODUCTION

Of the various social media platforms available, TikTok is one of the most popular and widely used. Its ability to present short, visually appealing content that is easily accessible to anyone makes TikTok popular with everyone, including children. This platform is used to create short videos accompanied by music and dance that can attract many people, especially elementary school-aged

children (Budiman, 2024) . TikTok entered Indonesia in 2017 and continues to grow to this day (Oktariani, 2023) . TikTok began to grow rapidly in 2020 when COVID-19 restricted many activities.

Ideally, during elementary school, children should engage in more meaningful learning and active play in the real world, such as playing with friends, exploring their surroundings, engaging in physical activities, and interacting directly with parents and teachers. However, the use of TikTok by elementary school-aged children is increasingly widespread and difficult to avoid. Many elementary school-aged children already have their own devices and spend hours each day watching, creating, and even sharing videos on TikTok (Munasti et al., 2022) . In fact, a preliminary analysis of a questionnaire completed by 113 fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students in Demak and Kudus Regencies found that 36.3% admitted to frequently opening the TikTok app daily. It's no surprise that early observations revealed that teachers reported that children were discussing viral TikTok videos almost every time they had class.

The extensive use of TikTok by elementary school-aged children raises concerns. As TikTok usage increases, questions arise about its positive and negative impacts on users. On the one hand, TikTok can be a platform for self-expression and, through videos, a way to learn new things (Bahrudin & Silviyana, 2024) . For elementary school children, TikTok can support language learning, especially foreign languages, without relying on teachers or textbooks (Hafifah et al., 2025) . The TikTok platform can also hone children's creativity, of course, with parental guidance and direction (Hafidzhoh et al., 2022) . On the other hand, excessive use can have negative impacts, one of which is a decline in ethics due to TikTok use, such as the use of coarse language and a lack of manners in interactions on TikTok becoming commonplace (Zahrotun Nahla et al., 2024) . Furthermore, excessive TikTok use can make children lazy in doing things, including studying (Hakim et al., 2025) . Using the TikTok app can lead to users becoming less social with their surroundings and less able to concentrate during learning (Fransiska & Via, 2023) . This is certainly a particular concern for parents when it comes to monitoring elementary school children's social media use to prevent it from disrupting their development.

According to Jean Piaget in Carranza-Pinedo & Diprossimo (2025) , the ages of 7 to 11 are the concrete operational period, a stage where children learn most effectively through direct interaction with real objects and concrete, logical thinking. When children are exposed to information that must be absorbed almost instantly, such as TikTok videos with a duration of 15 to 60 seconds that change rapidly, their ability to maintain concentration and develop logical thinking is affected. Several studies indicate that consuming such short video content can trigger the phenomenon of rapid context shifts, namely difficulty in maintaining focus at certain times. Therefore, there is a significant mismatch between the cognitive development needs of children in elementary school according to Piaget and the conditions of excessive media exposure.

Furthermore, Lev Vygotsky's social learning theory highlights the importance of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding, namely support from teachers throughout a child's educational process. Social relationships and guidance are crucial factors for children to effectively absorb new knowledge (Fadeev, 2019) . However, currently, TikTok use is often done individually, without adequate guidance or educational context. This results in children becoming passive users of digital content without gaining in-depth understanding, potentially neglecting the principles of interactive and contextual learning proposed by Vygotsky. This represents a theoretical gap between the theory of children's cognitive development and the TikTok content consumption habits of elementary school children.

Many previous studies have been conducted on the impact of TikTok use. One such study by Ismanto et al. (2025) showed that the intensity of watching TikTok, YouTube, and playing games significantly impacts low social-emotional development. This study is still not very specific, but it also provides a general overview of the influence of social media. Research conducted by Risnawati et al. (2022) detailed changes in the social behavior of fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 2 Temulus due to the use of the TikTok application. The results obtained showed that 80% of the changes in students were positive and 20% were negative. The influence of TikTok use on negative social changes, for example, imitates the booming *trend on TikTok , which* may be inappropriate for elementary school-aged children. However, there are also positive social changes in students seeking broad information and current *trends* , and can utilize TikTok to search for or as a learning resource. Therefore, this previous research is relevant to the current situation, where TikTok not only has a negative impact on students but can also have a positive impact, for example, by using the TikTok application as a medium or learning resource. Aini et al. (2023) conducted a study titled "The Relationship between TikTok Social Media and Learning Concentration." The results showed that the higher the use of TikTok, the lower the student's learning concentration. Conversely, the lower the use of TikTok, the higher the student's learning concentration. The findings of these studies and the researcher's initial findings served as the basic reference for this study.

This study has several novelties that distinguish it from previous research on the impact of TikTok on student achievement. While most previous studies have focused on adolescents or middle school students, this study specifically focuses on elementary school-aged children. Focusing on elementary school children is important because they are in a phase of cognitive development that is still heavily influenced by the digital environment and have immature levels of self-control. Furthermore, the approach used is triangulation of data from students, teachers, and parents, and the analysis focuses on the relationship between TikTok addiction levels and perceived decline in academic achievement in elementary school children. Few previous studies have examined this aspect quantitatively and

holistically at the elementary school level. Therefore, this study is expected to provide an analytical overview of TikTok addiction levels in elementary school students and its relationship to parental perceptions of declining academic achievement.

METHOD

This research is a descriptive quantitative study with a non-experimental correlational approach. The primary objective of this study was to determine the relationship between the level of TikTok addiction in elementary school students (independent variable) and the perception of decreased academic achievement (dependent variable) based on parental assessments. This study also incorporated data from teachers' perceptions to strengthen the findings through triangulation.

The subjects of this study consisted of three main groups, namely 113 elementary school students in grades IV, V, and VI in Demak and Kudus Regencies as the main respondents in filling out the TikTok addiction level questionnaire, 42 parents of students who provided assessments of changes in their children's learning behavior and academic achievement, and 31 teachers who provided general observations on the impact of TikTok use on students' learning motivation in class.

This study used a closed questionnaire instrument based on a 5-point Likert scale to collect data online. The data obtained were analyzed using the following statistical techniques; (1) converting the qualitative scale to a numerical score for each item of the student and parent questionnaire, (2) conducting a normality test on the student and parent questionnaire to determine the normality of the data using the Shapiro-Wilk Test, (3) because the data was not normally distributed ($p < 0.05$), so the correlation was continued using a non-parametric method, namely using the Spearman Rank Correlation Test, (4) and analysis of the teacher questionnaire data used as supporting qualitative and quantitative data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted by distributing online questionnaires to students, parents, and teachers. Students answered 10 questions using a 5-point Likert scale, including never, rarely, sometimes, often, and always.

Table 1 Student Questionnaire Results

Statement	Dominant answer
Open TikTok every day	Often (28.3%), Sometimes (34.5%)
Accessing TikTok >1 hour/session	Sometimes (32.7%), Rarely (29.2 %)
Watching TikTok during study time	Rarely (74.3%), Sometimes (12.4%)

Using TikTok until late at night	Never (52.2%)
Using TikTok during school breaks	Never (90.3%)
Prefer watching TikTok instead of studying	Never (49.6%), Sometimes (22.1%)
Having trouble concentrating on studying after using TikTok	Never (48.7%), Sometimes (27.4%)
Procrastinating on homework because of TikTok	Never (61.1%),Sometimes (17.7%)
Studying has become less since I started using TikTok regularly.	Never (43.4%), Sometimes (26.5%)
Value drops due to TikTok	Never (35.4%), Sometimes (33.6%)

Based on the results of a questionnaire completed by 113 elementary school students, it appears that the impact of TikTok use on the learning process shows a quite significant trend, although with varying intensity. Although the majority answered *"I study less since I regularly use TikTok," the statement* "I have never studied," there is a tendency for students to feel the impact since using TikTok regularly. Students feel that their study time has decreased. This indicates that some students experienced a decrease in study intensity after using TikTok regularly. The results of this questionnaire reflect that the phenomenon of TikTok social media use can affect students' academic achievement. Research Chiossi et al. (2023) confirmed that short videos impair *prospective memory* , the ability to remember to perform a task in the future. This has implications for procrastination, as evidenced by questionnaire results in which students admitted to *sometimes* procrastinating due to TikTok use.

Furthermore, (Said et al., 2025) revealed that TikTok significantly impacts concentration problems in college students, ultimately leading to decreased academic performance. This correlation between TikTok use and learning problems can also be applied to elementary school students, albeit within a different context of cognitive development. The impaired focus experienced by elementary school students after using TikTok, as demonstrated in a questionnaire, can reduce the effectiveness of the learning process. The results of this questionnaire also align with research (Gong & Tao, 2024) involving 1,052 elementary school students in China. The study found that short video usage was negatively correlated with academic achievement. Attention deficit disorder was the primary mediator between usage duration and academic achievement. This reinforces the hypothesis that it's not solely TikTok as a platform that has negative impacts, but rather how and to what extent its use can disrupt students' learning focus.

From a social perspective, (Tpoi & Panggalo, 2025) found that high-intensity TikTok use can lead to a decline in children's social skills, such as decreased cooperation, tolerance, and interest in interacting directly with peers. Although the questionnaire results did not explicitly indicate these indicators,

statements such as " *prefer watching TikTok to studying"* could be an early sign of shifts in social behavior patterns and learning interests. Thus, the collected questionnaire data shows patterns consistent with various recent scientific studies. TikTok, as a highly popular social media platform, can significantly impact elementary school students' learning focus, motivation, and even academic achievement if not supervised wisely. Therefore, strengthening digital literacy, regulating usage time, and actively involving teachers and parents in guiding children's use of social media is necessary.

Table 2 Results of the Parent Questionnaire

Statement	Dominant answer
Kids have their own TikTok accounts	Disagree (57.1%)
Kids use TikTok until night	Strongly disagree (57,,1)
Parents rarely monitor the content their children watch.	Disagree (40.5%)
Children are difficult to get to learn	Agree (38.1%)
Children prefer TikTok to studying	Disagree (38.1%), Agree (23.8%)
There has been a decline in grades since the child was active on TikTok	Agree (35.7%)
Children often lose focus because of TikTok	Agree (47.6%)
Parents advise children to reduce TikTok	Agree (52.4%), Strongly Agree (42.9%)

A questionnaire analysis involving 42 parents showed that most of them perceived their children using TikTok more often than studying, and that there was a trend toward a decline in academic performance, although not yet very noticeable. The average score for the perception of "decreased grades" reached 3.8 on a five-point scale, indicating that the results fell into the "Agree" category.

According to research conducted by Nurhayati & Langlang Handayani (2024) , the data obtained showed that students who used TikTok more frequently usually showed lower levels of learning motivation, although this relationship was weak. This finding is also in line with the results of research by Purboningsih et al. (2023) , which confirmed that both parents and adolescents in Indonesia are aware of the benefits and risks of social media use, including the tendency for digital content to take over time for meaningful activities such as studying. Furthermore, the theory proposed by Batubara & Risfianti (2024) emphasizes that active parental involvement in supervising children while browsing the internet usually results in a better digital experience and helps support academic achievement. Without such supervision, children are potentially exposed to material that not only reduces learning time but also interferes with the development of focus and motivation.

Then, based on the student and parent questionnaire data, the researchers conducted a normality test (Shapiro-Wilk). The following results were obtained.

Table 3 Results of Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk)

Data	W Statistics	*p-value*	Interpretation
Total Student Score	0.833	7.41×10^{-10}	The distribution is not normal because $p < 0.05$
Total Parent Score	0.708	7.84×10^{-8}	The distribution is not normal because $p < 0.05$

Table 3 shows that *the p-value* for the total student score is only 7.41×10^{-10} and the total parent score is only 7.84×10^{-8}, below 0.05. This means that both data (student and parent) are not normally distributed, so the subsequent correlation analysis uses Spearman Rank, which does not assume normality.

Table 4 Results of Spearman Rank Correlation Test

Statistics	Mark	Interpretation
Coefficient (ρ)	0.102	**Very weak positive** correlation between student and parent perceptions
p-value	0.520	**Not significant** ($p > 0.05$), meaning the correlation is not statistically meaningful

Based on Table 4, the results of the Spearman Rank correlation test show a very weak positive correlation between students' and parents' perceptions, with a coefficient (ρ) of 0.102 and *a p-value of* 0.520, indicating a non-significant result. Although there appears to be a positive correlation between students' and parents' perceptions, the relationship is very weak and insignificant. This indicates that students' perceptions of TikTok addiction do not align with or always reflect their parents' perceptions of the same issue.

These findings align with several previous studies. For example, research by Imawan et al. (2023) found that parents complained that their children often create content deemed inappropriate and can neglect their own responsibilities. However, children admitted that social media platforms like TikTok make it easier for them to find useful and up-to-date information. Some felt that social media made them more creative by seeing creators or even viral trends, even though they initially only wanted to follow trends without realizing they were also creating (Rosyidah & Ismeirita, 2023) .

Student and parent questionnaires showed no significant correlation between TikTok addiction and decreased student achievement. However, a questionnaire completed by 31 teachers revealed the following findings.

Table 5 Teacher Questionnaire Results

Statement	Dominant answer
Students talk about TikTok in class	Agree (64.5%)
Students lose focus during lessons	Agree (54.8%)
Students are tired/lack of sleep	Disagree (48.8%), Agree (29%)
Students' academic interest is declining	Agree (61.3%)
The grades of students who are active on TikTok are decreasing	Agree (38.7%), Disagree (35.5%)
Students who rarely use TikTok excel	Disagree (38.7%), Agree (32.3%)
TikTok influences students' learning motivation	Agree (58.1%)
Students' study time is disrupted by TikTok	Agree (74.25)
Schools should hold digital literacy education	Strongly agree (58.1%), Agree (41.9%)

Based on the results of the teacher questionnaire, it appears that the TikTok phenomenon is quite dominant in students' lives. As many as 64.5% of teachers observed that students frequently discuss TikTok in class, indicating that the platform has become part of students' daily lives and even permeates the learning environment. Furthermore, 54.8% of teachers stated that students lose focus during lessons. This suggests that TikTok use directly impacts student concentration in the classroom.

Regarding physical impacts, teachers observed that the majority of students (48.8%) showed no signs of fatigue or sleep deprivation due to TikTok use, although 29% of students appeared tired in class. This indicates that not all students were physically affected, but some still showed signs of sleep deprivation. In terms of academic interest, 61.3% of teachers assessed that students' interest in learning had decreased. This indicates a shift in attention from academic activities to social media activities.

Teachers' perceptions of TikTok's impact on student grades also varied. While 38.7% of teachers observed a decline in grades among students who actively used TikTok, 35.5% observed no significant impact. Furthermore, according to teacher observations, 38.7% disagreed that students who rarely used TikTok consistently performed better, while 32.3% agreed. This suggests that academic achievement is not solely determined by the frequency of TikTok use, but also by other factors such as intrinsic motivation and family support. The impact of TikTok on learning motivation is also a concern for teachers. 58.1% of teachers believe that TikTok negatively impacts student learning motivation.

Furthermore, 74.25% of teachers observed that students' learning time was frequently disrupted by TikTok use. This is a crucial finding, as it demonstrates that TikTok is not merely entertainment but also significantly displaces time that should be allocated for learning. Seeing this significant impact, teachers strongly support the need for digital literacy education in schools. Fifty-eight percent of teachers strongly agreed and 41.9% agreed that schools need to provide appropriate education on social media use.

Overall, the results of the teacher questionnaire indicate that TikTok has had a significant impact on student behavior, focus, and motivation in the classroom. While its impact on grades is not fully agreed upon, disruption to the daily learning process is a major concern that requires serious attention. Schools, along with parents, are expected to provide consistent digital literacy education so that students can manage their time well and prioritize learning obligations amidst the onslaught of increasingly compelling social media. This is reinforced by the opinion of Ratumakin et al. (2023) that teachers and parents need to better understand how they can help their children use social media in a healthy and responsible manner.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that TikTok use among elementary school students significantly impacts their behavior and learning styles. Although the correlation analysis between TikTok addiction and parents' perceptions of declining academic performance did not show a statistically significant relationship, data collected from teacher observations indicated that TikTok disrupted students' concentration, motivation, and time spent studying. Many teachers noted that students frequently discussed TikTok in class, lost concentration during lessons, and showed a reduced interest in academics. This phenomenon suggests that the effects of TikTok use can be measured not only in terms of academic grades but also in relation to students' daily behavior and learning consistency. Therefore, collaboration between schools and parents is needed in providing digital literacy education and appropriate supervision to ensure that social media use among elementary school students remains controlled and does not interfere with their academic or social development.

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