The Relationship Between Depression and Active and Passive Usage of TikTok

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INTRODUCTION

- 20% of teens experience depression before adulthood
- 22% of GenZ and Millenials use TikTok
- Among TikTok users, average screen time usage is 52 mins per day
- Previous studies indicate a positive correlation between Passive social media use (viewing content without engagement) and depression
- There is a gap in our understanding of how depression plays a role in TikTok use among adolescents

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between depression symptoms, screen time and the active and passive usage of TikTok among adolescents.

METHODS

Setting:
- Participants completed an online survey hosted by Google Forms

Recruitment
- Inclusion criteria were using TikTok and 13-24 years old
- Survey was promoted on social media platforms Snapchat and Instagram through known contacts and on TikTok based on the TikTok algorithm

Measures
- Depression was assessed by the PHQ-8 (max score:24)
- Active use(interacting with content) and passive use qustions adapted from previous studies to be specific to TikTok (max active score:24, max passive score:18)
- Active questions included: How often do you… Post? Only like a post? Comment on a post? Share a post?
- Passive use questions included: How often do you… Visit a creators profile? Save a post? Report a post?
- Screen time: How much time do you spend on TikTok per day?

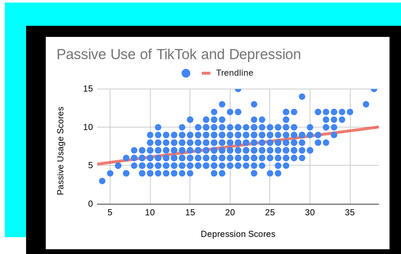
METHODS CONT.

Analysis
- Each worded response was expressed as a number, 1-6 for the active and passive usage related questions and 0-3 for each of the PHQ-8 questions.
- Correlations were tested between depression and and the social media variables: active usage, passive usage and screen time.

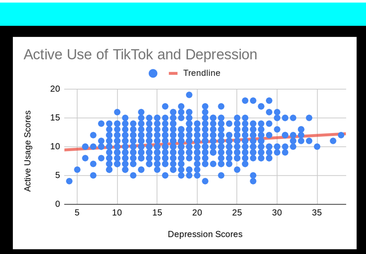
RESULTS

Demographics
- 764 participants
- Ages: 13(n=86, 11.3%), 14(n=99, 13%), 15(n=134, 17.5%), 16(n=127, 16.6%), 17(n=125, 16.4%), 18(n=67, 8.8%), 19(n=55, 7.2%), 20(n=30, 3.9%), 21(n=17, 2.2%), 22(n=4, 0.5%), 23(n=12, 1.6%), 24(n=8, 1%)
- Average age:16.2 Age standard deviation:2.3
- Genders: Female(n=622, 81.4%), Male(n=82, 10.7%), Trans-M-F(n=4, 0.5%), Trans-F-M(n=12, 1.6%), Gender Non-conforming(n=27, 3.5%), gender fluid(n=3, 0.3%), other/prefer not to say(n=14, 2%)
- Not of Hispanic or Latino descent(697), of Hispanic or Latino descent(67)

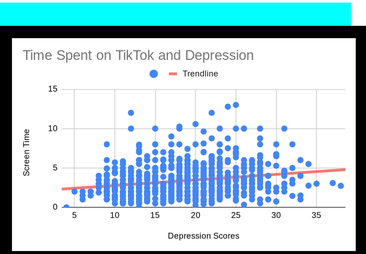
Descriptive information about depression and TikTok Use
- Average depression score:18.3
- Average active TikTok Use Score:10.6
- Average passive TikTok use score:7.3
- Average screen time on TikTok:3.3 hours Screen time standard deviation:2



The passive use of TikTok is related to Depression with a correlation value of 0.46.



The active use of TikTok is not strongly related to depression with its correlation value of 0.19.



Screen time on TikTok is not strongly related to depression with a correlation value of 0.2.

CONCLUSIONS

-People with more severe depression appear to be more passive users of TikTok.
-Depression has little effect with how much time someone uses TikTok or how activly they use it.

- The correlation of passive use and depression among adolescents on tik tok is similar to the correlation of passive use and depression among adults on social media.
- Possibility that not all participants are in the US given that TikTok is a global platform.

To further this research, using a more diverse group on TikTok based on their interests would be more representative of all adolescents since TikTok's algorithm determines what people see based on the type of post the person interacts with the most.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Lydia Oakleaf(@lydiaontheleft on TikTok) promoted my survey on her TikTok platform
- Bradley Kerr was my mentor who helped guide me throught this research process.

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