

SOCIAL AWARENESS OF CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN THE PHILIPPINES IN RELATION TO THE TIKTOK USAGE OF GRADE 9 STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study, entitled *“Social Awareness of Contemporary Issues in the Philippines in Relation to the TikTok usage of Grade 9 Students,”* examined the relationship between TikTok usage and the level of social awareness of contemporary Philippine issues among Grade 9 students of Our Lady of Peace School–Antipolo City. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design involving 147 Grade 9 students who were active TikTok users. TikTok usage was analyzed in terms of duration, frequency, and purpose, while social awareness was measured through a sixty-item questionnaire covering environmental issues, poverty, graft and corruption, and human rights. Results revealed that TikTok is heavily integrated into students’ daily routines, with 74.1% of respondents using the application for three hours or more daily and 90.5% reporting daily usage. Students primarily used TikTok for tension-free entertainment purposes, followed by cognitive needs such as learning and information acquisition. Despite TikTok’s popularity, respondents demonstrated a high level of social awareness across all four contemporary issues, with environmental issues and graft and corruption obtaining the highest composite means (3.60), followed by poverty (3.44) and human rights (3.37). Statistical analysis showed no significant relationship between students’ social awareness and TikTok usage in terms of duration and frequency. However, a mixed relationship was found in terms of purpose. While TikTok use did not significantly influence awareness of poverty and graft and corruption, low but statistically significant relationships were observed between purposeful TikTok use and awareness of environmental and human rights issues. These findings suggest that TikTok, although primarily an entertainment platform, can serve as a supplementary tool for promoting social awareness when used intentionally.

Keywords: *TikTok usage, Social Awareness, Contemporary Issues, Social Media, Duration, Frequency, Purpose*

INTRODUCTION

Are students becoming increasingly hooked on the social media platform TikTok? Are they using the application to stay informed about current events and societal issues? Do students have sufficient knowledge of the latest social issues in the Philippines? More importantly, can they be considered socially aware individuals? These questions highlight the growing role of social media in shaping the perspectives and awareness of young people today. This study aims to explore these questions and examine the relationship between the use of the TikTok application and the social awareness of students regarding contemporary issues.

As the world continues to become more technologically advanced, people now have multiple ways to stay informed about events occurring in their communities and across the globe. Traditional sources of news, such as newspapers, radio, and television, have gradually been supplemented by digital platforms. Social media applications such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, Google, and TikTok have become widely used sources of information, especially among young audiences. These platforms allow users to access news quickly and conveniently through their smartphones and other digital devices.

Among these platforms, TikTok has emerged as one of the most influential social media applications for young users. TikTok was launched by the Chinese technology company ByteDance in 2016 and quickly gained popularity worldwide due to its short-form video format and highly personalized recommendation algorithm. The application allows users to create and watch short videos that range from entertainment content to educational discussions, news updates, and social commentary. With over a billion active users globally, TikTok is the most popular platform among Gen Z, with 77% of them saying they use it to find new items and 63% for news updates (Oladipo, 2025). Short videos posted on TikTok can cover a variety of topics, including environmental issues, political developments, social movements, and other contemporary concerns that are relevant to society.

Recent studies indicate that TikTok is increasingly being used as a source of news and information. According to the Pew Research Center, more people are now encountering news on TikTok, and the percentage of users who regularly obtain news through the platform has grown significantly in recent years (Pew Research Center, 2025). In fact, about 55% of TikTok users report that they regularly get news from the platform (McClain et al., 2026), demonstrating how social media has transformed the way individuals consume information. This trend is particularly evident among younger audiences, who are more likely to rely on social media platforms for news updates compared to traditional media outlets.

The popularity of TikTok as an information source can also be attributed to the rise of short-form video content. Many users prefer watching brief, engaging videos rather than reading lengthy articles or watching long news broadcasts. Research suggests that shorter content formats are more appealing to modern audiences due to declining attention spans. Studies indicate that the average human attention span has decreased over time, which explains the increasing demand for concise and visually engaging information formats (Kajabi, 2024). As a result, TikTok's short-video format provides users with quick access to important information and updates.

Furthermore, TikTok's algorithm plays a significant role in distributing information to users. The platform's "For You Page" recommends videos based on user interests and engagement patterns, allowing individuals to encounter a wide range of content—even from creators they do not follow. This system exposes users to diverse perspectives, including discussions about current events, social movements, and societal challenges. Studies have found that a large majority of TikTok users report seeing content related to current events and news topics on the platform, including opinions, commentary, and information about breaking news (Shearer et al., 2024).

Viewing the digital state of the Philippines, Facebook remains the most widely used social media platform, followed by other major networks like YouTube and Instagram, largely due to its broad range of functions, including communication, content sharing, and access to news and services. According to recent data, a large proportion of Filipino internet users report using Facebook regularly, and it consistently maintains the highest usage rates in the country. Instagram also ranks highly because of its strong visual content appeal, especially among younger users who enjoy sharing photos and visual stories (Kemp, 2025).

In comparison, TikTok ranks third in overall usage among Filipino social media platforms, trailing behind Facebook and Instagram in terms of the number of users but still maintaining a significant presence. This is because TikTok's short-form video format appeals particularly to audiences who prefer quick, engaging, and highly personalized content, which has driven its rapid growth and high engagement levels in the local context. Filipinos spend a notable amount of time on TikTok despite it having slightly fewer overall users than Instagram, reflecting the platform's strong ability to capture sustained attention and engagement through bite-sized videos (Kemp, 2025).

In the context of education, middle school students are increasingly showing interest in discussing real-world issues and social concerns in the classroom. According to Tilley (2020), students at this stage of development begin to view the world within a broader social context and become more curious about current events and societal challenges. This developmental stage makes it an appropriate time to encourage discussions about contemporary issues and foster social awareness.

Social awareness is an important skill that students must develop as part of their educational growth. Being socially aware enables students to understand social

problems, empathize with others, and analyze complex societal issues critically. It also encourages them to become active participants in addressing problems that affect their communities and society as a whole. In today's digital era, social media platforms such as TikTok may play a role in shaping students' awareness of these issues by providing accessible and engaging information. Therefore, examining the relationship between TikTok usage and students' social awareness can provide valuable insights into how digital media influences the development of socially responsible and informed individuals.

Background Of The Study

The foundation of the Basic Education Development Plan (BEDP) 2030 is rooted in the goals and objectives of the Department of Education, including the national government's development agenda, international commitments, and global trends in education. It explains connections between the relevant organizations in the technical, higher education, and early childhood sectors of vocational education. It is based on the objective of the department that enables every Filipino to reach their greatest potential and make a significant contribution to a united country through the defense and advancement of their educational rights. (DepEd, 2022).

As mentioned, global trends in education involve the use of Social Media as a learning tool for students. According to Eckel (2022), people are always on social media and their phones these days. As a result, online learning has increased. More and more students are using online resources for their studies. Students can use social media as a useful tool in the real world. They can talk about their work, get criticism, and connect with people who can provide resources.

One of the popular social media platforms these days is TikTok; considering that TikTok is a relatively new platform, overall surveys do indicate certain benefits. For example, children between the ages of four and eighteen who use the app spend an average of 91 minutes a day on it. One in four TikTok users uses the social media platform for educational purposes, and 69% of those users have said that TikTok videos help them do their homework. Students most frequently use TikTok educational content for their English classes, followed by history, science, and math classes. These findings suggest that teachers who wish to grab their students' attention should think about using TikTok simply because of its widespread appeal among this age group (GCU, 2023).

As stated in BEDP 2023, Global Trends in Education, such as technological integration, are transforming K–12 education by encouraging student participation, personalization, and equipping them with the digital skills they are going to need in the twenty-first century. The incorporation of these methods and resources will be crucial in determining how learning is shaped over time as education develops (Ascione, 2023). Having stated that, the researcher, a Social Studies teacher at Our Lady of Peace School, Antipolo City, observed that technology such as cellphones and tablets is being used by the Grade 9 students in their free time based on the posted TikTok videos, reels, and stories on social media after their class hour. With that, a Pre-survey was conducted by the researcher, and it was identified that 95% of the Grade 9 students of Our Lady of

Peace School, Antipolo City, had a TikTok account. Only seventeen (17) out of two hundred thirty-two (232) Grade 9 students don't have this application. With this, it is applicable to conduct this survey to this level since almost everyone is using this application.

For this reason, the researcher wanted to investigate the relationship between Grade 9 students who used TikTok and their social awareness of current issues in the Philippines. The goal was to find out that, despite the popularity of the application, students are still aware of the problems that are happening in the country, and that TikTok has helped them be socially aware. According to Palmer (2024), TikTok offers more than just amusing videos of lip-syncing and dance moves. It has evolved into a vibrant area where young people can acquire and exchange valuable information, as well as express their creativity. TikTok has evolved into a news and informational platform, marking a significant shift in how young people use social media and engage with content. TikTok is becoming an increasingly important instrument for raising awareness and disseminating knowledge, impacting discussions on a wide range of subjects worldwide. promoting TikTok as a resource that affects how young people interact with news and material.

Considering that the topic for the Social Studies of Grade 9 level is under Economics, the researcher, being an Economics teacher, incorporated current news and events into the discussion for the students to feel the connection of economics to daily life, and that the economy can be affected by the issues happening in the country. The researcher found that most of the Grade 9 students are having a hard time relating to or identifying the details of current issues in the country, and sometimes have zero awareness of the said problem. According to the research findings by Ibardeloza et al. (2022), their results suggest that students' involvement and participation in relation to controversial issues arising in the country are unaffected by their exposure to social media, indicating that participants frequently engage in political and societal discussions out of personal interest and choice.

With this, the researcher adopted a survey questionnaire containing the social issues to analyze the relationship between the usage of TikTok and the social awareness of the Grade 9 students. The first part of the survey questionnaire determined the Grade 9 students' usage of the TikTok application in terms of duration, frequency, and their purpose. Followed by the adopted survey questionnaire, which has a sixty-item questionnaire that determines their social awareness.

This study hopes to benefit students by making them open to participating in and solving social issues, and opening their eyes to social problems that can be seen on TikTok. This study will also enlighten teachers on the students' new way of gathering news, and can be an eye-opener for teachers to utilize TikTok as an additional learning material that can be used as a teaching tool. Considering the statement from Ibardeloza et al. (2022), the public today has access to a wealth of knowledge on any topic,

particularly politics and social issues, thanks to the development of online sources of information.

TikTok – a popular application worldwide- can be an alternative news source for students. The researcher's goal is to determine the relationship between Grade 9 students who use the TikTok Application and their social awareness of the contemporary issues in the Philippines. To further discuss this, the researcher included relevant literature and studies that supported the key factors for this study.

News Consumption

In the modern world, being updated on things that are going on, such as the latest trends, the hottest gossip, and societal issues, is easy with a click of a fingertip. People can now obtain news in more ways than ever before. Today's news comes in as many forms and sizes as the people who consume it, from a daily newspaper delivered to your door and 4K video on your TV to a brief text message that can be quickly read (Eidosmedia, 2022).

From a traditional and old-fashioned way of reading news in a newspaper to listening to a radio broadcast, Social issues can now be seen and watched through television, computers, laptops, tablets, and even mobile phones, with the help of social media applications. Six Degrees, a cutting-edge platform that invented the idea of making user profiles and connecting with people online, was introduced at the beginning of social media, setting the stage for the later development of the digital communication environment. This raises the question of how long ago social media was created. The answer was revealed when Six Degrees debuted in 1997. This signaled the beginning of a time when digital platforms would play a crucial role in professional and personal communication (SciencePOD, 2024).

Global Trends In Education

The Department of Education uses the BEDP 2030 as a strategic roadmap to enhance basic education delivery and quality, as well as students' experiences in the classroom. The BEDP 2030 is adopted by the Department as the DepEd's long-term plan that encompasses all formal education from elementary school, junior high school, and kindergarten (DepEd, 2022).

DepEd's goals and priorities, the national government's development plan, international commitment, and global trends in education serve as the foundation for the Basic Education Development Plan (BEDP) 2030. It is based on the objective of the department that enables every Filipino to reach their greatest potential and make a significant contribution to a united country through the protection and advancement of their educational rights (DepEd, 2022).

In addition to wishing the Department of Education the best of luck, the Secretary of Finance praised the department for its efforts in creating the Basic Education Plan 2030. Through this planning phase, the education system can keep up with the rapidly

changing environment by utilizing technology to provide Filipino children with the skills and competencies up to par with global standards, he explained, making the BEDP 2030 a sound roadmap to rebuild our educational system and prepare the next generation for a competitive and inclusive economy (DepEd, 2022).

Digital technology has emerged as a societal requirement to guarantee education as a fundamental human right, particularly in a society where crises and wars are occurring increasingly frequently (UNESCO, 2024). Education around the world has been modified to reflect a culture that is constantly changing. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused unpredictable changes in the educational landscape. To survive and adapt to the crisis, innovations are emerging in the field of educational trends (Thuy, 2022).

According to Thuy (2022), A rapidly expanding trend in education is the use of mobile learning, or M-Learning, which takes advantage of the widespread usage of smartphones and tablets to enable studying at any time and from any location. 92.1% of internet users access the internet through a mobile device, according to recent figures, underscoring the potential reach of M-Learning. This method makes education more accessible to a wider audience by providing flexibility and convenience. Since the average individual uses mobile apps for 4.8 hours every day, M-Learning capitalizes on this trend by offering bite-sized and on-the-go learning experiences that can increase retention and engagement. Bite-sized learning, sometimes referred to as microlearning, entails presenting material in digestible, manageable chunks. The typical student is believed to have an attention span of ten to fifteen minutes. However, it appears to be shortened for young children. In order to provide learners with simple and concise knowledge, bite-sized learning was created. When compared to standard learning approaches, microlearning can increase knowledge retention by as much as 20%.

In relation to Mobile Learning, which offers bite-sized information, higher education institutions had to quickly switch from in-person to online instruction, and social media platforms emerged as a potent tool for efficient instruction. TikTok, being one of the most popular social media platforms, provided a quick, entertaining, and engaging approach to get unrestricted access to educational materials, according to data from a survey given to 80 students. It also improves retention and creativity, which makes it a good teaching method for the twenty-first century that encourages independent learning. This social media platform is ideal for a generation that wants to watch content in the form of rich videos that enhance self-esteem. making it a cutting-edge teaching tool that promotes an entirely new type of social learning (Dasoo, 2023).

According to Dasoo (2023), the nature of students (Gen Z and beyond, which includes the Grade 9 students of this school year 2025-2026) has made us increasingly aware that teaching and learning must take place in methods that are different from those of the past. Students of this generation can express themselves using the internet and a technology gadget like a tablet, laptop, or smartphone. Alongside this is the requirement to maintain student attention and retention during a module, which presents a chance to implement new and engaging teaching techniques, such as social media usage. Social

media may give students quick, enjoyable, and accessible access to important educational information. Additionally, social media may enhance communication abilities, give instant access to relevant data, and establish learning social networks.

Rise Of Social Media – Tiktok

When did social media begin to take off? The use of these platforms increased exponentially in the early 2000s. Giants like Facebook and X were made possible by Six Degrees' ground-breaking business approach. (SciencePOD, 2024).

These days, social media plays a significant role in students' daily lives, influencing their interactions with the outside world and their ability to keep informed, sometimes positively, while sometimes negatively. Students can stay informed and educated on significant topics by using social media as a platform to interact with current events and social issues. Additionally, it increases students' awareness of various cultures and points of view by facilitating the exchange of varied experiences and opinions (Guardian, 2024).

One of the social media platforms that has been popular these past few years, especially during the pandemic, is the TikTok application. TikTok was launched, and its initial user base suggests its success was never guaranteed. In 2018, there were just 55 million app users; by the summer of 2021, that figure had skyrocketed to one billion. Although the pandemic undoubtedly contributed to TikTok's global popularity, the app was already gaining traction before the lockdowns, as evidenced by the 693 million downloads it received in 2019 and the 850 million it received in 2020. Additional data demonstrates how TikTok has swiftly upended the social media landscape. TikTok was named the most popular website of 2021 by the American technology company Cloudflare, and it had about 1.5 billion users in 2022. It's evident that TikTok is growing and has upended the social media landscape (Raphael, 2023).

TikTok has become a digital entertainment playground, with Filipinos spending an average of 40 hours and 39 minutes a month on the platform. With features like tier list filtering, viral challenges, duet, and stitch functions, users can easily do more than just watch content on the platform (Howe, 2025).

Popularity Of Short-Form Video

So, why did the TikTok application become popular? The reason is that it provides a venue for short-form videos. According to Kajabi (2024), the waning human attention span is one of the most frequently mentioned explanations for the popularity of short-form videos. According to studies, the average attention span has decreased from 12 seconds in 2000 to just 8.25 seconds. This implies that fast-paced content is more in line with the attention span of modern audiences. This window is ideal for short videos, which let viewers take in information without wasting time or focus. Like appetizers for hunger, short videos offer rapid satisfaction. The statistics make it very evident that viewers are most interested in short videos. Less than 90-second videos retain 50% of viewers, according

to statistics, which is significantly greater than that of longer videos. This is consistent with the need for "snackable" material.

The popularity of short-form videos can be primarily ascribed to how quickly people consume content online. Given that people's attention spans are shorter than ever, content that is easy to understand and quick to engage with has a higher chance of grabbing and holding viewers' attention. This is addressed by short-form videos, which present information in manageable chunks that are simpler for viewers to watch, appreciate, and distribute (Dodds, 2024). Additionally, there is a resounding preference for video over text, particularly when learning things. 96% of respondents said they prefer short-form videos for efficient and rapid learning (Kajabi, 2024).

TikTok videos offer everything you can think of, such as music, dance, movies, comedy, fashion, latest trends, religious content, educational materials, and social news. Because of its humorous tone and short-form video format, the website could seem like an unusual news source. But for today's digital natives, who are used to ingesting information in short bursts, TikTok is the perfect place to quench their news demands (HOM Team, 2022).

According to a recent Pew Research Center survey, there has been a noticeable change in the way people consume news, with TikTok being a major news source in 2023. The percentage of TikTok users who access news through the app has increased from 22% to 43%, indicating this development (Hay, 2023). Thus, making TikTok one of the social media platforms that became a go-to source of news for students, increasing their social awareness.

TikTok is becoming a popular source of news information for a variety of additional reasons. Such as having a Bite-sized nature of information, wherein Bite-sized learning is a new educational approach made possible by TikTok's distinctive style of short films, which are only 60 seconds long. Nowadays, people use TikTok to find rapid, easily assimilated information on a variety of subjects, including history, science, personal growth, and life tips. Content producers are reducing difficult ideas into digestible chunks, which makes education more approachable and interesting for the younger audience.

Second, there is Social and Cultural awareness, wherein TikTok has shown itself to be an effective medium for bringing social and cultural issues to the public's attention. Frequently, challenges and trends are used to disseminate messages like inclusivity, sustainability, and activism. Because of the platform's worldwide scope, users may learn about many viewpoints, which helps the younger generation develop empathy and understanding. Overall, the way TikTok has changed from being a platform for fun to becoming a multipurpose knowledge source illustrates how social media and content consumption are evolving (Palmer, 2024).

Tiktok Usage In Terms Of Duration, Frequency, And Purpose

Let us identify the usage of the Grade 9 students based on the duration, frequency, and purpose. According to Manaher (2023), Duration is the amount of time that a specific activity or event occurs. It is the length of time something endures or persists. Duration, as used in the term, describes how long a specific action or behavior is carried out. On the other hand, Frequency describes how often a specific action or occurrence takes place during a given time period. The rate at which something occurs or is repeated over time is what it is.

The Philippines, labelled as a digital powerhouse, boasts 90.8 million social media user IDs and consistently ranks among the top countries in terms of average daily usage (Frequency). Not only is this a matter of sheer numbers, but it also reflects a deeply embedded "always-online" culture that is enhanced by Filipinos' well-known warmth and friendly personality. Being heavily attached to the online world, the TikTok application ranks third among the most popular social networking platforms in the Philippines. TikTok is used by 81.6% of Filipino internet users monthly. Even now, it's a preferred search engine that frequently outperforms Google. Because the system predicts user preferences, it keeps users glued to their screens. For many people, TikTok has become the new default (Howe, 2025).

Statistics on social media in the Philippines reveal the significant role these platforms play in Filipinos' daily lives. As of January 2025, there were 90.8 million social media user identities in the nation, equivalent to 78% of the total population. Filipinos spend more time online than people in most other nations, with an average of 3 hours and 32 minutes (Duration) each day spent on social media (Howe, 2025).

According to Duarte (2025), statistics showed that the average user spends over an hour on TikTok every day. Since 2019, the usual time spent on TikTok has more than doubled. With this, TikTok is becoming an increasingly important instrument for raising awareness and disseminating knowledge, impacting discussions on a wide range of subjects worldwide. promoting TikTok as a resource that affects how young people interact with news and material (Palmer, 2024).

An online survey was used to conduct the survey among 400 National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) students. According to the study's findings, social media sites have the ability to improve student engagement as well as knowledge acquisition (Olley et.al., 2023). In connection with knowledge acquisition by Olley (2023) and disseminating knowledge by Palmer (2024). The researcher viewed the purpose of using the TikTok application with the help of a theory that is focused on explaining why people use social media. According to the research conducted by Kasirye (2022), the "Uses and Gratifications Theory", first proposed by Katz and Blumler in the early 1940s, aims to explain why people use particular media, what needs drive their use, and the satisfactions they derive from employing them. The argument was initially presented in the past to explain why individuals chose to utilize the various media available in the 1940s. Although the media may have an impact on people, the theory acknowledges that people have massive authority to decide what they want from the media. Additionally, the theorists

Katz et al. (1973) divided the uses and gratifications hypothesis into other needs, such as tension-free needs, affective needs, cognitive needs, personal integrative needs, and social integrative needs.

Among the five needs stated in the theory, three needs stand out: cognitive needs, affective needs, and social integrative needs, which are the possible and related needs in developing the social awareness of students.

Social media sites like TikTok are becoming more and more popular, raising questions about how they may affect cognitive abilities, especially in students. According to some research, TikTok can encourage creativity and participation in educational situations when used responsibly; however, excessive use of the app is associated with academic difficulties like reduced study time and impaired information retention (Opara, 2025). Recent studies suggest that TikTok can be an effective medium for educating young people on various topics, including politics, tourism, live online sales, government information releases, health-related issues, and educational content. (Montag, 2021).

According to Malloli (2020), people use media to satisfy a variety of requirements, such as cognitive, affective, and social integrative, wherein people with cognitive needs use their intelligence in media to obtain information and learn new things, some people with affective needs wanted emotional demands; they would turn to the media to satisfy any desired emotions, joys, or feelings. In this sense, they would gain appreciation and understand the certain issue or topic they encounter, which would build awareness. And lastly, interaction with family, friends, and society is a requirement for social integration. People look to social media platforms to meet this demand, which would allow people to communicate with other individuals and obtain information, and acquire knowledge to develop and enhance social awareness.

Social Awareness

The fundamental concept of social awareness is the ability to consider the opinions of other individuals, groups, or communities and to use that understanding while interacting with them (Bera et.al., 2023). There is more to social awareness than simply being able to understand and react to problems and difficulties in life, whether they are interpersonal, personal, or general. Additionally, it is an ability and a compassionate mentality (Barinua et.al., 2022).

Students need to work on developing their ability to be socially aware. Social awareness refers to being conscious of and knowledgeable about our environment. This encompasses all of the elements that contribute to the social climate in which we live, such as surroundings, cultures, communities, social norms, struggles, and issues (Straw, 2024). Empathically taking into account the opinions of others around oneself and using that understanding to inform one's speech and behavior in a given social setting is what is meant by Social Awareness. An individual and their environment will interact more harmoniously and favorably when viewed through this socially conscious lens (Barowski, 2023).

According to PAS (2023), as we mature, societal awareness and social awareness abilities enable us to comprehend how we fit into and contribute to the world and community, as well as how we obtain the necessities of life. Ultimately, social awareness skills will enable us to appreciate professionalism in the workplace and facilitate effective communication, collaboration, and information sharing. Social awareness is essential to forming relationships and friendships and enabling us to live content and joyful lives. Even though social awareness is still developing during a child's school years, it is an essential ability to cultivate in children, as it helps them and others maximize the benefits of their education and provides lifelong benefits.

One study conducted by Agarwal (2024) entitled *The Impact of Social Media on Students' Awareness and Engagement with Social Issues*. According to the survey, social media greatly raises people's awareness of social issues. After using social media, 54% of respondents said they were more aware of social issues than they were before using it (31%). The findings indicate that social media has the potential to bring about significant social change by serving as an effective instrument for raising awareness and promoting civic involvement among college students.

Based on the adapted survey that the researcher used in this study. The researcher assessed the social awareness of the Grade 9 students by dividing it into four parts, such as awareness of environmental issues, poverty, graft and corruption, and human rights.

Environmental Issues

From the article by Cotton Brazil (2024), TikTok has played a major role in the emergence of a youth sustainability community that crosses national borders and promotes international dialogues about environmental stewardship. Among TikTok's varied material, a thriving community of people who care about sustainability has developed, boosting conversations on eco-friendly living around the world. In the battle against climate change, TikTok sustainability makers are a potent ally as environmental awareness and action gain importance.

According to the study done by Xie et al. (2024), stated that Social media platforms can promote social awareness, which can be defined as environmental awareness that acts as an internal motivator for people to engage in environmental protection actions. Social media platforms are important in encouraging pro-environmental behavior; in this sense, they frequently outperform traditional media. Online communities focused on environmental concerns can be fostered, and involvement in associated activities can be increased with the use of user-generated content that connects pro-environmental information and awareness.

According to the recent U-report survey, that is participated in by nearly 3,000 young people in the Philippines and was conducted by the UN, their top worries were jobs, education, health, and climate change. Approximately 26% of the nation's youth think that "climate change and natural disasters" will be the largest issue they face in the

future, while 23% are concerned about not being able to finish their education. 22% also cite "health (physical and mental)" and "finding a job" as major concerns (UNICEF, 2024).

Social awareness can be developed with the aid of social media such as TikTok. As stated by Sharma (2025), understanding young people's desire to effect change and encouraging activism and movements is a very successful way to harness their involvement in environmental awareness. The young people plan marches, demonstrations, or advocacy campaigns to address significant environmental issues that they want to see changed. This implies that individuals can communicate with their fellow citizens, post messages on social media, and talk about strategies to create a sustainable future. Since young people today are very interested in social media influencers, who have a significant impact on opinions. Influencers can help raise awareness of environmental issues by promoting these causes, giving advice on environmental awareness, or taking part in campaigns.

Poverty

For billions of people worldwide, poverty is a problem that cuts across national boundaries, cultural norms, and socioeconomic classes. Families and individuals are deprived of fundamental human rights, such as access to clean water, food, healthcare, and education. The extent of poverty around the world is astounding. Nearly 9.2% of people worldwide lived below the international poverty level in 2020, which is \$1.90 per day, according to the World Bank. More than 700 million people are unable to achieve their most basic necessities as a result. Poverty is a widespread problem that affects people in both developed and developing countries; it is not limited to any particular area (Noor, 2023).

According to Publicus Asia's most recent study, the top concerns among households were the fear of not having enough money for necessities, basic goods, and health care. Those in the 40–49 age range were most concerned about job insecurity, while the young and unemployed were most concerned about finding work (Mendoza, 2025).

According to the young generation, the current state of the economy (26 %) and the scarcity of entry-level jobs (33 %) are the two biggest barriers to finding employment or launching a business in the future. Concerns about the disruption that AI technology has brought and can bring (18 %) and the lack of access to high-quality education (20 %) are also present. When asked in an open-ended inquiry what they would do as president of the Philippines to create a brighter future, the same problems come up. The majority of responses asked the government to give priority to the economy, health, and education. The environment, poverty, agriculture, and corruption are among the national issues that are discussed in great detail (UNICEF, 2024).

With this, how did social media such as TikTok help in spreading social awareness based on the poverty issue? The answer is that many nonprofit organizations find that social media is a useful tool for spreading awareness of global poverty. According to U.S.

research, 47% of respondents said social media helped them learn about significant issues like world poverty. Furthermore, it revealed that 15% of people become aware of problems about eradicating poverty as a result of social media. For example, a humanitarian TikToker named Dora Moono Nyambe is raising awareness of extreme poverty and has demonstrated how TikTok is a great platform for spreading the message that extreme poverty can and should be eliminated. Again, bringing communities together to help generate change on issues is facilitated by increasing awareness of global poverty. People who are aware can become more enthusiastic and feel motivated to act or make changes. Global poverty cannot be eradicated by awareness alone, but it is an important and successful first step (Lyrenmann, 2021, and Keare, 2020).

Graft and Corruption

The most recent Publicus Asia study revealed that corruption, the economy, and inflation are the top three issues that the majority of Filipinos want President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to address. In the poll conducted between June 27–30, 2025, 1,500 participants were selected at random from the market research panel of more than 200,000 registered Filipino voters who are kept up to date by PureSpectrum's Singapore office, a US-based panel marketplace with a global presence. According to the survey, the biggest worry for 21% of respondents was corruption. (Mendoza, 2025).

With the help of social media such as TikTok, students can now develop and deepen their social awareness. For instance, an article by Gutierrez (2025) in the Daily Tribune stated that the social media platform TikTok saw a surge in online activity that shook the core of Philippine politics. Young Filipinos are criticizing government leaders' children for showing off their opulent lifestyles, which they say are paid for by taxpayer dollars. These lifestyles include designer clothes, expensive cars, lavish parties, and luxury trips. In reality, what appears to be simple cancel culture is a pressing demand to address privilege, corruption, and the moral duties of individuals in positions of authority and their families. Deep frustration is the foundation of the outrage. Many Filipinos watch as their hard-earned taxes enrich a few while the majority of them struggle to make ends meet.

In essence, social media has provided a platform for common people to voice long-suppressed complaints. An unplanned youth movement that demands that laws, particularly the anti-corruption laws that are currently in place, be applied, upheld, and respected. The effort spearheaded by young people shouldn't be written off as another social media fad. The demand for cultural transformation and responsibility is growing (Gutierrez, 2025).

Human Rights

The Philippines is home to one of Asia's oldest and most vibrant republics. Its democratic institutions, which are constantly monitored, are based on a free press, an open and vibrant civil society, and a Constitution that ensures the full protection of human rights. The United Nations' International Bill of Human Rights governs human rights in the Philippines in addition to several local laws (Child Hope, 2023).

Numerous problems have been affecting human rights in the Philippines. As an example, the nation's low tolerance for criticism and opposition has led to a decline in democratic space and the emergence of a culture of silence and fear. Speech and expression rights are steadily being weakened. Threats, humiliation, and insults have also been directed toward journalists, human rights advocates, and political opposition members who have frequently expressed opposing views and challenged government programs and policies. Hatred and red-tagging efforts have been directed at them. The filing of false accusations using fake evidence and hired witnesses has also been used to harass vocal critics and detractors in an effort to harm their credibility and reputation. (Child Hope, 2023).

Human rights abuses can now be exposed with the use of social media, which gives a voice to those who are frequently ignored. Widespread videos typically draw attention to incidents of severe violence, abuse, and cruel treatment, compelling authorities and society to address these problems. (Matore et al., 2025). According to Baig (2020), without social media, many users said they would not have known about the human rights situation. The viral TikToks' exponential online growth attracted the attention of the digital generation, inspiring many to raise awareness and conduct further research.

The research article by Sainz et al. (2022) stated that there is growing evidence that adults, including scholars and practitioners, can effectively learn about human rights through social media. Human rights education that is relevant to participants' experiences and contexts can result from critical conversations and organic learning possibilities made possible by the digital world. If this is true for kids and teens as well, then digital tools aid in their development of "rights consciousness" or "rights competence".

A study done by Jalli (2025) about the critical examination of how young activists in the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia are using TikTok to promote social justice and encourage political engagement in more oppressive settings finds that, despite the shrinking of offline civic spaces, these activists use innovative tactics like trend-jacking and meme creation to reach large audiences. These activists have been able to create engaging, youth-friendly material that connects with their peers thanks to TikTok's algorithmic design and participatory culture, showcasing the platform's potential as a formidable tool for social movement.

Overall, these social issues reported daily on the news can affect lives directly or indirectly, which is why students must be aware of what is going on in the country to assess and react to issues based on critical thinking properly. Students in the modern era are more adept at addressing social issues, as social media platforms like TikTok can serve as a primary source of news for them. Students must be active, collaborating, and knowledgeable in the issues of the Philippines, and that can be seen in their performance and how they deal with them online and offline.

On any given day, TikTok's algorithm can expose videos to millions of users. Videos that promote significant social, political, and geographic concerns and their

causes are included in this category. We may be certain that a highly informed next generation will rise because of their educational and informational nature. Because they are more impressionable than others, younger audiences are more likely to continue the awareness cycle. (Hacking, 2023).

According to the Guardian (2024), students can gain a deeper understanding of political institutions, cultural structures, and historical events by cultivating social awareness. Students who possess social awareness skills can also develop into knowledgeable global citizens who are prepared to tackle urgent social issues like discrimination, injustice, and inequality. Students who develop these abilities can make significant contributions to the development of a more just and equitable society, as well as favorably impact their communities. To sum up, social studies aids in pupils' understanding of the world, yet memorization of information is insufficient. To relate what is learned in the classroom to real-world problems, social awareness is essential.

Theoretical Framework

Uses & Gratifications Theory

In today's digital age, media plays a crucial role in shaping how individuals perceive and respond to social issues. With the rise of social media platforms, such as TikTok, students have unprecedented access to information about current events, societal challenges, and global trends. This constant exposure can influence their understanding of the world and foster a sense of social responsibility. The Uses and Gratifications Theory, developed by Harold Lasswell in the 1940s and later expanded by Blumler and Katz in the 1970s, provides a framework that explains the needs of the audiences actively engaging with the media (Sridharan, 2022).

The media plays a significant role in shaping history and influencing our lives in the present. According to Dooley (2015), media history covers the era at least from the invention of the hand press in the fifteenth century, but the term "media" was hardly used in the 1920s to describe the structures of such communication. Medieval murals, scriptoria, and oral traditions are some examples of interpretations, with some also dipping into ancient and prehistoric periods. This study aims to examine the relationship between the social awareness of the Grade 9 students concerning their usage of the TikTok application in relation to the Uses and Gratifications Theory.

The way that viewers engage with and act upon news has been altered by the digitalization of news. More news in various outlets is now available to audiences more quickly than before. The researcher has examined the needs that drive people to read news and the rewards they obtain by applying the uses and gratification theory (Anderson, 2024).

Harold Lasswell, an American political scientist and communication theorist, developed the "Uses and Gratification Theory" in the 1940s. Blumler, Katz, Guarevitch, and some other theorists further expanded this theory in the 1970s. In 1974, these

researchers made links between Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and how people use the media (Sridharan, 2022).

The Uses and Gratifications Theory is a user-centered approach that focuses on how people use media for their personal uses and gratification. This theory emphasizes the motives and the self-perceived needs of audience members. This theory suggests that the media has no power over audiences. Instead, audiences are highly active in their media usage, seeking out media to fulfill a certain need. Audiences create their meanings after they seek out that media. Uses and gratifications come from the idea that the media serve a purpose. If the audience has certain uses or needs, then the media fulfills or gratifies those needs. Audiences turn to the media as a useful tool to gratify their needs (Sridharan, 2022). The uses and gratifications theory, as per Blumler and Katz (1974), cited by Anderson (2024), suggests that audiences choose media with intention, goal-orientedness, and a desire to satisfy requirements, including monitoring their surroundings, finding information, and staying up to date.

According to the Uses and Gratifications Theory of Blumler and Katz (1974), cited by Sichach (2023), media consumers actively choose and use media to satisfy specific needs. According to the theory, these demands can be categorized into cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, social integrative needs, and tension-free needs. It challenges the conventional understanding of media influence by highlighting the audience's active role in determining their media preferences.

According to Sridharan (2022), through the use of various media, audiences aim to meet five distinct needs. First is the **Cognitive Needs**, which are centered on acquiring knowledge, such as watching educational videos. Cognitive Needs include comprehension and knowledge, curiosity, inquiry, and a need for consistency and significance. Our effort to learn and comprehend is motivated by cognitive needs. A traveler's interest in different cultures, a student's drive to comprehend intricate mathematical theories, or a person's search for life's greater significance are all examples of these demands. Fulfilling these demands promotes better understanding of life and its complexity as well as personal development and comprehension (McLeod, 2025).

Second, emotions are at the heart of **Affective Needs**, such as reacting and commenting on videos that express empathy (Sridharan, 2022). The emotional and social needs that people have are under this category. It includes the capacity to comprehend and control emotions, demonstrate empathy, build healthy relationships, and make moral decisions (Brown, 2025).

Third, the need to interact with others, such as chatting with family, friends, and coworkers, is a component of **Social Integrative Needs** (Sridharan, 2022). The human need to engage with friends, family, and the larger community and to fortify ties is under this category, and it is frequently satisfied through social media and communication. The Uses and Gratifications Theory, which claims that people consciously select media to

meet a range of social and personal needs, such as the urge to feel included and connected to others, is based on these requirements (Vinney, 2024, and Kami, 2025).

Fourth, self-esteem is the foundation of **Personal Integrative Needs**, such as posting a video or hopping into a trend (Sridharan, 2022). Enhancing self-esteem, acquiring credibility, confidence, and stability, as well as earning a sense of status within society, are other examples of Personal Integrative Needs—psychological needs satisfied by media and social contact (Hussain, 2019).

Finally, people who have **Tension-Free Needs** use media in a variety of ways to relax, such as watching funny content, dancing, singing, etc. (Sridharan, 2022). Tension-Free Needs are sometimes referred to as tension-released needs; they are a need to unwind and escape by lowering one's self-awareness (Vinney, 2024).

This theoretical framework is relevant to the study since it can explain how people use social media to fulfill their needs and identify the motivations behind their usage. Media consumption can meet a variety of needs, such as the five needs that is mentioned above, and three out of five audiences' needs help the students in developing their social awareness. **Cognitive Needs**, which use social media – TikTok, to seek out information, or to self-educate. In addition to comprehending people's social contexts, this need involves curiosity, exploration, and acquiring knowledge and information. Because the media is renowned for disseminating facts, this need emphasizes that users (students) select specific media (TikTok) merely because they are seeking information and facts (Kasirye, 2022). **Affective Needs**, which uses emotion, such as empathy, to react and give comments that help in understanding the depth of the problem. Knowing that this type of need occurs in humans and how to manage oneself in such emotional situations are both crucial. Knowing this can also help people react less negatively if they experience it (Kasirye, 2022). **Social Integrative Needs**, which were more about integrating technology (Social Media) with family, friends, and relations. The urge to feel connected to the outside world from their current position, as well as the yearning to belong to other individuals. These days, it is not uncommon for people to receive information about their countries as if they were there in real time, even when they are travelling (Kasirye, 2022). Students look for the ability of social media sites like TikTok to readily access education, gain fundamental knowledge, develop feelings, and form connections regarding a particular subject that they may find useful in the future. These needs help students become more socially aware in addition to increasing their knowledge.

Research Questions

This study examined the relationship between Grade 9 students' TikTok usage and their social awareness of contemporary issues in the Philippines. This study answered the following questions:

1. What is the Grade 9 students' level of TikTok usage in terms of the following:
 - 1.1. Duration
 - 1.2. Frequency

- 1.3. Purpose
 - 1.3.1. Cognitive Needs
 - 1.3.2. Affective Needs
 - 1.3.3. Social-Integrative Needs
 - 1.3.4. Personal-Integrative Needs
 - 1.3.5. Tension-Free Needs?
2. What is the Grade 9 students' level of social awareness of contemporary issues in the Philippines?
 - 2.1. Environmental Issues
 - 2.2. Poverty Issues
 - 2.3. Graft and Corruption Issues
 - 2.4. Human Rights Issues?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the level of TikTok usage among Grade 9 students and their social awareness of contemporary Philippine issues?
4. What program can be proposed based on the findings of the study?

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between the Grade 9 students' TikTok usage and their level of social awareness.

Scope And Delimitations Of The Study

This study took place this school year, 2025-2026, from January 2025 to March 2026. The first part of the study, containing the background of the study, gathering literature, supporting this study with a theoretical framework, and establishing research methodology, was done from January to May 2025, while the gathering of data from the respondents and interpreting the results was done from August to November 2025, and coming up with the summary, conclusion, and recommendations was accomplished from December 2025 to March 2026.

The participants of this study are the Grade 9 students of Our Lady of Peace School located in Antipolo City. The overall population of the Grade 9 level is 232 students from six (6) sections. The researcher used Slovin's formula to determine the accurate number of respondents needed for the study; the result was that 147 Grade 9 students were needed to conduct the study.

The researcher also implemented a stratified random sampling technique to select the respondents of this study, since not all the students have a TikTok account or are active in using the TikTok Application. From the six (6) sections of Grade 9 students, there are four sections with 25 students selected to participate, and two sections with 24 and 23 students selected to participate, for a total of 147 Grade 9 students who are TikTok users who answered the survey questionnaire.

This study focuses on examining the relationship between the Grade 9 students' use of the TikTok application and their level of social awareness regarding contemporary issues in the Philippines. The investigation specifically considers students' TikTok usage

in terms of three measurable dimensions: Duration, Frequency, and Purpose. The purposes of usage are further categorized based on the framework of the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which includes Cognitive needs (seeking knowledge and information), Affective needs (emotional engagement and empathy), Social Integrative needs (building connections and relationships), Personal Integrative needs (enhancing self-esteem and social status), and Tension-Free needs (relaxation and stress relief).

On the other hand, the contemporary issues in the Philippines that are addressed in this study are grouped into four main categories: Environmental issues, Poverty issues, Graft and Corruption issues, and Human Rights issues. These topics are frequently discussed and shared on TikTok through short-form videos, making the platform a relevant source for examining students' exposure and engagement with social matters. Other issues, such as international news, are not covered in this research.

It is important to note that the results of this study are specific to the selected respondents and their particular patterns of TikTok usage. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized to all Grade 9 students or other populations outside the participants of this study. The conclusions drawn will reflect only the relationship between the TikTok usage behaviors of the respondents and their social awareness of the identified contemporary issues.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher used a survey instrument and a quantitative approach to collect quantifiable data to determine the relationship between Grade 9 students' TikTok usage and their social awareness of the contemporary issues in the Philippines.

Quantitative research was the process of gathering and evaluating numerical data, according to Bhandari (2020). It could be applied to evaluate causal linkages, make predictions, identify trends and averages, and expand findings to larger populations. The scientific and social sciences—biology, chemistry, psychology, economics, sociology, marketing, etc.—all made extensive use of quantitative research.

This research was a Descriptive Correlational Research that, according to Creswell (2005), as cited by Lawrence (2023), pertained to a research technique that described the association between two or more variables without using control or manipulation. It sought to ascertain how closely two or more variables were related to one another, frequently through the use of statistical techniques such as correlation. Rather than proving cause and effect, this kind of research aimed to comprehend the nature and strength of a relationship. This study produced a result of whether the relationship between the variables would be positive or negative. When two variables moved in the same direction, there was a positive correlation. Conversely, the variables moved in opposing directions when there was a negative correlation (GCU, 2023).

The researcher employed Slovin's formula and Stratified Random Sampling Techniques to ensure that the sample size was sufficient. Slovin's formula helped the researchers determine an appropriate sample size from a population while maintaining a chosen level of accuracy. It provided an estimate of how many participants should be included in the sample to obtain results that were reasonably reliable and precise (Ellen, 2022), while Stratified random sampling techniques divided a population into subgroups, or strata, based on shared traits to ensure each group was represented. This method improved accuracy and reduced sampling bias, especially in diverse populations (Fleetwood, 2023).

The nature and relationship of the variables, the testing of a particular hypothesis, the assignment of subjects to groups according to pre-determined criteria using Slovin's formula to determine the number of respondents, and a survey questionnaire with established choices were handed out to the respondents through an online form to determine the relationship between variables.

Locale Of The Study

This research was conducted at Our Lady of Peace School in Antipolo City, Rizal. It was located beside the International Shrine of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage, also known as the Antipolo Cathedral.

In 1972, the cathedral school known as Our Lady of Peace School (OLPS) was established. Monsignor Vicente Fernandez extended an invitation to the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres Congregation to run the school. The academic, emotional, social, moral, and spiritual growth of its students had been a priority for OLPS during the years of its existence. Its dedication to service and involvement in the development of Antipolo's youth was demonstrated by its 50 years of existence (OLPS, 2025).

During the years 1972 to 1973, Our Lady of Peace School was established and offered kindergarten, which held its first graduation with 47 graduates. In 1974 to 1975, the school opened for primary grades and a Kindergarten course, plus Grades 1 to 4 were given recognition by DECS. From 1975 to 1976, the school offered intermediate grade levels, and the elementary department was given recognition by DECS. The first graduation in the elementary department was held in 1976, and the first year of the four-year high school course was opened.

In the year 1980, Our Lady of Peace School held its first high school graduation with 50 graduates. In 1983, the first batch of Kindergarten pupils graduated from High School. In 1985 to 1986, the high school department was granted full government recognition, and the school became a member of the Manila Archdiocesan and Parochial Schools Association, Inc. (MAPSA). In 1989, the high school department was recognized by the DECS as one of the 250 top-performing schools in the Philippines, ranking 106th. In 1991 to 1992, the construction of a three-story building began as part of the expansion of the school brought about by the demand to accept more students, and the newly constructed building was inaugurated and was occupied by the Grade school pupils. In 1994, the construction of the high school annex began in March, and the completion and

blessing were held in June. In 1996, the administration acquired 2.7 hectares of land as an expansion site of Our Lady of Peace School in Brgy. San Luis, Antipolo City.

In 2003, OLPS launched its strategic paths and directions, as well as the development of institutional priorities, namely the "Academic Formation", the "Christian Formation", and "Formation in Social Responsibility", which were initiated by Sister Felecitas Bernardo, SPC. In 2004, OLPS opened the extension school in Tawid-Tawid as OLPS Tawid-Tawid Community Extension School with Kinders 1 and 2. OLPS also created the Reading Learning Center that year. In 2005, the school passed the certification of the Private Education Assistance Committee – Fund for Assistance to Private Education (PEAC-FAPE), created the English and Science Learning Centers, Marian Hall, Kinder Playground, Library, and expansion of the Canteen, plus the OLPS Tawid-Tawid Community Extension School extended its offering to Grade 1. In 2006, OLPS Tawid-Tawid Community Extension School added Grade 2 education, and the school built a Math Learning Center and two speech laboratories. In 2007, OLPS Tawid-Tawid Community Extension School added Grade 3 education, the school created the Christian Living Education, and opened Pope John Paul II Minor Seminary in Brgy. San Luis, Antipolo City. In 2008, OLPS launched its program called Religion as the Core of the Curriculum- Whole Brain Learning System (RCC-WBLS) and the creation of the Robotics Laboratory.

In 2010, the PAASCU preliminary visit happened on August 2–3. In 2011 to 2012, OLPS Tawid-Tawid Community Extension School added Grade 4 to 5 education and constructed an additional classroom. Our Lady of Peace School received the First Excellence in Educational Transformation Awards (EETA) by ABS-CBN Bayan Academy, Rex Bookstore Inc., and Knowledge Channel Foundation, Inc., on February 15. The implementation of the K to 12 program also started that year, and PAASCU Level 1 Status was granted. In 2013, OLPS implemented the Skills Development Program, OLPS Tawid-Tawid Community Extension School added Grade 6 education, and held its first Grade 6 graduation ceremony. In 2016 to 2017, some accomplishments such as the completion of the new TLE laboratory in High School, PAASCU granted the school with Level 2 Re-Accredited Status, and the first batch of SHS Grade 12 graduation was held. In 2018, Dr. William Spady, a sociologist who was committed to learner empowerment and paradigm-shifting education, visited OLPS for Outcome-based education. In 2019, the Senior High School became a member of the Junior Achievement of the Philippines Incorporated, the school became a Microsoft Training Center, and the first virtual graduation was held due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, Our Lady of Peace School was granted Level 3 re-accredited status. Some classrooms, learning centers, offices, and laboratories were converted into virtual classrooms for the new normal setup in schools, and online classes dubbed as "OLPS@Home" started. In 2021, Our Lady of Peace School celebrated its 50th Golden Jubilee and integrated the Outcome-based education and Religion as the Core of the Curriculum- Whole Brain Learning System (RCC-WBLS) in pursuit of providing quality and excellence education for the students.

Our Lady of Peace School catered to Nursery, Pre-school, Kinder, Elementary level from Grade 1 to 6, Junior High School from Grade 7 to 10, and Senior High School from Grade 11 to 12. The student population comprised a total of 2,654 students from nursery to Grade 12 Senior High School as of the 2024–2025 school year, and the school had a total of 169 employees, including 93 teaching personnel and 76 non-teaching personnel.

Participants Of The Study

The participants of this study were the Grade 9 students of Our Lady of Peace School, Antipolo City, school year 2025–2026, who were all TikTok users. There were six sections of Grade 9 students—four sections were composed of 39 students, and two sections had 38 students, a mix of male and female participants in heterogeneous sectioning.

To ensure that the sample size was sufficient, the researcher employed Slovin's formula to determine the number of respondents per section. With the given 0.5 margin of error and the total population of 232 Grade 9 students, the result showed a total of 147 students to be the respondents for this study. Four sections had 25 screened students, and two sections had 23 and 24 screened students to answer the survey questionnaire.

To determine the participants of the study, the researcher used a stratified random sampling technique, a common statistical method where a population was separated into several subgroups, called strata, based on shared characteristics. The goal of creating these strata was to ensure that each subgroup was properly represented in the sample and to allow researchers to analyze specific sections of the population. This approach was especially useful when the population was diverse, since a simple random sample might not accurately reflect all groups. By organizing the population into strata, researchers could obtain a more representative sample and reduce the chances of sampling bias (Fleetwood, 2023).

In the selection of participants, the researcher instructed the students of each section to write on a 1/4 piece of paper their names and input “Applicable” if they had a TikTok account and “N/A” if they did not. The researcher displayed on the screen the questions and choices that the students wrote on their paper. The students were asked about their frequency of using TikTok, such as if they were using TikTok every day, four to five times a week, two to three times a week, or zero to once a week. They were also asked about the intensity of their activities, such as whether they were light users, moderate users, or heavy users of the application. From the collected students' answers, the researcher chose the suitable participants to proceed with the consent form and to answer the two-part survey questionnaire.

Research Instrument

The researcher utilized an adopted survey questionnaire to assess the TikTok usage of Grade 9 students and their level of social awareness regarding current issues and events. The questionnaire was originally based on the study conducted by Mr.

Anthony B. Bulaoro in June 2021 entitled “Students’ Awareness on Social Issues in Relation to Their Academic Performance.” Due to the relevance of this instrument to the present research, certain modifications were made to ensure alignment with the specific objectives and context of the study.

The revisions to the original questionnaire were minimal and mainly concentrated on the first section, which focused on students’ TikTok usage, including the duration, frequency, and purpose of use. These adjustments were made to effectively gather relevant data while maintaining the clarity and consistency of the instrument. In contrast, the second section, which measured the students’ level of social awareness, was retained in its original form to preserve the structure and integrity of the questionnaire.

As the modifications were confined to the TikTok usage section and did not affect the core variables, constructs, or measurement scales—specifically reflected in the Test 2 Questionnaire—the instrument was fit for the study; hence, it did not undergo expert validation because the adopted survey questionnaire had already undergone validation in the original thesis of its author. Furthermore, the changes introduced did not compromise the reliability or validity of the questionnaire’s main components. Therefore, the adopted instrument remained a reliable and appropriate tool for data collection in this study.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher clearly identified the aim of this research, which is to determine the relationship between the Grade 9 students who used the TikTok application and their social awareness of the contemporary issues in the Philippines. The best way to find out the connection is by a survey questionnaire that is adopted from existing research. This adopted survey questionnaire is already validated and reviewed by three social studies master’s teachers and the former researcher’s statistician.

In the first week of September 2025, the researcher started to secure a permit to conduct a study that was signed by the research adviser and the dean of FEU-Roosevelt. After obtaining their signatures on the “Letter to conduct”, the researcher secured a signature from the academic head/assistant principal and from the school head/principal of Our Lady of Peace School to administer the survey to the Grade 9 level.

The second week of September 2025 was used to ask for permission from the former researcher to adopt the survey tool from his existing research. The researcher messaged Mr. Bulaoro through social media and sent a letter asking for permission to use the survey questionnaire. Fortunately, Mr. Bulaoro agreed and gave his approval to utilize the survey questionnaire from his prior research. After obtaining permission to use the survey questionnaire, the researcher transferred the questionnaire to Google Forms and proceeded to the next step.

A pre-survey questionnaire was given to assess the participants of the study. During their Social Studies subject, the researcher first discussed the title and the purpose

of the study and asked for their consent to take a few minutes of their time to answer three questions for the pre-survey. Upon agreeing to be a part of the study, the students in every section of Grade 9 wrote their names on a 1/4 piece of paper and stated if they had a TikTok account by simply writing “Applicable” if they had an account and “N/A” if they did not have one, along with their frequency and intensity of using the TikTok application. This process helped the researcher identify and choose suitable participants for the study, following the number of needed participants, which was determined using Slovin’s Formula.

In the third week of September 2025, scheduling for answering the survey questionnaire was planned. The researcher asked for permission from the Subject Team Leader/Head of the TLE/ICT Department to use the High School Computer Laboratory, and the TLE/ICT Head gave permission to use it and provided the schedule of the laboratories that were not occupied and were free to use. The researcher plotted the dates in accordance with the laboratory's schedule given by the TLE/ICT Head, which was also in line with the Grade 9 schedule for their Social Studies subject. This ensured that no other subjects were affected during the gathering of the data. The researcher also informed the Subject Team Leader/Head of the Social Studies Department that the chosen Grade 9 students who used the TikTok application would utilize their time in Social Studies to answer the two-part survey of this study.

In the fourth week of September 2025, the filling out of the survey questionnaire took place. Based on the result from Slovin’s Formula, a total of 147 Grade 9 students who were actively using the TikTok application were chosen to answer the two-part survey questionnaire. The researcher informed the chosen students and presented the “Letter to the Participants”, inviting them to be a part of this study, followed by the “Letter of Consent”, indicating their agreement to participate and stating that the study was completely voluntary, meaning that the researcher respected their decision whether or not they chose to be part of the study. It was also stated that the study was completely anonymous, with no personal information such as names, phone numbers, email addresses, IP addresses, physical characteristics, photos, or videos collected or stored. These were all presented to the chosen students before taking the survey, and all the selected Grade 9 students were available and agreed to be part of the study.

A survey questionnaire was chosen as the data collection instrument for this research. A questionnaire was a research instrument consisting of inquiries intended to elicit valuable data from participants. These tools had an interview-style format and could contain both written and spoken questions. Questionnaires could be completed online, over the phone, on paper, or in person. It was not always necessary to administer the questions with a researcher present (Petrat, 2022). In line with the quantitative design of this research, a series of questions was answered through an online form that was adopted from existing research.

A closed-ended questionnaire was used to gather information from the Grade 9 students who used the TikTok application. A closed-ended questionnaire provided

responses that the respondents could choose from. The survey questionnaire was divided into two parts; the first part was about the Grade 9 students' level of usage of the TikTok application, which was composed of three questions containing the duration, frequency, and purpose of using the TikTok application.

The researcher employed the Likert Scale as defined by Williams (2024); it was named after psychologist Rensis Likert. This was a psychometric tool frequently used in surveys to measure respondents' thoughts and perceptions. Likert scale questions measured people's attitudes and opinions on a certain situation. Compared to a straightforward "yes or no" question, it could assist in measuring the thoughts and impressions of the audience with more nuance. Respondents could indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with particular assertions by answering these questions. They converted nuanced feelings into understandable, useful information.

Therefore, the second part of the questionnaire tested the Grade 9 students' level of social awareness of contemporary issues in the Philippines. It was composed of sixty questions about social issues in the Philippines. This part was divided into four categories—Environmental issues, Poverty, Graft and Corruption, and Human Rights. The purpose of the second part of the questionnaire was to identify whether the students were aware of current news and to correlate the Grade 9 students' responses to the first part of the survey questionnaire.

Upon the completion of the survey questionnaire, the last part of the data gathering process was the collection and organization of the data that was taken from the Grade 9 students' answers to the survey. The collected data were gathered with the use of Google Forms, and the researcher used percentage distribution and computation of central tendency using the mean to show the results and interpret the respondents' answers. This was used to find patterns and averages in the Grade 9 students' answers and make predictions about the results. The collected data were used only for this research and were securely stored to maintain the confidentiality of the study.

Overall, the data collection took one month to accomplish. The first week was spent obtaining approval from the authorities to proceed and conduct the research, and the second week was used to ask permission from a prior researcher to use his existing research survey questionnaire and to establish the pre-survey questionnaire for the whole Grade 9 level. The third week involved planning the scheduled data gathering and asking permission from the heads of the TLE/ICT and Social Studies departments to use the computer laboratory and the subjects' time to answer the survey questionnaire. In the fourth week, the researcher collected and interpreted the data that were acquired from the answers of the chosen 147 Grade 9 students who used the TikTok application.

Data Analysis

The social awareness of the chosen 147 Grade 9 students who utilized the TikTok application in relation to several current issues in the Philippines was assessed by the researcher using a two-part survey questionnaire, wherein the second part of the survey

assessing the social awareness of the students was adopted from existing research. The researcher's adviser double-checked each item for errors to make sure the questionnaires were correct.

A pre-test was given to the six sections of Grade 9 students to determine the participants of this study, followed by a survey questionnaire that was composed of two parts: usage of the TikTok application, containing the duration, frequency, and purpose (Cognitive, Affective, Social-Integrative, Personal Integrative, and Tension-Free) of using the application, and the second part that determined the Grade 9 students' social awareness level, which was composed of a sixty-item questionnaire about the contemporary issues (Environmental, Poverty, Graft and Corruption, and Human Rights) in the country.

After four weeks of gathering data from six sections of Grade 9 students, the data were organized and analyzed by the researcher with the help of the statistician. The statistical relationship, or association, between Grade 9 students' use of the TikTok application and their social awareness of contemporary issues in the Philippines was assessed using Pearson correlation.

According to Turney (2022), the most widely used metric for assessing a linear correlation was the Pearson correlation coefficient (r). It was a number that ranged from -1 to 1 and indicated how strongly and in which direction two variables were related. Additionally, the Pearson correlation coefficient was an inferential statistic, which meant that statistical hypotheses could be tested using it. It specifically determined if two variables had a meaningful link.

For the analysis of the survey questionnaire, formulas including the calculation of frequency, percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation coefficient (r) test were used to summarize the data, assess variability, and draw conclusions based on the gathered answers from the population.

For research question 1, stating the Grade 9 students' level of TikTok usage in terms of Duration, Frequency, and Purpose, the researcher used frequency and percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

For research question 2, regarding the Grade 9 students' level of social awareness of contemporary issues in the Philippines, the researcher treated the data using a weighted mean.

For research question 3, indicating the significant relationship between the level of TikTok usage among Grade 9 students and their social awareness of contemporary Philippine issues, it was treated using the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) test.

Ethical Considerations

This research required diligence, comprehension, and awareness, as well as integrity and honesty. It recognized and protected the rights of participants, maintained the study's integrity, and enhanced its credibility. A letter of permission to conduct the research was drafted and sent for approval to the school head/principal, and a letter of consent to the participants was presented in the questionnaires to inform them of their rights before answering the survey.

A letter of consent to the applicants was discussed before they completed the survey questionnaire. According to Denison (2024), voluntary participation meant that participants had the freedom to withdraw from the study at any moment and should not feel under any duress to complete the survey. Informed consent was not only an ethical factor when doing research; it was also a legal obligation. Participants had to be aware of the risks and advantages of this study as well as what they were consenting to. Confidentiality and anonymity were established in this research. Bhandari (2024) defined anonymity as a guarantee that this research would not collect any personal data that could identify them, such as names, phone numbers, email addresses, IP addresses, physical characteristics, photos, and videos. Since this research was conducted in Our Lady of Peace School, where the researcher worked as a teacher, and the participants were the researcher's Grade 9 students, confidentiality took place, as Bhandari (2024) defined confidentiality as the participant's right to privacy through the removal of all identifiable information from the report and the protection of the data for the duration that it was stored and used in this study. In line with confidentiality, the Republic Act 10173 of the Philippines, also known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012, protects the individual's privacy while regulating the collection and use of their data (Angara, 2012).

As a researcher, the responsibility to eliminate potential harm to the participants was enforced in this study. As Bhandari (2024) described potential harm, it was divided into four different forms, namely: psychological harm, which involved sensitive questions that might trigger the emotions of the participants; social harm, where participation in this study might bring social risks such as public embarrassment or stigma; physical harm, which referred to pain and injury that might result from the study procedures; and legal harm, which involved the disclosure of sensitive data that could lead to a breach of privacy and violate the anonymity and confidentiality of this research.

At the end of this research, result communication took place as the researcher communicated the results to the participants. Bhandari (2024) defined result communication as conveying the research outcome in an honest, reliable, and credible form, making the research results as transparent as possible. This was regarded as an important ethical responsibility when conducting a research study.

RESULTS

Research Question 1. Grade 9 students' level of TikTok usage in terms of the following:

- 1.1 Duration
- 1.2 Frequency
- 1.3 Purpose
 - 1.3.1. Cognitive Needs
 - 1.3.2. Affective Needs
 - 1.3.3. Social Integrative Needs
 - 1.3.4. Personal Integrative Needs
 - 1.3.5. Tension-Free Needs

Table 1.1. Level of TikTok Usage of Grade 9 Students in terms of Duration

DURATION OF USING TIKTOK APPLICATION	FREQUENCY (f)	PERCENTAGE (%)
3 hours and above	109	74.1 %
2 hours	25	17 %
1 hour	12	8.2 %
Less than 1 hour	1	0.7 %
TOTAL	147	100 %

Table 1.2. Level of TikTok Usage of Grade 9 Students in terms of Frequency

FREQUENCY OF USING TIKTOK APPLICATION	FREQUENCY (f)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Always (Everyday)	133	90.5 %
Sometimes (4-5 times a week)	13	8.8 %
Seldom (2-3 times a week)	1	0.7 %
Never (Not using TikTok)	0	0
TOTAL	147	100 %

Table 1.3. Level of TikTok Usage of Grade 9 Students in terms of Purpose

1.3.1. COGNITIVE NEEDS

COGNITIVE NEEDS (To gain and attain knowledge e.g. watching educational videos)	FREQUENCY (f)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Always	45	30.6 %
Sometimes	91	61.9 %
Seldom	8	5.5%
Never	3	2 %
TOTAL	147	100 %

1.3.2. AFFECTIVE NEEDS

AFFECTIVE NEEDS (To release emotions e.g. reacting and commenting on videos)	FREQUENCY (f)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Always	55	37.4 %
Sometimes	54	36.7 %
Seldom	29	19.7 %
Never	9	6.2%
TOTAL	147	100 %

1.3.3. SOCIAL INTEGRATIVE NEEDS

SOCIAL INTEGRATIVE NEEDS (To socialize e.g. chatting)	FREQUENCY (f)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Always	49	33.3 %
Sometimes	52	35.4 %

Seldom	34	23.1 %
Never	12	8.2 %
TOTAL	147	100 %

1.3.4. PERSONAL INTEGRATIVE NEEDS

PERSONAL INTEGRATIVE NEEDS (To boost your self-esteem e.g. posting videos or doing a trend)	FREQUENCY (f)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Always	18	12.2 %
Sometimes	46	31.3 %
Seldom	42	28.6%
Never	41	27.9 %
TOTAL	147	100 %

1.3.5. TENSION-FREE NEEDS

TENSION-FREE NEEDS (To release stress e.g. watching funny content, dancing, and singing)	FREQUENCY (f)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Always	121	82.3 %
Sometimes	22	15 %
Seldom	3	2 %
Never	1	0.7 %
TOTAL	147	100 %

Table 1.4. Level of TikTok Usage of Grade 9 Students in terms of Purpose interpreted using Weighted Means

NEEDS	ALWAYS (4)	SOMETIMES (3)	SELDOM (2)	NEVER (1)	WM	VI
1. Cognitive needs (To gain and attain knowledge e.g. watching educational videos)	45 (30.6%)	91 (61.9%)	8 (5.5%)	3 (2%)	3.21	S
2. Affective needs (To release emotions e.g. reacting and commenting on videos)	55 (37.4%)	54 (36.7%)	29 (19.7%)	9 (6.2%)	3.05	S
3. Social integrative needs (To socialize e.g. chatting)	49 (33.3%)	52 (35.4%)	34 (23.1%)	12 (8.2%)	2.94	S
4. Personal integrative needs (To boost your self-esteem e.g. posting videos or doing a trend)	18 (12.2%)	46 (31.3%)	42 (28.6%)	41 (27.9%)	2.28	S
5. Tension-free needs (To release stress e.g. watching funny content, dancing, and singing)	121 (82.3%)	22 (15%)	3 (2%)	1 (0.7%)	3.79	S
COMPOSITE MEAN					3.05	S

LEGEND: 4(3.26-4.00) - Always (A), 3(2.51-3.25) – Sometimes (S), 2(1.76-2.50)- Seldom (Se), 1(1.00-1.75)-Never (N)

Research Question 2. Grade 9 students' level of social awareness of contemporary issues in the Philippines

2.1. Environmental Issues

2.2. Poverty Issues

2.3. Graft and Corruption Issues

2.4. Human Rights Issues

SCALE	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
3.26-4.00	Highly Aware (HA)

2.51-3.25	Aware (A)
1.76-2.50	Slightly Aware (SA)
1.00-1.75	Unaware (N)

Table 2.1. Grade 9 students' level of social awareness of contemporary issues in the Philippines in terms of Environmental Issues

Environmental Issues	WM	VI
1. Considering your knowledge about the risks associated with environmental pollution, you will recommend a friend or a classmate the three R's to promote activities that will help reduce global warming or to live a clean and green life.	3.91	HA
2. Environmental pollution is on the rise, it poses hazard on the whole world, it causes the extinction of flora and fauna.	3.74	HA
3. Our country has a strong environmental pollution law; it is the government's prerogative to deal with it.	3.49	HA
4. All of us have to contribute to reduce environmental pollution and there is so much to be done to stop it.	3.87	HA
5. The remedial action on the environmental pollution should be the most important aspect to take care of.	3.71	HA
6. The DENR, LTO, MMDA, DA and BFAR. The following entities are taking initiatives to reduce environmental pollution.	2.82	A
7. "No segregation, no waste collection policy" is helpful in managing waste disposal in our community.	3.54	HA
8. The practice of 3R's, reduce, reuse, and recycle is very helpful in lessen environmental pollution.	3.97	HA

9. When people get together to solve environmental pollution problems, they will succeed.	3.93	HA
10. Wind, water, solar and natural gas are the most sustainable alternative energy source in the next 10 years.	3.74	HA
11. Studies reveal that human activities have contributed significantly to the increase of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere that causes climate change.	3.61	HA
12. The Philippines is suffering from degradation of the natural environment. It has fifty major rivers now polluted due to abuse and neglect.	3.31	HA
13. The Philippines is looming with the garbage problems despite the passage of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act or the Republic Act (RA) 9003.	3.22	A
14. There is a need for understanding and reformation of attitudes and concern towards the protection of environment.	3.83	HA
15. Other issues on environmental issues you wish to add:	3.31	HA
COMPOSITE MEAN	3.60	HA

LEGEND: (3.26-4.00) - Highly Aware (HA), (2.51-3.25) – Aware (A), (1.76-2.50)- Slightly Aware (SA), (1.00-1.75)-Unaware (N)

Table 2.2. Grade 9 students' level of social awareness of contemporary issues in the Philippines in terms of Poverty

POVERTY	WM	VI
1. Every Filipino family eats at least three times a day.	3.76	HA
2. Every Filipino family owns a shelter, a house and lot of their own.	3.66	HA
3. All members of a Filipino family have three or more sets of clothes.	3.71	HA
4. Member of a Filipino family frequently suffer from illness or ill-health.	3.68	HA

5. Every Filipino aged 10 years and above can be able to read and write.	3.73	HA
6. Every member of a Filipino household participates in community activities.	3.50	HA
7. Every Filipino family have more than enough money to spend for their needs and wants.	3.41	HA
8. Majority of families have gone out socially like “mallng” to enjoy the quality family time.	3.71	HA
9. According to NEDA (National Economic and Development Authority) poverty incidence among Filipinos has decreased to 21 percent during the first half of 2018 from the adjusted 27.6 percent during the first half of 2015.	2.93	A
10. A family of five members can live decently on 334 pesos per day according to NEDA report.	2.61	A
11. The majority of poor Filipino households have only achieved basic levels of education. At least two-thirds (2/3) of poor households.	3.63	HA
12. Poverty levels in the Philippines are affected by unrestrained population growth. The average poor family in the Philippines consists of six or more members.	3.69	HA
13. The Government of the Philippines utilizes social protection programs to provide poor families with direct assistance.	3.48	HA
14. The Government of the Philippines created AmBisyon 2040 and the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 in efforts to reduce poverty.	2.88	A
15. Other issues on poverty you wish to add:	3.24	A
COMPOSITE MEAN	3.44	HA

LEGEND: (3.26-4.00) - Highly Aware (HA), (2.51-3.25) – Aware (A), (1.76-2.50)- Slightly Aware (SA), (1.00-1.75)-Unaware (N)

Table 2.3. Grade 9 students' level of social awareness of contemporary issues in the Philippines in terms of Graft and Corruption

GRAFT AND CORRUPTION	WM	VI
1. Graft & Corruption is rampant in every branch of government (Judiciary, Legislative and Executive).	3.63	HA
2. Graft & Corruption is less in developed countries compare to least develop countries like the Philippines.	3.78	HA
3. To lessen corruption means transparent governance.	3.77	HA
4. Corruption can exist at many levels in a society. A corrupt policeman may accept a bribe to ignore an offence; a local politician and businessman may exchange money or gifts in order to secure government contracts; a head of state or a national government	3.89	HA
5. Corruption takes place in private businesses rather that in governments.	3.51	HA
6. Favoritism and nepotism, whereby jobs are given to friends or relatives, are also forms of corruption.	3.76	HA
7. The passing of Freedom of Information (FOI) as a law, will help eliminate corruption.	3.44	HA
8. A bribe be offered to get government permit/solve problem at government office is a form of corruption.	3.72	HA
9. Still vote a preferred party or person that was involved in a corruption scandal.	3.39	HA
10. To get all the way to the position in the Philippines today, you have to be corrupt.	3.31	HA

11. There is a high-risk of corruption when dealing with the police. The national police force is widely regarded as one of the most corrupt institutions in the country.	3.64	HA
12. There is a high risk of corruption when dealing with the tax administration. Around one in seven companies indicate they expect to give gifts in meeting with the tax officials.	3.66	HA
13. There is a high risk of encountering corruption when dealing with the customs administration. Companies indicate that irregular bribes and payments in import and export procedures are very common.	3.60	HA
14. No country has the capacity to stop all human rights violations but there is justified expectation that any government has enough resources to do substantial measures to address the situation as long as it has the political will to do so.	3.64	HA
15. Other issues on corruption you wish to add:	3.22	A
COMPOSITE MEAN	3.60	HA

LEGEND: (3.26-4.00) - Highly Aware (HA), (2.51-3.25) – Aware (A), (1.76-2.50)- Slightly Aware (SA), (1.00-1.75)-Unaware (N)

Table 2.4. Grade 9 students' level of social awareness of contemporary issues in the Philippines in terms of Human Rights

HUMAN RIGHTS	WM	VI
1. Human rights should be the concern of all.	3.95	HA
2. Oplan Tokhang violates human rights of the suspected drug addict individuals.	2.88	A
3. The government is effective in protecting the rights of all its citizen.	3.46	HA
4. The government acknowledge the rights of all of its citizens.	3.19	A
5. The government treats all of its citizens fairly regardless of sex or gender.	3.05	A

6. Only the state or government can protect our human rights.	3.24	A
7. Rich people have more rights than the poor.	3.35	HA
8. The modern electronic media playing a major role in enhancing human rights awareness.	3.64	HA
9. There is no need of including human rights education in the present curriculum.	2.70	A
10. If the fundamental rights are violated all have the right to approach Supreme Court or High court.	3.46	HA
11. Human Rights Watch's World Report 2020 tagged Duterte's anti-illegal drug campaign as still Philippines "gravest" human rights concern in 2019.	3.42	HA
12. Human rights groups have consistently highlighted that the effect of the campaign "war on drugs" and other abuses under Duterte administration go beyond the killed drug personalities.	3.66	HA
13. The attacks against media, activists, and members of civil society, on the basis of their alleged links to the Communist Party of the Philippines are all irregular and violate their rights.	3.59	HA
14. No country has the capacity to stop all human rights violations but there is justified expectation that any government has enough resources to do substantial measures to address the situation as long as it has the political will to do so.	3.72	HA
15. Other human rights issue you wish to add:	3.23	A
COMPOSITE MEAN	3.37	HA

LEGEND: (3.26-4.00) - Highly Aware (HA), (2.51-3.25) – Aware (A), (1.76-2.50)- Slightly Aware (SA), (1.00-1.75)-Unaware (N)

Research Question 3. Relationship between the Grade 9 students' level of TikTok usage and their social awareness of the Philippine contemporary issues

Scale of correlation coefficient	Value
$0 < r \leq 0.19$	Very Low Correlation
$0.2 \leq r \leq 0.39$	Low Correlation
$0.4 \leq r \leq 0.59$	Moderate Correlation
$0.6 \leq r \leq 0.79$	High Correlation
$0.8 \leq r \leq 1.0$	Very High Correlation

Table 3.1. Relationship Between the Grade 9 Students' Level of TikTok Usage in terms of Duration and Their Social Awareness of the Philippine Contemporary Issues

LEVEL OF TIKTOK USAGE VS ISSUES	COMPUTED PEARSON R VALUE	DESCRIPTION	P-VALUE	DECISION	INTERPRETATION
DURATION					
Duration vs Environmental Issues	-0.063	Very Low Correlation	0.451	Do not Reject the Hypothesis	Not Significant
Duration vs Poverty	0.071	Very Low Correlation	0.395	Do not Reject the Hypothesis	Not Significant

Duration vs Graft and Corruption	-0.110	Very Low Correlation	0.184	Do not Reject the Hypothesis	Not Significant
Duration vs Human Rights	-0.111	Very Low Correlation	0.180	Do not Reject the Hypothesis	Not Significant

NOTE: p-value ≤ 0.05 – significant, p-value > 0.05 – not significant

Table 3.2. Relationship Between the Grade 9 Students' Level of TikTok Usage in terms of Frequency and Their Social Awareness of the Philippine Contemporary Issues

LEVEL OF TIKTOK USAGE VS ISSUES	COMPUTED PEARSON R VALUE	DESCRIPTION	P-VALUE	DECISION	INTERPRETATION
FREQUENCY					
Frequency vs Environmental Issues	0.121	Very Low Correlation	0.143	Do not Reject the Hypothesis	Not Significant
Frequency vs Poverty	0.071	Very Low Correlation	0.393	Do not Reject the Hypothesis	Not Significant

Frequency vs Graft and Corruption	0.028	Very Low Correlation	0.738	Do not Reject the Hypothesis	Not Significant
Frequency vs Human Rights	0.034	Very Low Correlation	0.683	Do not Reject the Hypothesis	Not Significant

NOTE: p-value ≤ 0.05 – significant, p-value > 0.05 – not significant

Table 3.3. Relationship Between the Grade 9 Students' Level of TikTok Usage in terms of Purpose and Their Social Awareness of the Philippine Contemporary Issues

LEVEL OF TIKTOK USAGE VS ISSUES	COMPUTED PEARSON R VALUE	DESCRIPTION	P-VALUE	DECISION	INTERPRETATION
PURPOSE					
Purpose vs Environmental Issues	0.290	Low Correlation	0.001	Reject the Hypothesis	Significant
Purpose vs Poverty	0.155	Very Low Correlation	0.061	Do not Reject the Hypothesis	Not Significant

Purpose vs Graft and Corruption	0.135	Very Low Correlation	0.103	Do not Reject the Hypothesis	Not Significant
Purpose vs Human Rights	0.210	Low Correlation	0.029	Reject the Hypothesis	Significant

NOTE: p-value ≤ 0.05 – significant, p-value > 0.05 – not significant

Research Question 4. What program can be proposed based on the findings of the study?

Program Activities:
Table 4.1. Proposed Program Activity 1: Classroom Balita

ACTIVITY 1/ TITLE 1	CLASSROOM BALITA: Enhancing Social Awareness Through Student Reporting
OBJECTIVES	The objective of this activity is to strengthen and sustain the high level of social awareness among Grade 9 students by engaging them in classroom-based news reporting. Through “Classroom Balita,” students will be encouraged to stay informed about current social issues and present them in an organized, factual, and meaningful manner. This activity aims to develop students’ critical thinking, communication, and presentation skills while promoting responsible discussion of societal concerns. Furthermore, the activity seeks to cultivate informed, socially responsible learners who are able to analyze issues, express their perspectives confidently, and demonstrate empathy and understanding toward different social situations. By regularly engaging in this activity, students will continue to build awareness, confidence, and a sense of civic responsibility within the classroom setting.
PERSONS INVOLVED	Grade 7-10 students Each student will take on the role of both researcher and news anchor. In this task, students will conduct research on

	national news and current affairs using reliable sources. After gathering and understanding the information, they will present their findings by reporting the news in front of the class in a clear, organized, and confident manner. This activity will help students develop research skills, improve public speaking abilities, and deepen their understanding of important social issues. Social Study teachers Social Studies teachers must conduct a “Classroom Balita” before starting their lesson by allowing students to present and share current news. After the presentation, teachers will facilitate a brief discussion using guided questions to help students analyze and understand the issue more deeply. Teachers should then connect the news topic to the day’s lesson, making the discussion more relevant and meaningful. This approach encourages critical thinking, active participation, and helps students see the real-life application of the concepts being discussed in class.
TIME FRAME	Starting from first quarter until the fourth quarter.
PERFORMANCE & PRODUCT (OBE)	After conducting the study and obtaining the results, the students will do a live news reporting to be carried out every day before the start of the Social Studies class discussion. The whole report should not last more than 5 minutes to avoid consuming the time allotted for the day’s lesson. Performance: LIVE REPORTING in front of the class to enhance not just their social awareness but also their speaking skills and confidence. Product: NEWS REPORT and REFLECTION PAPER containing the following: 1. A manuscript of the news report and a reflection paper should be printed on a short bond paper. This will serve as a guide to properly execute the flow of the report. 2. The manuscript should follow this format:

	A. Name of student B. Grade and Section C. Headline/ Title of the News D. Summarized body of the News E. Reflection • How does the news affect yourself? • What is the impact of the news in the community? F. Source • Provide a screenshot of the news taken from TikTok application. • If the student has No TikTok account, they can use or borrow from their classmates to browse. • Provide a three (3) news articles from different trusted pages or accounts to fact-check and review the reliability of the TikTok news. • Provide screenshots of the website of the three (3) news sources. • The three (3) news sources should follow the APA research citation format (Surname, First Name Initial. (Year, Month, Date). Title of News (Font: Italic). News Source. News Link • Strictly NO WIKIPEDIA as News Source or reference.
RESOURCE NEED/ SOURCE OF FUND	Resource: School Supplies (Bond paper) Printer Classroom
SUCCESS INDICATOR	Standards for Success: • Reporting- 20 points • News Report Paper- 10 points • Reflection Paper- 15 points • News Source and correct format- 5 points TOTAL SCORE: 50 points on Fourth Quarter PETA

Table 4.2. Proposed Program Activity 2: Empowering Voices

ACTIVITY 2/ TITLE 2	EMPOWERING VOICES: A Grade 9 TikTok-Based Social Awareness Initiative
OBJECTIVES	The objective of this project is to promote social awareness through a TikTok-based campaign actively participated in by Grade 9 students. This initiative aims to encourage students to express their understanding of current social issues in a creative and responsible manner using a digital platform familiar to them. Through this activity, students will enhance their communication skills, boost their self-confidence, and develop digital literacy while learning how to use social media positively and ethically. Additionally, the project seeks to foster critical thinking and social responsibility as students create meaningful content that reflects awareness of societal concerns. The school will also benefit from this initiative, as the videos will be filmed within the school premises, allowing students to showcase the school's facilities, academic environment, and quality of education. By highlighting student engagement, creativity, and knowledge, the campaign will contribute to promoting the school's values and strengthening its public image.
PERSONS INVOLVED	• Students • Teachers • School Community • Social Media People who used TikTok application.
TIME FRAME	Third Quarter (December- January)
PERFORMANCE & PRODUCT (OBE)	The research is all about the TikTok application and the Social Awareness of the Grade 9 students, and since the result shows that Grade 9 students are highly aware on contemporary issues, it is their activity/task to share their knowledge on the platform and help spread awareness to the world by creating a TikTok video that contain the discussion of social issues, the impact on the economy, and their tips on being socially aware as a student.

	Performance: The students will do VIDEO FILMING AND EDITING, REPORTING, and TEACHING. These are the performances that will be observed on their TikTok video. The students will create their own video by filming themselves reporting the social issues assigned to them and share their knowledge on being socially aware. Product: The students will create a 3-5 minutes TikTok Video for their outcome-based product. It will follow the guidelines below: 1. Each section will have four (4) groups which will be assigned based on the social issues groups such as, Environmental issues, Poverty, Graft and Corruption, and Human Rights. 2. The video must contain: A. Discussion of two (2) current news based on the assigned social issue group. B. Impact of the issue to the economy. C. Tips to be Socially aware as a Grade 9 students. 3. This activity is in collaboration with different subjects: A. Social Studies- For Social Awareness B. ICT- For the use of technology. C. MAPEH- For the artistic presentation, visuals, and edit. D. Filipino and English- For the language to be used on filming, the students can use both languages provided with a subtitle. 4. Before Filming, each group must present first their manuscript with three (3) fact-check links for proof reading and checking. This is to be check and validated by the collaborating subject teachers. 5. Raw and final video will be checked and graded first before uploading on the TikTok application to ensure the quality of the video. A revision may occur based on the comments of the collaborating subject teachers. 6. Once approved, each member will upload the video on their TikTok account as well as other social media and will use the following hashtags; #EmpoweringVoices, #SocialAwareness, #OLPS and tag the official TikTok account of the school (@OLPSMedia) to further spread awareness and to expand the audience reach.
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RESOURCE NEED/ SOURCE OF FUND	Resource: School Computer Laboratories School Classrooms Other School Facilities that might be needed		
SUCCESS INDICATOR	Standards for Success:		
	CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	SCORE
	Content (AP)	The video clearly explains the assigned topic in an organized and easy-to-understand manner. It thoroughly discusses the impact of the issue on the economy, helping viewers understand its relevance and real-world effects. In addition, the video provides reliable and practical tips that promote social awareness, encouraging viewers to be more informed, responsible, and mindful of the issue being presented.	40%
	Creativity and Originality (MAPEH)	The video exhibits originality in both format and concept, showcasing the students' creativity through the effective use of visual elements such as props, artistic text, illustrations, and other creative features. These elements are thoughtfully integrated to enhance the presentation, maintain viewer interest, and support the overall message of the video while demonstrating innovative and imaginative expression.	20%
		The video is well-focused and steady, demonstrating good camera control and framing	20%

	Technical Quality (ICT)	throughout. It features high-quality editing that ensures smooth transitions and a polished overall presentation. The audio is clear and easy to understand, while the sound effects are used appropriately to enhance the message without distracting from the content.		
	Script (Filipino and English)	The script and dialogues are well written, clear, and well organized, effectively conveying the message of the video. The delivery is confident and easy to understand, showing proper pacing and pronunciation. In addition, the video includes correct and accurate subtitles, which enhance clarity, accessibility, and overall comprehension for the audience.	20%	
	TOTAL		100%	

Table 4.3. Proposed Program Activity 3: Radyo Balita Live

ACTIVITY 3/ TITLE 3	RADYO BALITA LIVE: Tunog ng Kabataan, Balita ng Bayan
OBJECTIVES	This initiative is a comprehensive program organized by the Social Studies Department, designed to run throughout the entire school year. It is designed to engage students in educational activities that promote awareness, participation, and a deeper appreciation of social studies. Through consistent implementation across the school year, the program seeks to build knowledge, values, and skills that contribute to students' holistic development. Documentation materials, including news reports, research papers, and photographs, will be gathered by the participating volunteer students. These collected documents will serve as valuable sources of information, providing evidence and insights

	that will support the objective of the program. The process of collecting and reporting these materials will be conducted carefully to ensure accuracy, relevance, and authenticity of the data provided by the volunteers. To deepen students' understanding of social issues and demonstrate their compassion through participation in activities focused on economics, politics, society, and the environment. Social studies department will launch “RADYO BALITA LIVE: Tunog ng Kabataan, Balita ng Bayan”, as Radio stations are essential in supporting local events, promoting social awareness, and enhancing the comprehension of the students through listening.
PERSONS INVOLVED	• Students • Teachers • School Community
TIME FRAME	Whole school year
PERFORMANCE & PRODUCT (OBE)	Based on the result of the study, launching “RADYO BALITA LIVE” every Tuesday and Thursday at 7:30AM after the Daily Routine will enhance and strengthen the students’ social awareness on the contemporary issues. The activity is designed to reach a wider audience, extending beyond the grade 9 students to include all grade levels, faculty members, and the entire school community. Since the program will be carried out through the school’s Public Announcement (PA) System, it will ensure that everyone within the campus can participate as listeners and beneficiaries of the broadcast. This broad coverage aims to promote inclusivity, shared awareness, and stronger sense of community among students and teachers alike, as the information and news presented are intended to engage and inform all members of the school environment. Performance: The live broadcasting program, conducted through the school’s Public Announcement System, will serve as an innovative approach to enhance students’ social awareness and communication abilities. It will provide opportunities for them to deliver news and information to the school community in real time, encouraging active participation and responsibility. Moreover, this

	activity aims to develop essential life skills such as public speaking, confidence, listening, and teamwork, while also promoting awareness of local and global issues that shape students' perspective and values. A total of two (2) Radio News Anchor will be coming from the volunteers of Grade 7-10 students every Tuesday, and club members every Thursday. Product: NEWS REPORT PAPER containing the following: 1. A News Report Paper shall be created by the volunteer students and printed on a short bond paper. This will serve as a manuscript that will guide the student acting as a radio news anchor to properly and clearly deliver the report and execute the broadcast completely. This Report paper shall then be passed to their Social Studies teacher for evaluation and documentation purposes. The submission will allow the teacher to assess the students' understanding of the topic, their level of engagement, and the knowledge they have gained related to social awareness and communication. It will also serve as an important reference for measuring the effectiveness of the program. 2. The news must contain one (1) local and one (1) international news. 3. A news report paper should follow the format: A. Name B. Grade and Section C. Headline/ Title of the News D. Summarize body of the News E. Picture taken during the radio broadcasting F. Source • Provide a screenshot of the news taken from TikTok application. • If No TikTok account, students can use or borrow from their classmate to browse. • Provide a three (3) news source from different trusted news authority to fact-check the TikTok news. • Provide also a screenshot of the website for the three (3) news source. • Three (3) news source should follow the APA research citation format (Surname, First Name Initial. (Year, Month, Date). Title of News (Font: Italic). News Source. News Link
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	Strictly NO WIKIPEDIA as News Source.
RESOURCE NEED/ SOURCE OF FUND	Resource: ICT Department PA System
SUCCESS INDICATOR	Standards for Success: Participating/ volunteer students and club members may get additional points or remarks in recitation to be given by social studies teacher per Grade level.

Table 4.4. Proposed Program Activity 4: TNT (Teaching N' TikTok)

ACTIVITY 4/ TITLE 4	TNT (TEACHING N' TIKTOK): Using TikTok as a Learning Tool in teaching Araling Panlipunan
OBJECTIVES	This seminar aims to guide teachers in understanding how the TikTok application can be used as a supplementary educational tool to promote students' social awareness. Since many students frequently use social media, particularly TikTok, the platform can be utilized not only for entertainment but also for learning about contemporary social issues such as environmental concerns, poverty, corruption, and human rights. By the end of the seminar, teachers will be able to: 1. Understand the role of social media, particularly TikTok, in shaping students' social awareness. 2. Identify strategies for integrating TikTok as a supplementary learning tool that can be used inside the classroom. 3. Evaluate TikTok content related to contemporary social issues. 4. Design classroom activities that promote critical thinking and social awareness using TikTok.
PERSONS INVOLVED	

	1. Social Studies Department Role: Organizing Committee Description: The organizing committee manages the logistics of the seminar, including registration, preparation of materials, documentation, and evaluation forms to ensure the smooth flow of the activity. 2. Resource Speaker Role: Seminar Facilitator Description: The resource speaker provides expert knowledge about social media platforms, particularly TikTok, and demonstrates how it can be used as a supplementary educational tool. They guide participants through strategies for evaluating TikTok content and integrating it into classroom learning. 3. Teachers (All Levels) Role: Primary Implementers Description: Teachers participate in the seminar to learn how TikTok can support discussions on contemporary issues and improve students' social awareness. They will develop classroom activities and strategies that responsibly incorporate TikTok content into lessons. 4. School Administration Role: Support Partners Description: Serves as a vital support partner by providing guidance, resources, and encouragement for professional development. Their support helps ensure that teachers can effectively learn how to use TikTok as an innovative tool for engaging students and enhancing modern teaching strategies.
DURATION, TIME, AND VENUE	Duration: One (1) Day Seminar Time: 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM Venue: Marian Hall at Our Lady of Peace School-Antipolo City

PROGRAM FLOW	PROGRAM FLOW			
	TIME:	ACTIVITY:	DESCRIPTION:	FACILITATOR:
	8:00 – 8:30 AM	Registration	Arrival of participants	Social Studies assigned Teacher
	8:30 – 8:45 AM	Opening Program	Prayer, National Anthem, and Opening Remarks	Social Studies assigned Teacher and School Head/Principal
	8:45 – 9:15 AM	Overview of the Seminar	Introduction to the purpose of the seminar and expected outcomes	Subject Team Leader of Social Studies Department
	9:15 – 10:15 AM	Session 1: Social Media and Student Learning	Discussion on how social media influences students' learning and social awareness	Resource Speaker
	10:15 – 10:30 AM	Health Break	Snack time	N/A
	10:30 – 11:30 AM	Session 2: Understanding TikTok as an Educational Tool	Features of TikTok and examples of educational and socially relevant content	Resource Speaker
	11:30 – 12:00 NN	Demonstration	Presentation of TikTok videos related to environmental issues, poverty, graft and corruption, and human rights	Resource Speaker

	12:00 – 1:00 PM	Lunch Break	Lunch Time	N/A
	1:00 – 2:00 PM	Session 3: Integrating TikTok in Classroom Activities	Strategies for using TikTok as a supplementary tool for teaching social awareness	Resource Speaker
	2:00 – 3:00 PM	Workshop Activity & Presentation of Outputs	Teachers will design sample learning activities using TikTok content	Resource Speaker and Group Leaders
	3:00 – 3:15 PM	Health Break	Snack Time	N/A
	3:15 – 4:00 PM	Question and Answer Segment and Closing Program	Questions, reflections, sharing of insights, and Closing Remarks	Resource Speaker, Social Studies assigned Teacher and School Head/Principal
RESOURCE NEED/ SOURCE OF FUND	To successfully conduct the seminar, several materials, equipment, and logistical resources are required to ensure an effective and engaging learning experience for the participants. Venue and Facilities – A suitable venue such as the Marian Hall that can accommodate the participating teachers. The venue should have proper seating arrangements and a conducive learning environment. Audio-Visual Equipment – A laptop, LED Screen, speakers, and microphone will be used to present seminar materials, show TikTok videos, and facilitate discussions. Internet Connection – A stable internet connection is necessary to access online resources and demonstrate TikTok content relevant to social awareness and contemporary issues.			

	4. Seminar Materials – Certificates for the Speaker and certificates of participation for the teachers will be prepared by the Social Studies Department. 5. Fund- requested fund worth Php 10,000 approved by the School Finance head and School Head/ Principal to be used for printing certificates and buying of token and food for the speakers and facilitator.
EXPECTED OUTPUT	1. Teachers will gain awareness of how TikTok can support classroom discussions about contemporary social issues such as environmental issues, poverty, graft and corruption, and human rights. 2. Teachers will develop creative teaching strategies that incorporate short-form video content to make lessons more engaging and relevant to students. 3. Teachers will gain a better understanding of how TikTok and other social media platforms can influence student's knowledge, attitudes, and awareness of social issues. 4. Teachers will learn ways to guide and monitor student's social media use at the time of discussion (when needed) to ensure that it contributes positively to learning and responsible digital behavior. 5. Teachers will collaborate more effectively in promoting students' social awareness and responsible use of social media as a learning tool.
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EVALUATION FORM Seminar Title: TNT (TEACHING N' TIKTOK): Using TikTok as a Learning Tool in teaching Araling Panlipunan Date: _____ Grade Level: ☐ Elementary Teacher ☐ JHS Teacher ☐ SHS Teacher Instructions:

Please evaluate the seminar by placing a check (✓) in the column that best represents your opinion.																	
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating Scale</th> <th>Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Excellent</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Very Good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Fair</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Poor</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Rating Scale	Description	5	Excellent	4	Very Good	3	Good	2	Fair	1	Poor				
Rating Scale	Description																
5	Excellent																
4	Very Good																
3	Good																
2	Fair																
1	Poor																
Part I: Seminar Content					5	4	3	2									
The objectives of the seminar were clearly presented.																	
The seminar topics were relevant to improving students' social awareness.																	
The discussion about TikTok as a learning tool was informative and useful.																	
The seminar increased my understanding of contemporary social issues.																	
Part II: Speaker / Facilitator					5	4	3	2									
The speaker was knowledgeable about the topic.																	
The speaker explained the concepts clearly and effectively.																	
The speaker encouraged participation and discussion.																	
Part III: Program Organization					5	4	3	2									
The seminar was well-organized.																	
The time allotted for each activity was appropriate.																	
The venue and facilities were suitable for the seminar.																	
Part IV: Impact of the Seminar					5	4	3	2									
The seminar helped me understand how TikTok can be used as a supplementary learning tool.																	
The seminar encouraged me to promote students' social awareness.																	
I am willing to apply what I learned from this seminar.																	
Part V: Open-Ended Feedback																	

	1. What did you like most about the seminar?	
	2. What improvements would you suggest for future seminars?	
	3. Additional comments or suggestions:	

DISCUSSION

Research Question 1. Grade 9 students' level of TikTok usage in terms of the following:

- 1.1 Duration
- 1.2 Frequency
- 1.3 Purpose
 - 1.3.1. Cognitive Needs
 - 1.3.2. Affective Needs
 - 1.3.3. Social Integrative Needs
 - 1.3.4. Personal Integrative Needs
 - 1.3.5. Tension-Free Needs

Table 1.1. Level of TikTok Usage of Grade 9 Students in terms of Duration

The data reveal that the majority of respondents reported spending a significant amount of time on the TikTok application. Most notably, **109 respondents, representing 74.1%** of the total sample, indicated that they use TikTok for **three hours or more per day**. This shows a strong tendency toward extended daily usage.

A smaller yet still notable group of **25 respondents (17%)** reported using the application for **two hours each day**. Meanwhile, **12 respondents, accounting for 8.2%**, said they spend **one hour on TikTok daily**. Only **one respondent (0.7%)** reported spending **less than one hour** on the application.

Overall, with a total of 147 participants, the data suggests that TikTok is used heavily by most respondents, with nearly three-quarters engaging with the platform for three hours or more each day. This highlights the application's strong appeal and potential influence on its users' daily routines.

The findings of the study closely align with the observations presented by Howe (2025). According to Howe, Filipinos spend significantly more time online compared to individuals in many other countries, averaging 3 hours and 32 minutes per day on social media alone. This high level of digital engagement is further supported by national statistics showing that, as of January 2025, the Philippines had 90.8 million active social media user identities, representing 78% of the country’s entire population.

These results also reinforce Duarte’s (2025) claim that the typical social media user in the Philippines now spends over an hour each day on TikTok. This marks a dramatic increase in platform usage, as the average time spent on TikTok has more than doubled since 2019. Together, these sources paint a clear picture of the growing influence of social media—particularly TikTok—on the daily lives and digital habits of Filipinos.

When viewed through the lens of the Uses and Gratifications Theory, these results illustrate how social media—especially TikTok—effectively fulfills several user needs. First, TikTok meets **cognitive needs** by providing quick access to information, tutorials, news, and educational content, keeping users constantly informed and mentally stimulated. Second, it satisfies **affective needs** through entertaining videos, humor, trends, and emotionally engaging content, encouraging users to stay on the platform longer. Lastly, the platform fulfills **social integrative needs** by enabling users to connect with friends, communities, and creators, making online interaction a meaningful part of their daily routine.

Table 1.2. Level of TikTok Usage of Grade 9 Students in terms of Frequency

The data reveals that the vast majority of respondents uses TikTok application daily. A total of **133 respondents, representing 90.5%** of the sample, reported that they use TikTok **“Every day”**, indicating that the platform is deeply integrated into their daily routines. A smaller portion of respondents, **13 individuals or 8.8%**, stated that they use TikTok **“Sometimes”**, specifically around four to five times a week. Only **one respondent (0.7%)** indicated that they use the application **“Seldom”**, about two to three times per week. Notably, none of the respondents reported **“Never”** in using TikTok, suggesting that TikTok has a near-universal presence among the group surveyed.

Overall, the results show that TikTok use is highly frequent, with daily engagement being the dominant pattern among users. This underscores the platform’s strong appeal and its significant role in participants’ everyday digital activities.

The findings of the study reinforce Howe’s (2025) observation that the Philippines stands as a true digital powerhouse. With 90.8 million registered social media user IDs, the country demonstrates a remarkable level of online participation, placing it among the global leaders in terms of average daily social media usage. This strong digital presence highlights how deeply integrated online platforms have become in the everyday lives of Filipinos.

Aligned with this trend, TikTok has emerged as one of the country's preferred digital spaces. It currently ranks as the third most popular social networking platform in the Philippines, reflecting its widespread appeal across different age groups and communities. Furthermore, the platform enjoys substantial reach, with 81.6% of Filipino internet users accessing TikTok each month.

These figures emphasize not only the dominance of social media in the country but also TikTok's significant role in shaping online behavior. The compelling usage patterns of Filipinos demonstrate their strong engagement with digital platforms, reaffirming the Philippines' position as one of the most active and connected nations in the online world.

The statement connects to the Uses and Gratifications Theory by showing that the high level of social media and TikTok usage in the Philippines is a result of users actively choosing platforms that meet their personal needs. With 90.8 million social media user IDs and consistently ranking among the top countries in daily online activity, Filipinos clearly engage with digital platforms not by accident, but because these platforms offer something they seek. This aligns with the theory's central idea that audiences are active participants who select media based on the gratifications they expect to gain.

TikTok's strong presence in the country further illustrates this connection. As the third most popular social networking platform in the Philippines and with 81.6% of Filipino internet users accessing it every month, TikTok has evidently become a preferred space for fulfilling a variety of needs. Whether users are looking for entertainment, emotional stimulation, learning, self-expression, social connection, or a momentary escape from stress, TikTok provides content that fits these motivations. Its widespread use shows that it effectively satisfies cognitive, affective, social, personal, and tension-release needs—exactly the types of gratifications outlined in the theory.

In essence, the statement reflects how Filipinos' strong engagement with TikTok and other online platforms supports the Uses and Gratifications Theory by demonstrating that people gravitate toward media that align with their desires, motivations, and daily needs.

Table 1.3. Level of TikTok Usage of Grade 9 Students in terms of Purpose

The researcher used frequency distributions and percentages of the collected data to determine the Grade 9 students' purposes of using the TikTok application. The Purpose is divided into five needs in accordance with the "Uses and Gratification Theory," developed by Katz and Blumler in the early 1940s. These needs are cognitive needs, affective needs, social integrative needs, personal integrative needs, and tension-free needs.

1.3.1. COGNITIVE NEEDS

The data shows that most respondents use TikTok to satisfy their cognitive needs, particularly in gaining knowledge and accessing educational content. The largest group, **91 respondents or 61.9%**, reported that they **sometimes** use TikTok for educational purposes, suggesting that learning-oriented content is a fairly common part of their browsing experience.

Meanwhile, **45 respondents (30.6%)** indicated that they **always** use TikTok to gain knowledge, demonstrating that nearly one-third of the users consistently rely on the platform for educational videos, tutorials, and informational content. A smaller portion, **8 respondents (5.5%)**, stated that they **seldom** use the platform for cognitive purposes, showing limited engagement with educational material. Only **3 respondents (2%)** reported **never** using TikTok to meet cognitive needs. Overall, the data suggests that TikTok serves as a meaningful source of information and learning for most users, with a significant majority—over 92%—turning to the platform at least occasionally for educational content.

While cognitive needs ideally should be consistently met by students when using the TikTok application, it is important to acknowledge that TikTok is not the only platform capable of providing educational value. Students today have access to a wide range of social media sites that offer information, tutorials, and learning opportunities. As Sridharan (2022) explains, different forms of media cater to cognitive needs in various ways, giving users multiple avenues to gain knowledge.

In this context, the finding that 61.9% of respondents selected “Sometimes” indicates that although students do not rely on TikTok exclusively for educational content, they still recognize its potential as a source of learning. This suggests that TikTok plays a supportive role in fulfilling their cognitive needs—providing information, insights, and educational videos when relevant—while other platforms may complement or enhance their overall learning experience. Thus, students view TikTok not only as an entertainment space but also as an occasional tool for gaining knowledge.

1.3.2. AFFECTIVE NEEDS

The data indicates that TikTok is an important platform for fulfilling users’ affective needs, particularly in expressing and releasing emotions through actions like reacting to and commenting on videos. The largest group, **55 respondents (37.4%)**, reported that they **always** use TikTok to express their emotions, suggesting that for many users, engaging with content emotionally is a regular part of their experience on the app.

A nearly equal number, **54 respondents (36.7%)**, indicated that they **sometimes** use TikTok to release emotions. This shows that emotional engagement is a significant but not constant activity for many users, occurring whenever the content resonates with them. Additionally, **29 respondents (19.7%)** reported **seldom** using the app for affective

purposes, while a smaller group of **9 respondents (6.2%)** stated that they **never** use TikTok to express emotions.

Overall, the findings suggest that a majority of users—over 70%—turn to TikTok at least occasionally to satisfy their affective needs. This highlights the platform's role not only as a source of entertainment but also as a space where users can emotionally engage, react, and connect with content in ways that reflect their feelings and moods.

In general, the act of reacting to and commenting on videos allows users to express their emotions and connect empathetically with the content and other viewers. According to Sridharan (2022) and Kasirye (2022), these interactions foster a deeper understanding of the issues being presented by encouraging emotional engagement and empathy. This process goes beyond simple reactions—it involves the capacity to comprehend and manage one's own emotions, as well as to recognize and share the feelings of others.

Brown (2025) further explains that such emotional exchanges contribute to building healthy relationships and guiding moral decision-making. This emotional involvement reflects the affective needs described in the Uses and Gratifications Theory, where media consumption is driven by the desire to release emotions, seek emotional support, and experience feelings such as empathy, joy, or comfort. By reacting and commenting, users fulfill these affective needs, allowing them to process their emotions and connect with others on a deeper level.

Thus, TikTok serves not only as a platform for entertainment but also as a space where users can emotionally engage, express themselves, and develop emotional intelligence through meaningful social interactions. This emotional gratification is a key reason why users continue to participate actively in these digital communities.

1.3.3. SOCIAL INTEGRATIVE NEEDS

The data reveals that TikTok plays a meaningful role in fulfilling users' social integrative needs, particularly in helping them socialize and interact with others through features such as chatting, commenting, and engaging with content. Among the respondents, **49 individuals (33.3%)** indicated that they **always** use TikTok for social interaction, showing that for about one-third of users, the platform consistently serves as a space for connecting with others.

Meanwhile, the largest portion of respondents, **52 individuals (35.4%)**, reported that they **sometimes** use TikTok to socialize. This suggests that while social interaction is not the primary purpose for all users, it still occurs regularly and naturally as they engage with content. Additionally, **34 respondents (23.1%)** stated that they **seldom** use the platform for social purposes, indicating a more limited engagement in social features. A smaller group, **12 respondents (8.2%)**, noted that they **never** use TikTok for socializing.

Overall, the findings show that a significant majority—nearly 70%—use TikTok at least occasionally to socialize. This reflects the platform’s function as a digital space where users can form connections, interact with communities, and maintain social relationships, thereby fulfilling important social integrative needs.

TikTok is just one of many social media platforms that offer messaging features, enabling users to chat, connect, and socialize. The data shows that a significant number of respondents actively use TikTok for these purposes, highlighting the app’s role as a digital space for interaction. This strong desire to stay connected with others, despite physical distances or current circumstances, reflects a fundamental human need to belong and engage with social groups.

According to Kasirye (2022), this drive to connect with the outside world and foster relationships aligns with the concept of social integrative needs within the Uses and Gratifications Theory. These needs involve seeking out media platforms that facilitate social bonding, communication, and a sense of community. TikTok fulfills these needs by providing users with tools to interact—whether through chatting, commenting, or sharing content—which helps reduce feelings of isolation and strengthens social ties.

In essence, the use of TikTok for socializing illustrates how users turn to media not only for entertainment or information but also to satisfy their inherent need for social connection and belonging. This reinforces the theory’s assertion that people actively choose media that support their desire for interpersonal relationships and community engagement.

1.3.4. PERSONAL INTEGRATIVE NEEDS

The data reveals varying levels of engagement with TikTok to satisfy personal integrative needs, which relate to boosting self-esteem through activities such as posting videos or participating in trends. Among the respondents, a smaller group of **18 individuals (12.2%)** reported that they **always** use TikTok for this purpose, indicating a consistent effort to enhance their self-image and gain recognition through the platform.

A larger portion, **46 respondents (31.3%)**, stated that they **sometimes** engage in these activities, suggesting that many users turn to TikTok occasionally to express themselves and boost their confidence. Meanwhile, **42 respondents (28.6%)** indicated that they **seldom** use the platform for personal integrative needs, showing a lower frequency of engagement in self-promotion or trend participation. Notably, **41 respondents (27.9%)** reported that they **never** use TikTok for this purpose, suggesting that over a quarter of users do not see the platform as a means to enhance their self-esteem or public identity.

Overall, these findings indicate that while a significant number of users do utilize TikTok to support their self-esteem and personal image at least sometimes, a considerable portion either rarely or never use the platform for this reason. This suggests

diverse motivations among users, with some prioritizing self-expression and recognition, and others engaging with TikTok for different gratifications.

In totality, the data shows that students today use TikTok in varying degrees—from occasionally to not at all—as a means to boost their self-esteem through activities such as posting videos or participating in popular trends. This behavior reflects a broader desire to enhance one’s sense of personal value and social standing. According to Hussain (2019), media platforms like TikTok play a significant role in helping users achieve personal integrative needs, which include building self-confidence, gaining credibility, and achieving a stable sense of identity.

These needs go beyond simple entertainment or social interaction; they relate to how individuals see themselves and wish to be perceived by others. By engaging in content creation and trend participation, users are not only expressing themselves but also seeking validation and recognition from their peers. This process helps them establish a sense of status and acceptance within their social circles and society at large.

Thus, TikTok serves as an important tool for fulfilling personal integrative needs, allowing users to strengthen their self-esteem and social identity through media engagement. This aligns with the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which highlights that individuals actively use media to satisfy specific psychological needs related to self-worth and social positioning.

1.3.5. TENSION-FREE NEEDS

The data clearly indicates that TikTok plays a significant role in fulfilling users’ tension-free needs, particularly as a means to release stress and unwind by watching funny videos, dancing, singing, or engaging in lighthearted content. A substantial majority of respondents, **121 individuals (82.3%)**, reported that they **always** use TikTok to relieve stress and relax. This demonstrates that for most users, TikTok is a consistent and reliable outlet for tension release and emotional relief.

Additionally, **22 respondents (15%)** stated that they **sometimes** use the platform for this purpose, showing that even those who do not use TikTok constantly still recognize its value as a stress-relief tool when needed. Only a small number of respondents, **3 individuals (2%)**, indicated they **seldom** use TikTok for tension-free needs, while just **1 respondent (0.7%)** reported never using the application to alleviate stress. Overall, these findings highlight TikTok’s powerful role as a source of entertainment and relaxation, helping users manage stress and escape daily pressures through enjoyable and engaging content. The platform effectively meets the tension-release needs of the vast majority of its users.

In general, people turn to various forms of media as a way to relax and unwind from the stresses of daily life. Activities such as watching funny videos, dancing, and singing are common methods of using media for entertainment and stress relief, as noted

by Sridharan (2022). This aligns closely with what are called tension-free needs—sometimes referred to as tension-release needs—which describe the human desire to reduce stress and temporarily escape reality by lowering one’s self-awareness (Vinney, 2024).

This explains why a large number of respondents in the study selected “Always” when asked about using TikTok to fulfill these needs. For many users, engaging with lighthearted and entertaining content provides a valuable opportunity to unwind, relax, and give their minds a break from the constant flow of information and mental demands. Through this form of media consumption, users are able to momentarily ease their worries, recharge emotionally, and restore mental balance, making TikTok a powerful tool for managing everyday tension and promoting psychological well-being.

Table 1.4. Level of TikTok Usage of Grade 9 Students in terms of Purpose interpreted using Weighted Means

The table presents the level of TikTok usage of Grade 9 students in terms of purpose, interpreted using weighted means and verbal interpretations. In terms of **Cognitive Needs**, most students reported using TikTok *sometimes* (61.9%) and *always* (30.6%) to gain knowledge through educational content. This resulted in a weighted mean of 3.21, verbally interpreted as Sometimes, indicating that TikTok serves as a supportive but not primary source of learning for students.

For **Affective Needs**, which involve releasing emotions through reacting and commenting on videos, responses were more evenly distributed between *always* (37.4%) and *sometimes* (36.7%). The weighted mean of 3.05, interpreted as Sometimes, suggests that emotional engagement is a regular but moderate part of students’ TikTok use. Regarding **Social Integrative Needs**, such as socializing through chatting and interaction, the majority of students selected *sometimes* (35.4%) and *always* (33.3%). With a weighted mean of 2.94 and a verbal interpretation of Sometimes, the data shows that TikTok plays a role in social interaction, though it is not the dominant platform for all students.

In contrast, **Personal Integrative Needs**, which relate to boosting self-esteem through posting videos or participating in trends, recorded lower levels of engagement. A significant number of students reported *seldom* (28.6%) or *never* (27.9%) using TikTok for this purpose. The weighted mean of 2.28, still verbally interpreted as Sometimes, indicates that self-esteem enhancement is not a primary motivation for many students when using TikTok.

Lastly, **Tension-Free Needs** obtained the highest level of usage, with an overwhelming majority of students indicating *always* (82.3%) using TikTok to release stress through entertaining content. This resulted in the highest weighted mean of 3.79, interpreted as Sometimes, highlighting TikTok’s strong role as a stress-relief and relaxation platform. Overall, the composite mean of 3.05, verbally interpreted as

Sometimes, suggests that Grade 9 students moderately use TikTok to fulfill various needs, with tension-free needs being the most dominant, followed by cognitive, affective, social integrative, and personal integrative needs.

Research Question 2. Grade 9 students' level of social awareness of contemporary issues in the Philippines

- 2.1. Environmental Issues
- 2.2. Poverty Issues
- 2.3. Graft and Corruption Issues
- 2.4. Human Rights Issues

Table 2.1. Grade 9 students' level of social awareness of contemporary issues in the Philippines in terms of Environmental Issues

Based on the results, Grade 9 students generally show a high level of awareness about environmental issues in the Philippines, with an overall composite weighted mean of 3.60, indicating they are **“Highly Aware.”** The students understand the importance of practicing the 3Rs—Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle—to help reduce pollution (WM=3.97), and they are willing to encourage their friends or classmates to adopt activities that promote a clean and green environment (WM=3.91). They believe that working together to solve environmental problems can lead to success (WM=3.93) and that everyone must contribute to reducing pollution (WM=3.87).

The students recognize the need to develop awareness and change attitudes toward protecting the environment (WM=3.83). They are also conscious that environmental pollution is increasing and can harm both plants and animals (WM=3.74). They understand that renewable energy sources like wind, solar, water, and natural gas are important for sustainable energy in the future (WM=3.74).

Moreover, students are aware that human activities contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change (WM=3.61). They are familiar with waste management policies such as the “No Segregation, No Collection” policy (WM=3.54) and acknowledge that the government has laws to address environmental issues (WM=3.49). However, they also realize that problems persist, such as pollution in major rivers (WM=3.31) and garbage issues in the country, despite laws like the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (RA 9003) (WM=3.22).

Finally, students have some awareness of the government agencies responsible for environmental protection, including the DENR, LTO, MMDA, DA, and BFAR (WM=2.82), though knowledge in this area is slightly lower compared to other environmental concerns. Overall, the findings show that Grade 9 students are highly aware of the environment, understand the importance of their actions, and recognize both individual and collective responsibilities in addressing environmental challenges.

The strong level of environmental awareness shown by the Grade 9 students supports the idea presented by Cotton Brazil (2024) that TikTok has become an influential platform in shaping environmentally conscious youth. According to the article, TikTok has played a major role in bringing together a global community of young people who are passionate about sustainability. Through short videos, creative content, and viral trends, the platform makes it easier for youth from different countries to share ideas, learn from one another, and engage in meaningful discussions about environmental stewardship.

This growing online movement helps raise awareness about climate change, pollution, and conservation in ways that feel relatable and accessible to young audiences. TikTok sustainability creators—often young individuals themselves—serve as powerful voices who inspire others to take action, whether by adopting eco-friendly habits or participating in environmental campaigns. As environmental issues become more urgent, these creators and the communities they build stand as valuable allies in promoting awareness, encouraging responsibility, and motivating collective action.

In this sense, the high awareness observed among the students reflects not only their understanding of environmental issues but also the broader influence of platforms like TikTok, which continue to shape a generation that is informed, engaged, and ready to contribute to global environmental efforts.

Table 2.2. Grade 9 students’ level of social awareness of contemporary issues in the Philippines in terms of Poverty

The results in Table 2.2 show that Grade 9 students have a “**Highly Aware**” understanding of poverty issues in the Philippines, as reflected in the overall composite weighted mean of 3.44. The students strongly recognize several important indicators of well-being. They are aware that every Filipino family should eat at least three times a day (WM=3.76) and that every Filipino aged 10 and above should be able to read and write (WM=3.73). They also understand that Filipino families should have their own shelter, including a house and lot (WM=3.66), and that every member of a household is expected to participate in community activities (WM=3.50).

In addition, students believe that family members should have at least three or more sets of clothes and should experience social activities like “mall” to enjoy quality family time (WM=3.71). They also recognize the importance of financial stability, stating that every Filipino family should have more than enough money to cover both their needs and wants (WM=3.41).

The students also show strong awareness of the causes and effects of poverty. They understand that poverty levels are influenced by rapid population growth and that the average poor Filipino family often has six or more members (WM=3.69). They are also aware that poverty often leads to frequent illness or poor health among family members (WM=3.68). Furthermore, they acknowledge that most poor households achieve only basic levels of education (WM=3.63) and that the Philippine government

should use social protection programs to give direct support to poor families (WM=3.48). These findings reveal that Grade 9 students have a strong and detailed understanding of the conditions, challenges, and needs related to poverty in the Philippines.

Overall, TikTok and other social media platforms have become powerful tools in raising awareness about global poverty. Their wide reach and constant flow of information allow important issues to spread quickly, especially among younger audiences who spend much of their time online. Research conducted in the United States supports this, showing that 47% of respondents reported learning about major global issues, including world poverty, through social media. This demonstrates how digital platforms help people access information they might not encounter through traditional media.

Additionally, the same research revealed that 15% of individuals became aware of efforts to eliminate poverty specifically because of what they saw on social media. These platforms often highlight real stories, educational content, and calls to action that open people's eyes to the realities faced by impoverished communities. As Lyrenmann (2021) and Keare (2020) suggest, social media not only spreads information but also encourages users to think critically about social issues and become more involved in conversations about solutions.

Through videos, infographics, campaigns, and personal stories, platforms like TikTok play a significant role in educating the public and fostering a sense of global responsibility. In this way, social media becomes an essential avenue for increasing understanding and motivating action toward reducing poverty worldwide.

Table 2.3. Grade 9 students' level of social awareness of contemporary issues in the Philippines in terms of Graft and Corruption

With an overall composite weighted mean of 3.60, the results in Table 2.3 indicate that Grade 9 students have a **"Highly Aware"** level of understanding about graft and corruption issues in the Philippines. The findings show that students are well aware of all issues presented in the survey. They understand that corruption can occur at many levels in society (WM=3.89) and that it exists across all branches of government, including the Judiciary, Legislative, and Executive (WM=3.63). They also recognize that graft and corruption are less common in developed countries than in less developed countries like the Philippines (WM=3.78).

The students are aware that corruption is especially likely in certain sectors, such as tax administration (WM=3.66), the police (WM=3.64), customs administration (WM=3.60), and even in private businesses (WM=3.51). They can also identify specific forms of corruption, including favoritism and nepotism (WM=3.76) and situations where bribes are offered to obtain government permits (WM=3.72).

Finally, the Grade 9 students believe that reducing corruption requires transparent governance (WM=3.77), and they agree that the passing of the Freedom of Information

(FOI) law can help eliminate corruption (WM=3.44). Overall, the data shows that students have a strong and informed understanding of the nature, causes, and possible solutions to graft and corruption in the country.

Social media has played a significant role in helping students develop and strengthen their social awareness. Platforms like TikTok have become spaces where young people are exposed to real-world issues and ongoing discussions about politics, inequality, and governance. In recent years, a wave of online activity has greatly influenced the political climate in the Philippines. For example, young Filipinos have taken to social media to openly criticize the children of government leaders for displaying luxurious lifestyles, behaviors seen by many as insensitive or disconnected from the everyday struggles of ordinary citizens.

As Gutierrez (2025) points out, this surge of digital engagement reflects how deeply involved the youth have become in social and political conversations. Through these platforms, students not only gain information but also learn to question, analyze, and form opinions about the actions of public figures and institutions. This exposure enables them to build a deeper understanding of societal issues and encourages them to become more active and aware citizens.

Table 2.4. Grade 9 students' level of social awareness of contemporary issues in the Philippines in terms of Human Rights

The data in Table 2.4 show that Grade 9 students generally have a **“Highly Aware”** understanding of Human Rights issues in the Philippines, with an overall composite weighted mean of 3.37. Students clearly understand that human rights concern everyone and should be protected at all times (WM=3.95). They also recognize that modern electronic media, especially social media, play a big role in spreading information and increasing awareness about human rights (WM=3.64).

In addition, the students believe that the government is effective in protecting the rights of its citizens (WM=3.46) and that the government should have adequate resources to address human rights problems (WM=3.72). They also know that if someone's fundamental rights are violated, they have the right to seek help from the Supreme Court or High Court (WM=3.46). The students are aware of several important human rights issues in the country. They understand the impact of the “war on drugs” and other violations during the Duterte administration (WM=3.66) and that Duterte's anti-illegal drug campaign remained one of the country's “gravest” human rights concerns in 2019 (WM=3.42). Students also know about the attacks on media workers, activists, and civil society members, which were linked to accusations involving the Communist Party of the Philippines (WM=3.59). They have also observed a common concern: that rich people seem to have more rights than the poor (WM=3.35).

However, the results also show areas where students are less aware and could still improve their understanding. This includes knowing more about how the government

protects human rights (WM=3.24), whether the government truly acknowledges the rights of all citizens (WM=3.19), and whether all citizens are treated fairly regardless of sex or gender (WM=3.05). Students also show lower awareness of issues like Oplan Tokhang, which violates the rights of suspected drug users (WM=2.88), and the need to include human rights education in the school curriculum (WM=2.70). Overall, while Grade 9 students show a high level of awareness in many human rights concerns, the data reveal that there are still important areas where deeper understanding is needed.

Furthermore, TikTok has become an important platform for raising awareness about human rights, especially among the youth. As highlighted in a study by Jalli (2025), young activists in the Philippines are increasingly using TikTok to promote social justice and inspire political participation, even in environments where open expression can be challenging or risky. Through creative approaches such as trend-jacking—where activists repurpose popular trends to deliver meaningful messages—and the use of humorous or thought-provoking memes, these young advocates are able to reach wide audiences and spark conversations about human rights issues.

This shows how TikTok, beyond being an entertainment platform, has transformed into a powerful tool for advocacy, enabling young Filipinos to voice their concerns, raise awareness, and engage others in pressing social and political matters.

Research Question 3. Relationship between the Grade 9 students' level of TikTok usage and their social awareness of the Philippine contemporary issues

Table 3.1. Relationship Between the Grade 9 Students' Level of TikTok Usage in terms of Duration and Their Social Awareness of the Philippine Contemporary Issues

The data presented in Table 3.1 indicates that there is no statistically significant relationship between the duration of TikTok usage among Grade 9 students and their level of social awareness. This conclusion is supported by the computed Pearson correlation coefficients, which reflect very weak associations across all social issues examined. Specifically, the correlation values were -0.063 for environmental issues, 0.071 for poverty, -0.110 for graft and corruption, and -0.111 for human rights. These values fall within the range that describes a very low or negligible correlation, suggesting that the amount of time students spend on TikTok has little to no meaningful connection with their awareness of these societal concerns.

Further reinforcing this finding are the corresponding p-values for each social issue, all of which exceed the standard level of significance set at 0.05. The p-values of 0.451 for environmental issues, 0.395 for poverty, 0.184 for graft and corruption, and 0.180 for human rights indicate that the observed relationships are not statistically significant. As a result, the null hypothesis is not rejected, leading to the conclusion that the duration of TikTok usage does not significantly influence the social awareness of the students.

These findings suggest that although a large proportion of Grade 9 students reportedly use TikTok for three hours or more daily—and despite broader statistics showing that average users spend over an hour per day on the platform—extended usage does not necessarily translate into heightened social awareness. Even with Filipinos spending an average of 40 hours and 39 minutes per month on TikTok, the platform primarily functions as a space for digital entertainment rather than a dedicated source of news or social education. Its features, such as tier list filtering, viral challenges, duets, and stitch functions, encourage interactive and creative engagement beyond passive content consumption (Howe, 2025).

This suggests that the duration of TikTok use alone is an insufficient predictor of social awareness among Grade 9 students. While students may spend considerable time on the platform, time spent does not equate to exposure to socially informative content, as TikTok's algorithm primarily tailors content based on entertainment preferences, user interactions, and trends rather than educational value (Kaye, 2020). Consequently, prolonged usage may be dominated by leisure-oriented content, such as humor, music, or viral challenges, which limits consistent engagement with social issues.

Additionally, social awareness is a multidimensional construct influenced by several external factors beyond social media consumption, including formal education, family discussions, traditional media, peer influence, and community involvement. These stronger influences may dilute or overshadow any marginal effect that TikTok usage duration could have, resulting in very weak correlations. Furthermore, the algorithmic personalization of TikTok creates highly individualized content feeds, meaning that two students with identical usage durations may encounter vastly different content. This variability reduces the likelihood of a uniform impact on social awareness across the sample, contributing to nonsignificant statistical results.

While TikTok may expose users to socially relevant content, it cannot be assumed to be the primary or sole contributor to students' social awareness, as users engage with the platform for a wide variety of purposes beyond information-seeking. Thus, the interpretation is not significant because the measure of exposure (time spent) does not capture the quality, relevance, or educational nature of the content consumed, nor does it account for other dominant socialization influences shaping students' awareness.

Table 3.2. Relationship Between the Grade 9 Students' Level of TikTok Usage in terms of Frequency and Their Social Awareness of the Philippine Contemporary Issues

The results presented in Table 3.2 indicate that there is no statistically significant relationship between the social awareness of Grade 9 students and the frequency with which they use the TikTok application. This conclusion is supported by the computed Pearson correlation coefficients, which demonstrate very low levels of association across all selected social issues. Specifically, the correlation values were 0.121 for environmental issues, 0.071 for poverty, 0.028 for graft and corruption, and 0.034 for

human rights. These values suggest that the frequency of TikTok use has a negligible influence on students' awareness of these social concerns.

Moreover, the corresponding p-values further validate this finding, as all exceed the conventional significance level of 0.05. The p-values of 0.143 for environmental issues, 0.393 for poverty, 0.738 for graft and corruption, and 0.683 for human rights indicate that the observed relationships are not statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis is not rejected, leading to the conclusion that how often students use TikTok does not meaningfully affect their level of social awareness.

The data also reveal that although nearly all respondents reported using TikTok daily, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that students primarily rely on the platform for obtaining news or socially relevant information. The absence of a statistically significant relationship between the social awareness of Grade 9 students and the frequency of TikTok usage may be explained by the distinction between the amount of time spent on the platform and the nature of the content consumed. Although most respondents reported daily use of TikTok, frequent exposure does not necessarily imply engagement with informative or socially relevant material, as the platform's algorithm primarily promotes entertainment-based and personalized content (Howe, 2025).

TikTok is only one of several social media platforms available to students, and its use does not automatically equate to exposure to informative or awareness-building content. In fact, TikTok ranks only third among the most popular social networking platforms in the Philippines (Howe, 2025), suggesting that students' social awareness is shaped by a broad digital ecosystem rather than a single platform. In the Philippine context, Facebook and YouTube remain the dominant sources of online information and news consumption, with Filipinos recognized as among the most active users of these platforms globally (Mateo, 2025). This suggests that students are likely exposed to social issues through multiple online channels, thereby diluting the influence of TikTok usage frequency alone.

From a broader perspective, students' social awareness is likely shaped by multiple overlapping influences, including school instruction, family discussions, traditional media, and other dominant social media platforms. Given that these platforms are more commonly used for news consumption in the Philippines, TikTok's relative role in informing students about social issues may be secondary. This diffusion of influence makes it difficult for any single platform—especially one primarily associated with short-form entertainment—to exert a measurable, independent effect on social awareness.

Therefore, while TikTok is widely used by the Grade 9 students, the interpretation is not statistically significant because TikTok usage frequency is an insufficient and indirect predictor of social awareness, particularly within a media environment where students access information from diverse sources and where platform use does not guarantee engagement with socially informative content.

Table 3.3. Relationship Between the Grade 9 Students' Level of TikTok Usage in terms of Purpose and Their Social Awareness of the Philippine Contemporary Issues

The findings indicate a mixed outcome regarding the relationship between Grade 9 students' use of the TikTok application in terms of purpose and their level of social awareness. On one hand, the results reveal very low correlations between TikTok usage and students' awareness of certain social issues, particularly poverty and graft & corruption. The computed Pearson correlation coefficients were 0.155 for poverty and 0.135 for graft and corruption, both of which indicate weak associations. Correspondingly, the p-values of 0.061 for poverty and 0.103 for graft and corruption exceed the standard significance level of 0.05. As a result, the null hypothesis is not rejected, suggesting that students' use of TikTok in terms of Purpose does not have a significant relationship with their social awareness of poverty, graft, and corruption.

The lack of a statistically significant relationship between Grade 9 students' TikTok usage in terms of purpose and their awareness of poverty, graft, and corruption may be explained by the platform's predominant use for entertainment rather than civic or social learning. TikTok is largely consumed for leisure, with only a minority of users intentionally engaging with educational content (Grand Canyon University, 2023). As a result, students are less likely to encounter or critically engage with content that deepens their understanding of complex socio-political issues.

Additionally, TikTok's algorithm prioritizes content aligned with users' existing interests, which often reinforces entertainment-focused consumption rather than exposure to informative or socially relevant topics. This limits opportunities for sustained engagement with issues such as poverty and corruption, which typically require contextual explanation and critical reflection beyond what short-form videos can provide. Lastly, students' social awareness is more strongly influenced by formal education, family values, and personal interest than by casual social media use. As supported by Ibardeloza et al. (2022), students' engagement with socio-political issues often stems from intrinsic motivation rather than passive exposure; TikTok usage alone is insufficient to produce significant effects. Collectively, these factors explain why the data do not demonstrate a statistically significant relationship between TikTok usage and students' social awareness of poverty, graft, and corruption.

On the other hand, the results show a contrasting pattern for environmental and human rights issues. The computed Pearson r values of 0.290 for environmental issues and 0.210 for human rights issues indicate low but meaningful correlations. In addition, their corresponding p-values of 0.001 and 0.029 fall below the 0.05 significance level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between students' use of TikTok in terms of Purpose and their level of social awareness regarding environmental protection and human rights concerns.

This finding aligns with broader youth perspectives and global trends. A recent U-Report study by UNICEF (2024) revealed that approximately 26 percent of Filipino youth believe climate change and natural disasters will be the most significant challenges they face in the future. Social media platforms, including TikTok, have been shown to play a crucial role in shaping environmental awareness, which serves as an internal motivation for individuals to take action to protect the environment. Xie et al. (2024) emphasize that social media often surpasses traditional media in promoting pro-environmental behavior by leveraging user-generated content that connects knowledge with awareness, fosters online communities, and encourages active participation in environmental initiatives.

Similarly, TikTok has emerged as an effective platform for raising awareness about human rights issues. Baig (2020) notes that many users reported they would not have been informed about human rights conditions without exposure to social media. The rapid and viral nature of TikTok content, in particular, has attracted the digital generation, motivating users not only to spread awareness but also to engage in further research and discussion. Taken together, these findings suggest that while TikTok may not significantly influence students' awareness of all social issues, it plays a meaningful role in enhancing awareness of environmental and human rights concerns when used with a specific purpose.

Research Question 4. What program can be proposed based on the findings of the study?

Based on the findings of this study, the educational program is recommended to continue developing the students' social awareness of social issues and events in the Philippines.

Program Overview

Title:

Project S.A.F.E.
(Social Awareness for Future Empowerment)

Program Rationale:

The rapid growth of digital media, particularly social networking platforms such as TikTok, has significantly influenced how young people are exposed to social issues in the Philippines. The findings of the study reveal that Grade 9 students already possess a high level of social awareness, especially regarding current social concerns such as environmental issues, poverty, graft and corruption, and human rights. This suggests that students are not passive recipients of information but are already socially conscious and capable of engaging with societal issues.

However, while students demonstrate strong awareness, the study also indicates that mere exposure to social media content does not automatically deepen understanding or guarantee sustained social engagement. Social awareness, if left unsupported, may

remain surface-level and gradually decline without continuous reinforcement, critical reflection, and guided application. Therefore, there is a need for a structured program that does not aim to introduce awareness from scratch but rather enhances, sustains, and channels existing awareness into informed understanding, responsible digital engagement, and constructive action.

Project S.A.F.E.: Social Awareness for Future Empowerment is designed to build upon the already high level of social awareness among Grade 9 students by strengthening their critical thinking skills, deepening their understanding of key social issues, and promoting responsible use of digital platforms such as TikTok. By integrating guided discussions, reflective activities, and purposeful media engagement, the program seeks to empower students to become informed, socially responsible individuals who are capable of sustaining their awareness and contributing positively to their communities and the nation.

Program Objectives:

To enhance and sustain the existing social awareness of Grade 9 students by promoting informed understanding, responsible digital media use, and active engagement with key social issues in the Philippines. At the end of the program, the Grade 9 students are expected to:

1. **Strengthen their understanding** of major social issues in the Philippines, including environmental concerns, poverty, graft and corruption, and human rights, through guided learning activities and discussions.
2. **Enhance critical awareness** by analyzing social issue–related content encountered on TikTok and other digital platforms, distinguishing between credible information and misinformation.
3. **Promote responsible and purposeful use of social media**, particularly TikTok, as a tool for sustaining awareness rather than passive entertainment.
4. **Encourage reflective thinking** by allowing students to express their perspectives and insights on social issues through discussions, written reflections, or creative digital outputs.
5. **Empower students to become socially responsible youth** who are informed, engaged, and capable of contributing positively to their school, community, and society.

Findings

The study entitled “TikTok usage in relation to Social Awareness of Contemporary Issues in the Philippines among Grade 9 students”. The objective was to determine whether students are still aware of the issues facing the nation, despite the popularity of the TikTok application, and whether TikTok has enhanced their social awareness. These findings are based on data collected from 147 ninth-grade students at Our Lady of Peace School in Antipolo City.

Among the important findings of this research were:

1. The 147 Grade 9 students who became respondents of this research demonstrated the following results, which are based on their duration, frequency, and purpose of using the TikTok Application. The results on **DURATION** show that the majority of respondents heavily use TikTok. Out of 147 participants, nearly three-fourths (74.1%) reported using TikTok for three hours or more each day, indicating extended daily engagement with the platform. Smaller groups reported lower usage, with 17% spending two hours daily and only a minimal number using the app for one hour or less. These findings are consistent with recent studies showing high social media usage among Filipinos, who spend several hours online daily, particularly on TikTok. The results highlight TikTok's strong influence on users' daily routines and digital habits.

The results on **FREQUENCY** show that TikTok is used daily by the vast majority of respondents, with 90.5% reporting daily use. A smaller portion uses the app several times a week, and none reported never using it, indicating that TikTok is deeply integrated into their daily routines. These findings reflect broader trends in the Philippines, where social media usage is extremely high. TikTok ranks as the third most popular platform in the country, with 81.6% of Filipino internet users accessing it on a monthly basis, highlighting its widespread appeal across various age groups.

The results on **PURPOSE** show that Grade 9 students who used TikTok fulfill various needs at a moderate level, as reflected by the composite mean of 3.05 (Sometimes). Among the multiple needs, **Tension-Free Needs** ranked the highest, indicating that students primarily use TikTok for stress relief and entertainment purposes. This was followed by **Cognitive Needs**, showing that the platform is also used to gain knowledge and access educational content.

Affective and **Social Integrative Needs** were met at a moderate level, suggesting that students sometimes use TikTok to express emotions and socialize. In contrast, **Personal Integrative Needs** ranked the lowest, indicating that boosting self-esteem through posting videos or joining trends is not a major motivation for most students. Overall, the findings suggest that TikTok is mainly used by Grade 9 students for relaxation and learning, while emotional expression, social interaction, and self-esteem enhancement play a secondary role.

2. The responses of the Grade 9 student participants indicate a **High Level of Awareness** of the four contemporary issues examined in the study. Among these issues, Environmental Issues and Graft and Corruption Issues obtained the highest composite means of 3.60, reflecting strong student awareness and understanding of these topics. Similarly, Poverty Issues registered a composite mean of 3.44, while Human Rights Issues obtained a composite mean of 3.37, both of which still fall within a high level of awareness. This suggests that they are socially conscious and capable of recognizing and understanding important societal challenges.

3. For the significant relationship between the level of TikTok usage among Grade 9 students and their social awareness of contemporary Philippine issues, the gathered

data revealed that when it comes to **DURATION**, the data indicate that there is **no statistically significant relationship** between the duration of TikTok usage among Grade 9 students and their level of social awareness. The Pearson correlation coefficients for environmental issues (-0.063), poverty (0.071), graft and corruption (-0.110), and human rights (-0.111) all show very weak or negligible associations. Additionally, the p-values for each issue exceed the standard significance level of 0.05, confirming that the observed relationships are not statistically significant. These findings suggest that even though many students spend several hours daily on TikTok, extended usage does not necessarily lead to greater awareness of social issues. While the platform may expose users to socially relevant content, TikTok primarily serves as a space for entertainment and creative engagement rather than a consistent source of social education. Therefore, students' social awareness appears to be influenced by factors beyond the amount of time they spend on the platform.

The significant relationship for the **FREQUENCY** shows that there is **no statistically significant relationship** between the social awareness of Grade 9 students and the frequency of their TikTok usage. The Pearson correlation coefficients for environmental issues (0.121), poverty (0.071), graft and corruption (0.028), and human rights (0.034) all show negligible associations, and the corresponding p-values exceed 0.05, confirming that the observed relationships are not significant. Although most students reported using TikTok daily, the findings suggest that frequency of use does not meaningfully influence their awareness of social issues. TikTok is primarily a platform for entertainment rather than a primary source of news or social education, and students likely gain social awareness from multiple online sources. Overall, TikTok's frequency of use cannot be considered a decisive factor in shaping students' social awareness.

Lastly, the result of a significant relationship in terms of **PURPOSE** revealed that there is a mixed relationship between Grade 9 students' use of TikTok in terms of purpose and their level of social awareness. For **Poverty** and **Graft and Corruption**, the correlations were very low ($r = 0.155$ and 0.135 , respectively) and **not statistically significant** ($p > 0.05$), indicating that TikTok usage does not meaningfully affect students' awareness of these issues. This aligns with studies showing that TikTok is primarily used for entertainment rather than educational or informational purposes. In contrast, **Environmental** and **Human Rights Issues** showed low but **statistically significant correlations** ($r = 0.290$ and 0.210 , $p < 0.05$), suggesting that students' purposeful use of TikTok is associated with higher awareness of these topics. This reflects broader trends where social media, including TikTok, effectively raises environmental and human rights awareness among students by providing accessible, engaging, and community-driven content. Overall, the results indicate that while TikTok may not significantly influence awareness of all social issues, it plays a meaningful role in promoting awareness of environmental protection and human rights when used with a deliberate purpose.

4. Since the data gathered revealed that Grade 9 students demonstrate a high level of awareness regarding contemporary issues, a program titled **“Project S.A.F.E. (Social Awareness for Future Empowerment)”** was proposed. This initiative aims to sustain

and further develop students' social awareness by providing structured activities that enhance their critical thinking and analytical skills. Through the program, students will have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of key social issues such as environmental protection, poverty, human rights, and graft and corruption, while also learning to responsibly navigate and utilize digital platforms like TikTok. By integrating educational content with digital engagement, Project S.A.F.E. seeks to empower students and teachers to become informed, thoughtful, and socially responsible individuals capable of contributing meaningfully to society.

Conclusions

Based on the foregoing findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. This study reveals that TikTok plays a significant role in the daily lives of the 147 Grade 9 students surveyed. Most respondents engage with the platform extensively, spending three or more hours per day and accessing it daily, demonstrating its strong presence in their routines. The primary purpose of TikTok use among these students is Tension-Free Needs for stress relief and entertainment, followed by Cognitive Needs through learning and educational content. The other three needs from Uses and Gratification Theory are less prominent motivations. Overall, TikTok serves mainly as a source of relaxation and knowledge acquisition for Grade 9 students, highlighting its influence on both their digital habits and leisure activities.

2. The Grade 9 students demonstrated a high level of awareness of contemporary societal issues. They showed the strongest understanding of Environmental and Graft and Corruption Issues, followed closely by Poverty and Human Rights Issues. Overall, the findings indicate that the students are socially conscious and capable of recognizing and understanding key challenges in society.

3. The study found that the level of TikTok usage among Grade 9 students—whether measured by duration or frequency—does not significantly influence their overall social awareness of contemporary Philippine issues. However, when students use TikTok with a specific purpose, there is a low but significant positive relationship with awareness of Environmental and Human Rights Issues, suggesting that purposeful engagement can enhance understanding of certain social topics. Overall, TikTok primarily serves as an entertainment platform, and students' social awareness is shaped more by intentional content consumption than by general usage.

4. Given the high level of social awareness among Grade 9 students, the proposed **Project S.A.F.E. (Social Awareness for Future Empowerment)** aims to further develop their understanding of key societal issues and enhance critical thinking skills. By combining educational activities with responsible digital engagement, the program seeks to empower students to become informed, socially responsible, and active contributors to society.

In addition, the program includes seminars designed for teachers to strengthen their roles in guiding students' responsible use of social media platforms such as TikTok. These seminars will help teachers develop effective strategies for integrating digital media

as a supplementary learning tool in classroom discussions about contemporary social issues. At the same time, teachers will gain a deeper understanding of how social media influences students' knowledge, attitudes, and awareness of societal concerns. Through this initiative, teachers will be better equipped to support students in developing social awareness and responsible digital behavior, creating a collaborative learning environment that promotes meaningful engagement with real-world issues.

Recommendations

In light of the conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are proposed for the students, educators, parents, future researchers, and school administration to provide practical strategies and interventions that address students' digital habits, learning needs, and understanding of contemporary issues.

1. It is recommended that Educators and Parents guide the students to use TikTok purposefully by promoting content that balances entertainment with educational and skill-building opportunities. Integrating TikTok as a supplementary learning tool can leverage students' engagement with the platform to enhance cognitive development while encouraging responsible and mindful digital habits.

Educators can significantly influence students' responsible use of social media by fostering digital literacy and teaching skills such as evaluating content critically, understanding privacy, and recognizing misinformation. Meanwhile, parents should support healthy screen time habits, address the effects of social media on mental well-being, and encourage respectful online interactions. By demonstrating positive, educational use of social media and helping students maintain a balance between online and offline activities, both educators and parents can ensure that social media serves as a valuable tool for learning, personal development, and cultivating social responsibility.

2. It is recommended that educators and school administrators continue to nurture and expand students' social awareness by incorporating activities and discussions related to contemporary societal issues into the curriculum. Programs and projects that focus on Environmental, Graft and Corruption, Poverty, and Human Rights Issues can help students deepen their understanding, apply critical thinking, and actively engage in socially responsible initiatives both inside and outside the classroom.

Activities like Classroom Balita and Radyo Balita Live can help students develop social awareness, confidence, and communication skills essential for engaging with the community. The school administration can further strengthen its Community Extension Services Program by organizing initiatives such as tree-planting projects for environmental conservation, feeding programs for underprivileged groups, and seminars that raise awareness on human rights and issues of graft and corruption.

3. Students should be guided to use TikTok and other social media platforms intentionally, focusing on content that promotes understanding of social issues. Educators and Parents can support this by helping students find trustworthy, informative content and incorporating purposeful social media use into learning activities, turning leisure use into opportunities for education and social responsibility.

4. The school is encouraged to adopt Project S.A.F.E. (Social Awareness for Future Empowerment) to deepen students' knowledge of societal issues and enhance their critical thinking abilities. Through a combination of educational activities and guided digital engagement, the program can help Grade 9 students grow into informed, socially responsible, and proactive members of society. Plus, it can also help with the school's marketing promotion, as one of its program activities includes posting TikTok videos that are taken inside the school premises.

5. It is recommended that the school organize seminars for teachers to strengthen their role in guiding students toward the responsible use of social media platforms like TikTok. Programs such as *"TNT (Teaching N' TikTok): Using TikTok as a Learning Tool in Teaching Araling Panlipunan"* can help teachers develop effective strategies for integrating digital media as a supplementary resource in classroom discussions on contemporary social issues. Through these seminars, teachers can gain deeper insights into how social media influences students' knowledge, attitudes, and awareness of societal concerns. This initiative can better equip teachers to guide students in developing social awareness and responsible digital behavior.

6. A parallel study on social awareness may be conducted using other social media platforms to strengthen the results of the present research. Different social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and X (Formerly Twitter), have different features, users, and ways of sharing information, which may affect how people become aware of social issues. Studying other platforms can help determine whether social awareness varies depending on the platform used. This recommendation is supported by the *Digital 2026* report by Meltwater in collaboration with We Are Social, which states that Facebook and YouTube remain the most widely used social media platforms in the country. Because many people actively use these platforms, they play an important role in spreading information and shaping public awareness. Conducting similar studies on other Social medias may provide a clearer and more complete understanding of how these applications influence social awareness of the students.

7. It is also recommended that future researchers explore other grade levels aside from Grade 9 to gain a broader understanding of students' social awareness. Social awareness may vary depending on age, maturity, and educational exposure; therefore, including students from different grade levels can provide more comprehensive and comparative results. This approach would help determine how social awareness develops as student' progress through their academic years.

8. In addition, future researchers may conduct social awareness assessments among teachers and school administrators. Since teachers and administrators play a vital role in shaping students' values, attitudes, and understanding of social issues, examining their level of social awareness can offer important insights. Such studies may help identify gaps, strengths, and areas for improvement, which can be used to design programs or interventions that promote a more socially aware school community.

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