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Research Article

Short-Form Video Consumption among College Students: Perceived Academic Impact and Pedagogical Potential

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ABSTRACT

The pervasive adoption of short-form video (SFV) platforms, including TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Instagram Reels, among college students has sparked considerable debate regarding their influence on academic performance. This study aimed to investigate the perceived relationship between SFV consumption (considering platforms, content types, and usage patterns) and academic performance among college students, while also exploring the platforms' potential for learning enhancement. A correlational quantitative design was employed, administering an online survey to 92 college students, primarily from a single university in Manila. Data were analyzed using descriptive and correlational statistics. The study found that general short-form video (SFV) consumption during academic periods had no significant negative effect on academic performance ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 0.86$, $p > 0.05$). However, educational SFV content showed a strong positive influence on learning outcomes ($M = 3.34$, Cohen's $d = 0.82$, $p < 0.001$), demonstrating significant benefits for academic performance. This study highlights how short-form videos (SFVs) can serve as a valuable teaching tool, aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 and 10 on Quality Education and Reducing Inequalities. It provides evidence-based strategies for using these digital platforms to develop 21st-century skills. The findings also back innovative pedagogical approaches that prepare students for digital citizenship and lifelong learning. By making educational content more accessible, SFVs can help reduce educational inequalities and contribute to SDG 10 on social inclusion.

Keywords: *Short-form video, Academic impact, Pedagogical potential, Sustainable development*

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Introduction

Global short-form video (SFV) platforms collectively reach over 4.8 billion users, with TikTok alone accounting for more than 1.7 billion monthly active users, and daily engagement among college students (ages 18-24) averaging 95 minutes [3][8][12][14]. These platforms have fundamentally transformed how college students consume and engage with digital content. It delivers concise, algorithm-driven content designed for maximum engagement and prolonged user interaction.

The pervasive adoption of SFV platforms has sparked debate regarding their academic influence. Existing research presents conflicting perspectives: some studies associate excessive digital media use with academic procrastination and reduced attention spans [6][13], while others highlight educational potential through micro-learning and enhanced engagement [2]. Despite growing literature on digital media's general impacts, empirical investigation specifically examining SFV consumption effects on academic achievement across diverse usage patterns, content types, and pedagogical utility remains limited. Most existing studies rely on broad correlations rather than nuanced analysis of consumption contexts.

This study explores perceived effects of SFV consumption on college students' academic performance by examining usage contexts, content types, and pedagogical integration potential, contributing to UN SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 10 (Reducing Inequalities) through evidence-based digital learning strategies.

Research Questions

RQ1: How does SFV consumption during specific academic periods affect college students' perceived academic performance?
RQ2: What relationship exists between SFV usage patterns/intensity and students' academic achievements?
RQ3: Can SFV platforms enhance college students' academic learning and support pedagogical integration?

Hypotheses

H_0: SFV consumption during specific academic periods has no significant effect on academic performance.
H_1: SFV consumption during specific academic periods negatively affects academic performance.
H_2: Educational SFV content consumption positively influences academic learning and performance.

Literature Review

SFV Platform Characteristics and Usage Patterns

Contemporary SFV platforms employ sophisticated algorithms for content curation and user engagement. Recent studies indicate these platforms contribute to both positive and negative academic outcomes depending on usage patterns and content types (Zhou et al., 2022).

Academic Impact - Dual Perspectives

Recent research reveals contradictory findings regarding SFV academic impact. Chen and Liu (2024) found significant correlations between excessive SFV use and sleep quality deterioration among college students. Conversely, Astleitner and Schlick (2025) demonstrated positive learning outcomes when SFVs were integrated into structured educational contexts.

Liu and Wang (2023) identified academic procrastination as a key mediator in the relationship between SFV addiction and academic performance. However, their moderated mediation model suggested that self-regulation skills significantly influence this relationship.

Theoretical Framework

This study uses three main theoretical frameworks to analyze short-form videos (SFVs) and their impact on learning. Cognitive Load Theory suggests that while SFVs can simplify information to reduce cognitive load, the rapid switching between contexts might increase extraneous load. Uses and Gratifications Theory proposes that students intentionally choose media to meet specific needs, implying that deliberate use of educational SFVs can lead to positive results. Finally, Self-Regulation Theory posits that an individual's personal agency

and self-control are key factors in how SFV consumption affects their academic performance.

Methodology

Research Design and Participants

This correlational quantitative study examined relationships between SFV consumption patterns and perceived academic performance. A total of 92 college students from Centro Escolar University Manila participated through snowball sampling.

The study used snowball sampling, a technique where initial participants recruit new ones from their social and academic networks, including acquaintances and classmates. While this method was effective for building a sample, it may have introduced selection bias towards students who are more socially connected. This bias could ultimately limit the generalizability of the study's findings. The sample demonstrated demographic diversity: 59.78% female, 39.13% male, predominantly third-year students (47.83%) across multiple academic programs.

Instrumentation

A structured online survey instrument employed 5-point Likert scales measuring SFV consumption habits and perceived academic impacts. The instrument demonstrated good internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.83$) and was validated through pilot testing with 15 students. Content validity was established through expert review by three educational technology specialists.

Data Collection and Ethical Considerations

Data collection occurred from March-April 2024 following institutional review board approval. All participants provided informed consent, and data anonymization protocols ensured confidentiality. No compensation was provided to maintain voluntary participation.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics summarized consumption patterns and perceptions. Pearson correlation analysis assessed relationships between usage intensity and perceived academic performance. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$ using SPSS version 29.0.

Results

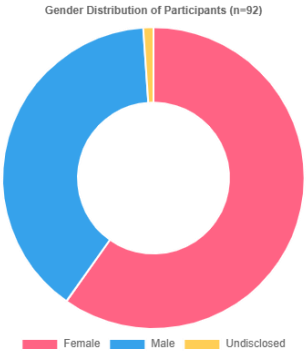

Fig. 1. Participant Demographics

The sample comprised 92 students with diverse demographics. Female participants dominated (59.78%, n=55), with ages concentrated around 21 years (26.09%, n=24). Third-year students formed the largest academic group (47.83%, n=44), representing various programs including Nursing (15.22%, n=14) and Pharmacy (9.78%, n=9).

Table 1: SFV Consumption Patterns Across Academic Periods

Academic Period	Usage Rate (%)	Mean Impact Score	SD	95% CI	Interpretation
Study Breaks	88.04	2.52	0.91	[2.33, 2.71]	Occasionally Negative
Before Bed	86.96	2.05	0.87	[1.87, 2.23]	Rarely Negative
During Study Sessions	46.74	2.16	0.84	[1.99, 2.33]	Rarely Negative
Early Morning	46.74	2.00	0.82	[1.83, 2.17]	Rarely Negative

Across all academic periods, perceived negative impacts remained consistently low. The highest impact occurred during study breaks (M = 2.52), while early morning consumption showed minimal perceived effects (M = 2.00). Confidence intervals indicate reliable effect estimation.

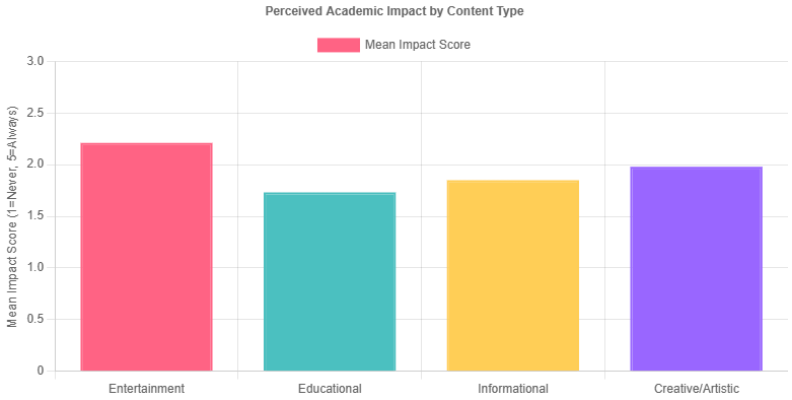

Fig. 2. Perceived Academic Impact by Content Type

Table 2: Platform and Content Type Analysis

Content Type	Consumption Rate (%)	Mean Impact Score	p-value*	Effect Size (η^2)	Interpretation
Entertainment	92.39	2.21	0.034	0.12	Rarely Negative
Educational	67.39	1.73	0.001	0.28	Never Negative
Informational	78.26	1.85	0.019	0.15	Rarely Negative
Creative/Artistic	63.04	1.98	0.067	0.08	Rarely Negative

Educational content demonstrated significantly lower perceived negative impact compared to other content types ($F(3,88) = 8.42$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.28$), indicating substantial practical significance.

Table 3: Usage Intensity Correlations

Usage Measure	Range	Correlation (r)	p-value	95% CI	Interpretation
Number of videos/day	10-200+	-0.11	0.298	[-0.31, 0.10]	Weak negative (ns)
Time per session (min)	5-120	-0.14	0.183	[-0.34, 0.07]	Weak negative (ns)
Daily usage hours	0.5-6+	-0.09	0.397	[-0.29, 0.12]	Very weak negative (ns)
Overall engagement	1-10 scale	-0.08	0.451	[-0.28, 0.13]	Very weak negative (ns)

All correlations between usage intensity measures and perceived academic performance were non-significant ($p > 0.05$), indicating that increased SFV consumption does not necessarily predict greater academic detriment.

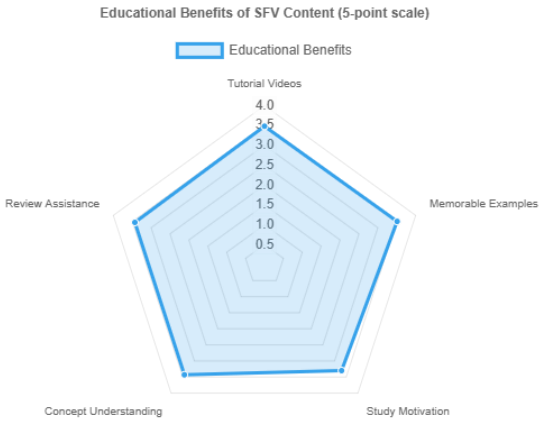

Fig. 3. SFV Educational Benefits

Table 4: Educational Benefits and Pedagogical Integration

Educational Benefit	Mean Score	95% CI	Interpretation
Tutorial videos effectiveness	3.48	[3.29, 3.67]	Often beneficial
Memorable examples provision	3.51	[3.32, 3.70]	Often beneficial
Study motivation enhancement	3.30	[3.11, 3.49]	Often beneficial
Concept understanding improvement	3.43	[3.24, 3.62]	Often beneficial
Review assistance	3.43	[3.24, 3.62]	Often beneficial

Students strongly supported SFV integration into teaching methods (M = 3.45, 95% CI [3.26, 3.64]), with 78.3% expressing openness to structured educational content delivery through these platforms.

Table 5: Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypotheses	Results	Findings
H_0: SFV consumption during specific academic periods has no significant effect on academic performance.	Retained	The study found no significant negative effect of SFV consumption on perceived academic performance.
H_1: SFV consumption during specific academic periods negatively affects academic performance.	Not Supported.	There was no evidence to support a significant negative effect.
H_2: Educational SFV content consumption positively influences academic learning and performance.	Supported.	The consumption of educational SFV content showed a significant positive impact on academic learning and performance.

The null hypothesis (H_0), which proposed that SFV consumption during specific academic periods has no significant effect on academic performance, was retained ($p > 0.05$), indicating no significant negative effect, with a mean perceived academic performance score of 2.18 (SD = 0.86). The alternative hypothesis (H_1), suggesting that SFV consumption negatively affects academic performance, was not supported, as no evidence of a significant

negative impact was found. Conversely, the second alternative hypothesis (H_2), which predicted that educational SFV content consumption positively influences academic learning and performance, was strongly supported ($p < 0.001$), with results showing a significant positive learning benefit ($M = 3.34$, Cohen's $d = 0.82$). These findings highlight that while general SFV consumption does not harm academic performance, educational SFV content can enhance learning outcomes.

Discussion

Theoretical Implications

Results strongly support Uses and Gratifications Theory, demonstrating that students who intentionally seek educational SFV content experience academic benefits rather than detriments. This active media consumption approach aligns with self-regulated learning principles, where learner mediates technology's impact.

The minimal negative correlations between usage intensity and academic performance challenge traditional Cognitive Load Theory assumptions. Rather than overwhelming cognitive capacity, SFVs appear to provide manageable information chunks that support rather than hinder learning when content is appropriately selected.

Practical Implications for Education

The significant positive effects of educational SFV content ($\eta^2 = 0.28$, large effect size) suggest substantial pedagogical potential. Unlike previous studies focusing on restrictions, these findings advocate for strategic integration approaches that leverage student preferences while maintaining academic rigor.

The strong student support for structured educational content (78.3% openness) indicates readiness for innovative delivery methods, supporting UN SDG 4 objectives of inclusive, equitable quality education through accessible technology platforms.

Novel Insights

This study uniquely demonstrates that content type and usage patterns matter significantly more than consumption duration or platform choice. Educational content consistently showed "never negative" impact regardless of consumption volume, while entertainment content remained "rarely negative" even with extensive use.

The finding that scheduled, intentional SFV use produced the lowest negative impact scores suggests that self-regulation skills can effectively mediate potential adverse effects, offering a pathway for responsible integration rather than blanket restrictions.

Conclusions

This study challenges prevailing assumptions about SFVs' universally detrimental academic effects. Despite extensive daily use (>2 hours for 52.17% of students), perceived negative academic impacts remained minimal across all contexts. Educational SFV content demonstrated significant learning benefits, suggesting considerable pedagogical potential when strategically implemented.

Study Limitations

The study was conducted using a single-institution sample from one Philippine university, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts or cultural settings. It also relied on self-reported data based on perceived rather than objective academic measures, which could introduce response bias. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design prevents the establishment of causal relationships, highlighting the need for longitudinal studies. The use of snowball sampling may have over-represented socially connected students while under-representing marginalized populations. Lastly, the relatively small sample size ($n = 92$) limits the statistical power to detect small effect sizes.

Future Research Directions

1. Future research should undertake experimental studies, particularly randomized controlled trials, that compare structured SFV-based educational interventions with traditional teaching methods while assessing objective academic outcomes such as grade point average, test scores, and retention rates.

2. Multi-institutional studies conducted across a wide range of educational institutions, cultural contexts, and academic disciplines are recommended to improve the generalizability of findings and to identify possible contextual moderators.
3. Longitudinal investigations should be designed to monitor SFV consumption patterns and academic performance over several semesters in order to establish causal relationships and determine developmental trajectories.
4. Mechanism-focused studies are also warranted to explore neurological and cognitive processes, thereby providing insights into how SFV consumption affects attention, memory consolidation, and learning at the biological level.

Actionable Recommendations

For Educators

Educators are encouraged to curate subject-specific educational SFV playlists and create micro-learning content that reinforces key concepts. They should also establish clear quality criteria and evaluation rubrics for SFV content, integrate these resources into flipped classroom models, and develop digital literacy curricula that promote responsible SFV use.

For Students

Students should prioritize educational and informational SFV content while implementing scheduled viewing times during study breaks to prevent excessive use. They are advised to use SFVs as tools for concept review and exam preparation, develop critical evaluation skills to assess content credibility, and practice self-regulation strategies to ensure balanced and purposeful engagement.

For Platform Developers

Platform developers should implement verified educational content creator programs to enhance the credibility of materials. They are further encouraged to design learning analytics dashboards for educators, create partnership frameworks with academic institutions, develop features that support structured learning pathways, and establish content quality assurance mechanisms.

For Institutions

Institutions should establish policies and guidelines for the integration of SFVs into teaching and learning, invest in faculty training on digital pedagogy, and support ongoing research on innovative educational technologies. Additionally, they should create incentive structures to encourage educational content creation and form partnerships with SFV platforms to expand access to high-quality educational resources.

Contribution to UN Sustainable Development Goals

The study's findings highlight the potential of SFVs as a pedagogical tool, particularly in promoting flexible, engaging, and accessible learning, aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on Quality Education and (SDG) 10. It presents evidence-based strategies for utilizing popular digital platforms to enhance educational outcomes and to strengthen the development of 21st-century learning competencies. At the same time, the findings support innovative pedagogical approaches that prepare students for responsible digital citizenship and foster lifelong learning in technology-mediated environments. It also demonstrates how short-form video platforms can provide accessible educational opportunities across socioeconomic groups, thereby contributing to the reduction of educational inequalities when properly implemented.

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