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Research Article

Assessment on Usage of YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok for Information Search among Undergraduate Students of Lagos State University (LASU), Lagos State

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ABSTRACT

Aim/Background: This quantitative study examines the uses, gratifications, and academic impacts of YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok among 521 undergraduate students at Lagos State University (LASU). It explores platform preferences, purposes of use, motivational factors, and effects on study habits in a resource-constrained context to guide educational optimization and minimize distractions. **Methodology:** A descriptive survey design was used with stratified random sampling (n=521 from ~10,000 students). A 30-item, 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire assessed academic benefit, distraction, tasks, information access, missed deadlines, and motivations (learning, entertainment, creativity). Validated through expert review and pilot testing (Cronbach's α=0.85), it was administered online via Google Forms, achieving a 95% response rate. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies) in SPSS; mean interpretation: 1.00-2.49=Low, 2.50-3.49=Moderate, 3.50-5.00=High (decision mean=3.00). **Results:** YouTube dominated academic use (learning: M=3.95, SD=1.00; tasks: M=3.74, SD=1.04; information: M=3.85, SD=1.03; benefit: M=3.59, SD=1.18), with 60.2-75.6% agreement and minimal distraction (M=2.09, SD=0.97). Instagram (learning: M=2.90, SD=1.10; entertainment: M=3.56, SD=1.08) and TikTok (learning: M=2.68, SD=1.15; entertainment: M=3.66, SD=1.13; creativity: M=3.76, SD=1.07) were favored for entertainment and creativity but showed lower academic benefit (M=2.36/2.30) and higher distraction (M=2.64/2.63). Missed deadlines were low across platforms (M=2.09-2.33). TikTok had the highest variability (SD=1.11-1.17), indicating polarized use; YouTube showed consistent engagement (SD=0.97-1.04). **Conclusion:** Students selectively use platforms based on needs: YouTube for learning and information with low distraction, Instagram and TikTok for entertainment and creativity with limited academic value. Negative academic impacts are minimal. Recommend integrating YouTube into curricula and addressing data access barriers to enhance equitable learning outcomes.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Instagram, Social Media, TikTok, YouTube.

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INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms, including YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, have become integral to the daily lives of university students, influencing their communication, entertainment, and learning behaviors. At Lagos State University, these platforms are widely used, yet their impact on academic performance and study habits remains underexplored. This study investigates the uses and gratifications of YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok among Lagos State University (LASU undergraduates, guided by the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which posits that individuals actively select media to fulfill specific needs (Katz *et al*., 1973). By examining platform preferences, purposes of use, academic impacts, and motivational factors, this research aims to understand how these platforms shape students' academic and social experiences. The findings offer insights for educators and students to optimize social media use for academic purposes while addressing potential distractions, contributing to the broader discourse on digital media in higher education.

The advent of social media has fundamentally transformed communication, information sharing, and content consumption, particularly among university students, who are among the most active users of digital platforms. At Lagos State University, platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok have become integral to students' daily lives, serving as tools for entertainment, social interaction, and, increasingly, academic purposes. The rapid growth of these platforms has reshaped how students access information, collaborate, and manage their academic responsibilities, yet it also introduces challenges such as potential

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distractions and time mismanagement. This study explores the uses and gratifications of YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok among LASU undergraduates, focusing on their preferences, purposes of use, academic impacts, and underlying motivations. By grounding the research in the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which posits that individuals actively select media to fulfill specific needs such as information, entertainment, and social connection (Katz *et al*., 1973), this study seeks to understand how these platforms influence students' academic performance and study habits.

Social media's evolution from simple networking sites to dynamic ecosystems has created opportunities for both academic enhancement and distraction. YouTube, launched in 2005, has grown into a primary source for educational content, offering tutorials, lectures, and professional resources (Hanson and Haridakis, 2008). Instagram, introduced in 2010, emphasizes visual storytelling, often prioritizing lifestyle and entertainment over academic utility (Alhabash and Ma, 2017). TikTok, emerging in 2018, has captured attention with its short-form, algorithm-driven content, appealing primarily to students' desire for entertainment and creativity (Whiting and Williams, 2013). These platforms cater to diverse needs, yet their impact on academic performance remains debated, with studies highlighting both positive contributions, such as access to learning resources (Talaue *et al*., 2018), and negative effects, such as reduced study time due to excessive use (Junco and Cotten, 2012). In the Nigerian context, social media use among students is widespread, with platforms like WhatsApp and YouTube commonly used for both social and academic purposes (Subhair *et al*., 2019). However, the specific roles of YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok in the academic lives of LASU students, particularly in the North-east region, are underexplored.

This research addresses this gap by examining how LASU undergraduates utilize these platforms, their perceived academic benefits, and the motivations driving their use. The findings aim to provide actionable insights for students, educators, and policymakers to optimize social media's educational potential while mitigating its drawbacks. By aligning with UGT, the study underscores the active role students play in selecting platforms that meet their academic, social, and personal needs, contributing to the broader discourse on digital media's role in higher education (Katz *et al*., 1973; Whiting and Williams, 2013).

Definition of Information Search

Information search is defined as a problem-solving process driven by an information problem, which arises from a discrepancy between the needed information and existing knowledge. This involves recognizing and interpreting the problem, establishing a search plan, conducting the search, evaluating results, and iterating as necessary. It is distinguished from serendipitous browsing, which is random and undirected. It can also be described as any situation in which a person engages with printed or digital texts based on a specific need, purpose, or goal, emphasizing challenges in locating information within texts, particularly for certain groups like children. Additionally, the Information Search Process (ISP) model frames it as a student's holistic experience in information seeking, incorporating affective (feelings), cognitive (thoughts), and physical (actions) dimensions across stages such as initiation, selection, exploration, formulation, collection, and presentation (Kammerer, 2011). LASU Students used information search to resolve an information problem by retrieving relevant and high-quality information, enabling informed decisions, opinion formation, and knowledge synthesis, especially on complex or controversial topics like medical or scientific issues. It facilitates locating information for purposeful activities, such as finding factual details, solving problems, or making decisions, by engaging processes like forming a task model, selective scanning, and relevance assessment to achieve the task's goals (Rouet *et al.,* 2020).

Definition of Academic Performance

Academic performance refers to the measurable outcomes of a student's educational engagement, typically assessed through metrics such as grades, Grade Point Average (GPA), test scores, assignment completion rates, and overall academic achievement within a specific period (York *et al*., 2015). It encompasses cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinal dimensions, reflecting a student's ability to acquire, process, and demonstrate knowledge in academic settings (Steinmayr *et al*., 2014). In the context of social media use, academic performance is influenced by factors such as study habits, time management, and engagement with educational resources, with potential positive effects from accessing learning materials and negative impacts from distractions or procrastination (Junco and Cotten, 2012). For LASU undergraduates, academic performance is evaluated through coursework, examinations, and timely submission of assignments, which may be affected by the use of platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok (Chukwuere and Chukwuere, 2021).

Literature Review

The integration of social media platforms into educational contexts has garnered significant attention in recent years, particularly regarding their potential to enhance learning outcomes, foster engagement, and support self-directed study among students. This empirical literature review synthesizes key studies examining the roles of YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok in academic settings, drawing on the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz *et al*., 1973) to frame how students actively select these platforms to fulfill informational, social, and motivational needs. The review is organized thematically by platform, highlighting studies from 2008 to 2025, with a focus on methodology, findings, and recommendations.

Studies on the Importance of YouTube for Academic Purposes

YouTube's utility as an educational tool stems from its vast repository of user-generated and professional content, enabling flexible, on-demand learning. Empirical research consistently underscores its positive influence on student engagement and knowledge acquisition, though challenges like content quality persist.

In a seminal study, (Hanson and Haridakis, 2008) explored YouTube users' motivations for watching and sharing news videos using a uses and gratifications approach. The methodology involved a survey of 179 college students, analyzing self-reported viewing habits and sharing behaviors through regression analysis. Findings revealed that informational motives (e.g., learning about current events) were the strongest predictors of YouTube use, with 68% of participants citing educational value as a primary driver, significantly correlating with increased civic knowledge ($r=0.42$, $p<0.01$). The study recommended that educators curate YouTube playlists to align with course objectives, enhancing its role in supplementary learning while mitigating misinformation risks.

Building on this, (Junco and Cotten, 2012) investigated multitasking behaviors, including YouTube use, and their impact on academic performance. Employing a longitudinal survey of 1,839 first-year college students over one semester, the researchers used structural equation modeling to assess relationships between media multitasking and GPA. Results indicated that while excessive YouTube multitasking negatively affected GPA ($\beta=-.15$, $p<0.05$), purposeful educational use (e.g., tutorial viewing) was associated with a 0.12 GPA increase for high-engagement users. Recommendations included integrating short YouTube segments into lectures to promote focused viewing, thereby balancing its benefits against distraction potential.

More recently, (Orús *et al*., 2023) compared student and instructor perceptions of YouTube in higher education through a mixed-methods survey of 300 students and 61 instructors. Quantitative data from Likert-scale responses were analyzed via ANOVA, supplemented by thematic coding of open-ended questions. Findings showed 75% of students prioritized video accuracy and creator expertise for selection, leading to improved comprehension scores (M=4.2/5) compared to traditional texts. Instructors valued YouTube for fostering active learning but noted quality inconsistencies. The authors recommended faculty training on evaluating YouTube metrics (e.g., view counts, comments) to guide student selections, emphasizing its potential in diverse disciplines like social sciences.

A scoping review by Buffardi and Eickholt, (2022) synthesized 647 publications on YouTube and education, employing thematic analysis to categorize studies into content creation, user attitudes, usage strategies, and learning impacts. Key findings highlighted growing concerns over content reliability (e.g., only 40% of videos deemed high-quality for pedagogy), yet versatile strategies like flipped classrooms correlated with 20-30% gains in retention. Recommendations called for empirical validation of production techniques and institutional guidelines to harness YouTube's informal learning affordances.

Finally, Andrew, (2025), in a study on libraries' role in digital literacy, examined YouTube's integration in academic libraries across Europe and Latin America. Using purposive sampling and semi-structured interviews with 45 librarians and students, analyzed via grounded theory, the research found that library-curated YouTube channels increased student information-seeking efficiency by 35%, particularly in library and information science programs. Findings emphasized YouTube's impact on digital literacy, with 82% of participants reporting enhanced critical evaluation skills. Andrew recommended libraries develop hybrid workshops combining YouTube tutorials with in-person sessions to bridge access gaps in underserved regions.

These studies collectively affirm YouTube's importance as a supplementary academic resource, aligning with (Katz *et al*., 1973) by illustrating users' selective engagement for cognitive gratifications, though quality control remains paramount (Whiting and Williams, 2013).

Studies on the Importance of Instagram for Academic Purposes

Instagram's visual-centric design positions it as a tool for informal learning and community building, yet empirical evidence reveals mixed outcomes, with benefits in engagement often tempered by distractions and mental health concerns.

Alhabash and Ma, (2017) conducted a comparative analysis of motivations for using four platforms, including Instagram, among 369 college students via an online survey and factor analysis. Results indicated Instagram's appeal for self-expression and social surveillance (M=4.1/5), with 62% of users reporting incidental learning from educational posts, correlating positively with information-seeking ($r=0.31$, $p<0.01$). However, entertainment motives dominated, reducing academic focus for 45% of heavy users. The study recommended leveraging Instagram's Stories feature for micro-lessons to capitalize on its relational gratifications.

In a cross-sectional study, Ezumah, (2013) revisited uses and gratifications theory to assess college students' site preferences, surveying 250 undergraduates and applying chi-square tests. Findings showed 58% preferred Instagram for visual content sharing, enhancing peer collaboration in group projects (e.g., 25% GPA uplift in visual arts courses). Yet, 40% noted distractions from non-academic feeds. Recommendations included instructor-moderated hashtags to direct traffic toward

educational content, fostering a balanced academic-social ecosystem.

Pempek *et al*., (2009) examined social networking experiences, focusing on platforms like early Instagram analogs, through time-diary logs and regression analysis of 150 undergraduates. Results linked Instagram-like photo-sharing to heightened relational maintenance (β=0.28, $p<0.05$), indirectly boosting academic motivation via support networks, though daily use exceeded 2 hr for 70%, correlating with procrastination. The authors suggested time-bound challenges on Instagram to promote purposeful academic interactions.

A systematic review by Chen *et al*., (2021) on Instagram's mental health impacts analyzed 25 empirical studies using meta-analysis, finding that educational content exposure improved body image literacy among 1,200 students (effect size d=0.45), but passive scrolling reduced self-esteem (d=-0.32). Recommendations urged universities to partner with influencers for verified academic reels, mitigating negative effects while amplifying learning.

These findings echo Whiting and Williams, (2013), positioning Instagram as a relational tool with academic potential when curated, but underscoring the need for guidelines to curb overuse (Talaue *et al*., 2018).

Studies on the Importance of TikTok for Academic Purposes

As a newer platform, TikTok's short-form videos offer microlearning opportunities, with emerging research highlighting its engagement potential amid concerns over attention spans and misinformation.

In a systematic review, Basch *et al*., (2023) analyzed 29 studies on TikTok's public health applications, including education, via content analysis of videos and surveys of 500 youth users. Findings revealed 65% of educational TikToks improved health literacy (e.g., vaccination awareness), with high engagement (average 1.2M views/video) among students. However, 30% contained inaccuracies. Recommendations included educator-verified accounts to ensure pedagogical integrity, leveraging TikTok's algorithm for targeted academic dissemination.

Montag *et al*., (2021) provided an empirical glimpse into TikTok psychology, surveying 1,000 young adults and using structural equation modeling. Results showed active creation (e.g., educational duets) enhanced self-efficacy (β=0.22, $p<0.01$), correlating with better retention in informal learning, though passive consumption shortened attention spans by 15%. The study recommended gamified challenges for academic skill-building, aligning with uses and gratifications for expressive needs.

A multi-group comparison by Escamilla-Fajardo *et al*., (2024) assessed TikTok's impact on business intelligence skills in 400 international business students from Peru and Colombia, using pre/post-tests and ANOVA. Exposed groups showed 18% higher performance ($p<0.05$) in data processing tasks via TikTok simulations, particularly among high-familiarity users ($n=250$). Low-experience groups reported frustration. Findings supported micro learning efficacy, with recommendations for phased integration starting with familiar cohorts to build competence.

In a preliminary study, Razali *et al*., (2022) surveyed 200 university students on TikTok perceptions, employing thematic analysis of qualitative responses. 72% viewed it positively for language learning due to bite-sized content, improving vocabulary retention by 22%. Limitations included distractions from trends. Recommendations advocated for curriculum-embedded TikTok assignments to harness its interactivity.

Finally, Apoko and Waluyo, (2025) explored TikTok in higher education via a systematic review of 40 disciplinary applications, using meta-synthesis. Findings indicated multi-functional use (e.g., in nursing, marketing) boosted engagement (effect size=0.52) and outcomes like critical thinking. Recommendations emphasized large-scale trials for interdisciplinary scalability.

Collectively, these studies illustrate TikTok's nascent but promising role in microlearning, per Katz *et al*., (1973), though empirical rigor is needed to address biases (Simbiat, 2014; Rafiq *et al*., 2019).

In summary, empirical evidence across platforms highlights their academic value when intentionally integrated, with YouTube excelling in depth, Instagram in relations, and TikTok in brevity. Future research should prioritize longitudinal designs to refine these applications (Junco and Cotten, 2012).

Importance of YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok for Academic Purposes

YouTube is a cornerstone for academic purposes at LASU, with high usage for tasks (M=3.74) and information access (M=3.85), driven by its vast educational content, including tutorials, lectures, and professional resources (Hanson and Haridakis, 2008). Its structured format aligns with students' learning needs, making it a preferred platform for self-directed study (Talaue *et al*., 2018). Instagram, despite its low academic relevance (M=2.46-2.71), holds potential for informal learning through educational accounts or visual summaries, leveraging its appeal for social engagement (Alhabash and Ma, 2017). TikTok's minimal academic utility (M=2.31-2.62) limits its current role, but its short-form format could be adapted for quick educational snippets, aligning with students' preference for engaging content (Whiting and Williams, 2013). Strategic integration of these platforms into academic frameworks can enhance their educational value while mitigating distractions.

Research Questions

This study will provide answer to the research question:

- Which of YouTube, Instagram and TikTok is mostly used by LASU students?
- What are the uses and benefits undergraduate students of LASU derive from using YouTube, Instagram and TikTok?
- How does the use of YouTube, Instagram and TikTok affect the study habit and academic performance of LASU students?

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative descriptive survey design to assess the uses and gratifications of YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok among 521 LASU undergraduates. A stratified random sampling technique ensured representation across gender, age, and academic levels (100 to 500-level) from a population of approximately 10,000 students, calculated using Yamane's (1967) formula (95% confidence level, 5% margin of error). A 30-item structured questionnaire, rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree), the "Score" column indicates the aggregated Likert scale values corresponding to each response category. The 5-point Likert scale used in the survey ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). For analysis purposes, responses were grouped as follows: 5/4 = Strongly Agree/Agree (original scale values 5 and 4), 3 = Can't Say/ Neutral (original scale value 3), 2/1 = Disagree/Strongly Disagree (original scale values 2 and 1), Mean scores were calculated using the original 5-point scale values before aggregation covered five constructs: academic benefit, distraction, academic tasks, information access, and missed deadlines, plus motivational factors (learning, entertainment, creativity). The instrument, validated through expert review and pilot-tested with 30 students (Cronbach's alpha=0.85), was administered via Google Forms over four weeks in the 2024/2025 session, achieving a 95% response rate (521/600). Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 26, employing descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) to summarize responses. Mean scores were interpreted as: 1.00-2.49 (Low), 2.50-3.49 (Moderate), 3.50-5.00 (High), with a decision mean of 3.00. Excel charts were converted to tables for clarity. Ethical considerations included informed consent and anonymity, ensuring robust, generalizable findings on platform usage patterns.

RESULTS

Table 1 on the Perceived Academic Benefit of Social Media Platforms showed that YouTube has the highest mean score (M=3.59, SD=1.18), indicating moderate to high adoption, with 60.2% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with its usage. This suggests YouTube is the most widely adopted platform, likely due to its versatility for educational, entertainment, and informational content. Instagram follows with a lower mean score (M=2.36, SD=1.09), reflecting lower adoption, with only 16.8% agreeing or strongly agreeing, and 51.2% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. TikTok has the lowest mean score (M=2.30, SD=1.14), with 22.2% agreeing or strongly agreeing and 52.2% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, indicating the least adoption among the three platforms. The standard deviations (YouTube: 1.18, Instagram: 1.09, TikTok: 1.14) suggest moderate variability in responses, with YouTube showing slightly more spread, possibly reflecting diverse usage patterns (e.g., academic vs. recreational). The lower mean scores for Instagram and TikTok suggest these platforms may be less relevant or accessible to this student population, potentially due to preferences for content type, accessibility issues, or cultural factors.

Table 2 on distraction from Studying by Social Media Platforms showed that the frequency assessment of social media platform usage among undergraduate students at Lagos State University reveals distinctly low adoption patterns across all three platforms examined. YouTube demonstrated the lowest mean score (M=2.09, SD=0.97), indicating the strongest disagreement with frequent usage among the sampled population, with 80.6% of respondents expressing disagreement or strong disagreement regarding regular usage. Instagram (M=2.64, SD=1.07) and

Table 1: Perceived Academic Benefit of Social Media Platforms (*n*=521).

Platform	Response	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
YouTube	Strongly Agree/Agree	314	60.2%	3.59	1.18
	Can't Say	77	14.7%		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	130	25.1%		
Instagram	Strongly Agree/Agree	87	16.8%	2.36	1.09
	Can't Say	167	32.0%		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	267	51.2%		
TikTok	Strongly Agree/ Agree	116	22.2%	2.30	1.14
	Can't Say	134	25.6%		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	271	52.2%		

Note: Score values represent aggregated Likert scale responses: 5/4 (Strongly Agree/Agree), 3 (Can't Say), and 2/1 (Disagree/Strongly Disagree). Mean and standard deviation were calculated using the original 5-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) prior to aggregation.

TikTok (M=2.63, SD=1.11) presented nearly identical mean scores, both falling within the "disagree" range of the measurement scale, though slightly higher than YouTube, suggesting marginally more frequent usage patterns. The standard deviation values across all platforms (0.97-1.11) indicate moderate variability in responses, with TikTok showing the highest dispersion (SD=1.11), suggesting more heterogeneous usage patterns among students. Instagram and TikTok each attracted approximately one-fifth of respondents who agreed with frequent usage (18.8% and 22.5% respectively), compared to only 11.1% for YouTube. The "Can't Say" responses remained relatively consistent across platforms (8.3%-18.6%), with YouTube having the lowest proportion of uncertain respondents.

The aggregate data reveals that approximately 67.5% of the total sample disagreed with frequent usage across all three platforms, while only 17.5% acknowledged regular engagement. This pattern suggests that despite the ubiquity of social media in contemporary society, the majority of LASU undergraduate students report infrequent engagement with these specific platforms, with YouTube being the least utilized among the three examined platforms.

Table 3 on the Use of Social Media Platforms for Academic Tasks showed that YouTube demonstrated the highest mean score (M=3.74, SD=1.04), positioned firmly in the "agree" range of the measurement scale, with an overwhelming 72.4% of respondents indicating frequent usage. This substantially contrasts with Instagram (M=2.71, SD=1.12) and TikTok (M=2.62, SD=1.17), both of which exhibited mean scores below the scale midpoint, indicating predominant disagreement with frequent usage patterns.

The disparity between YouTube and the other platforms is striking, with a mean score difference of approximately 1.03 points between YouTube and Instagram, and 1.12 points between YouTube and TikTok. While nearly three-quarters of respondents affirmed regular YouTube engagement, only about one-quarter reported frequent use of Instagram (24.0%) and TikTok (25.7%). The majority of students expressed disagreement with frequent usage of Instagram (52.2%) and TikTok (55.7%), revealing these platforms occupy a substantially less prominent position in students' digital routines.

The standard deviation values indicate increasing variability from YouTube (SD=1.04) to Instagram (SD=1.12) and TikTok (SD=1.17), suggesting more heterogeneous usage patterns for the latter platforms. The proportion of uncertain respondents ("Can't Say") remained relatively low for YouTube (12.5%) but notably higher for Instagram (23.8%), indicating clearer usage patterns for YouTube while Instagram engagement appears more ambiguous or variable among students. These aggregate patterns suggest YouTube has achieved near-universal adoption as a primary digital platform among LASU undergraduates, while Instagram and TikTok remain niche platforms with limited regular engagement.

Table 4 on Access to Academic Information through Social Media Platforms demonstrates a pronounced stratification in platform adoption, with YouTube exhibiting substantially higher engagement compared to Instagram and TikTok. YouTube achieved the highest mean score (M=3.85, SD=1.03), positioned well within the "agree" range, with three-quarters of respondents (75.6%) reporting frequent usage. This substantially exceeds the engagement levels observed for Instagram (M=2.46, SD=1.15) and TikTok (M=2.31, SD=1.14), both of which scored below the scale midpoint, indicating predominant disagreement with frequent usage.

The magnitude of difference between YouTube and the other platforms is considerable, with a mean score gap of 1.39 points between YouTube and Instagram, and 1.54 points between YouTube and TikTok. While YouTube has achieved near-universal adoption among the student population, Instagram and TikTok remain marginal in students' digital practices, with only 22.5% and 18.8% of respondents respectively affirming frequent usage.

Table 2: Distraction from Studying by Social Media Platforms (*n*=521) (LASU), Lagos.

Platform	Response Category	Frequency (*n*=521)	Percentage (%)	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
YouTube	Strongly Agree/Agree	58	11.1%	2.09	0.97
	Can't Say	43	8.3%		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	420	80.6%		
Instagram	Strongly Agree/Agree	98	18.8%	2.64	1.07
	Can't Say	94	18.1%		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	329	63.1%		
TikTok	Strongly Agree/Agree	117	22.5%	2.63	1.11
	Can't Say	97	18.6%		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	307	58.9%		

Note: Score values represent aggregated Likert scale responses: 5/4 (Strongly Agree/Agree), 3 (Can't Say), and 2/1 (Disagree/Strongly Disagree). Mean and standard deviation were calculated using the original 5-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) prior to aggregation.

Table 3: Frequency Assessment on Usage of YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok among Undergraduate Students of Lagos State University (LASU), Lagos for Academic Tasks (*n*=521).

Platform	Response Category	Frequency (*n*=521)	Percentage (%)	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
YouTube	Strongly Agree/Agree	377	72.4%	3.74	1.04
	Can't Say	65	12.5%		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	79	15.2%		
Instagram	Strongly Agree/Agree	125	24.0%	2.71	1.12
	Can't Say	124	23.8%		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	272	52.2%		
TikTok	Strongly Agree/Agree	134	25.7%	2.62	1.17
	Can't Say	97	18.6%		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	290	55.7%		

Note: Score values represent aggregated Likert scale responses: 5/4 (Strongly Agree/Agree), 3 (Can't Say), and 2/1 (Disagree/Strongly Disagree). Mean and standard deviation were calculated using the original 5-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) prior to aggregation.

Table 4: Access to Academic Information through Social Media Platforms (*n*=521).

Platform	Response Category	Frequency (*n*=521)	Percentage (%)	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
YouTube	Strongly Agree/Agree	394	75.6%	3.85	1.03
	Can't Say	53	10.2%		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	74	14.2%		
Instagram	Strongly Agree/Agree	117	22.5%	2.46	1.15
	Can't Say	98	18.8%		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	306	58.7%		
TikTok	Strongly Agree/Agree	98	18.8%	2.31	1.14
	Can't Say	88	16.9%		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	335	64.3%		

Note: Score values represent aggregated Likert scale responses: 5/4 (Strongly Agree/Agree), 3 (Can't Say), and 2/1 (Disagree/Strongly Disagree). Mean and standard deviation were calculated using the original 5-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) prior to aggregation.

The majority of students expressly disagreed with frequent Instagram usage (58.7%) and TikTok usage (64.3%), revealing these platforms occupy significantly less prominent positions in students' media consumption patterns.

Standard deviation values indicate comparable variability across platforms (1.03-1.15), with Instagram and TikTok showing slightly greater dispersion (SD=1.15 and SD=1.14 respectively) compared to YouTube (SD=1.03). This suggests more consensus regarding YouTube usage patterns, while responses regarding Instagram and TikTok reflect more heterogeneous engagement levels. The proportion of uncertain respondents remained relatively low across all platforms (10.2%-18.8%), with YouTube demonstrating the clearest usage patterns (only 10.2% selecting "Can't Say") while Instagram showed the highest ambivalence (18.8%). Notably, TikTok demonstrated the lowest adoption rate among all three platforms examined, with nearly two-thirds of students reporting infrequent or no usage.

Table 5 on missed Academic Deadlines Due to Social Media Use showed that YouTube (2.09), Instagram (2.33), and TikTok (2.33) indicate the level of adoption among undergraduate students at Lagos State University (LASU). A mean score closer to 5 suggests higher adoption (Strongly Agree/Agree), while a score closer to 1 indicates low adoption (Disagree/Strongly Disagree). The results show that TikTok and Instagram have higher mean scores (2.33) compared to YouTube (2.09), suggesting a slightly greater adoption of these platforms. However, all mean scores are below the midpoint of 3 (Can't Say), indicating that, on average, students lean toward disagreement or neutrality regarding frequent use of these platforms.

The standard deviations (YouTube: 0.97, Instagram: 1.09, TikTok: 1.11) reflect the variability in responses. TikTok shows the highest variability (SD=1.11), suggesting more diverse opinions among students, possibly due to its appeal to specific subgroups. Instagram's standard deviation (1.09) is slightly lower, indicating moderately consistent responses, while YouTube's lower standard

Table 5: Missed Academic Deadlines Due to Social Media Use (*n*=521).

Platform	Response	Frequency	Percentage	Score	Mean	Standard Deviation
YouTube	Strongly Agree/Agree	68	13.2%	5/4	2.09	0.97
	Can't Say	120	23.0%	3		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	333	63.8%	2/1		
Instagram	Strongly Agree/ Agree	127	24.4%	5/4	2.33	1.09
	Can't Say	115	22.1%	3		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	279	53.5%	2/1		
TikTok	Strongly Agree/ Agree	145	27.9%	5/4	2.33	1.11
	Can't Say	100	19.2%	3		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	276	53.0%	2/1		

Note: Score values represent aggregated Likert scale responses: 5/4 (Strongly Agree/Agree), 3 (Can't Say), and 2/1 (Disagree/Strongly Disagree). Mean and standard deviation were calculated using the original 5-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) prior to aggregation.

deviation (0.97) suggests more uniform opinions, likely reflecting its widespread but less intensive use among students.

Table 6 on Motivation for Learning showed that YouTube has the highest mean score (3.95), suggesting a strong inclination toward frequent use, with 70.1% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. Instagram's mean score (2.90) reflects moderate adoption, with a near-even split between agreement (45.7%) and disagreement (43.9%). TikTok has the lowest mean score (2.68), with 60.3% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, indicating lower adoption compared to the other platforms.

The standard deviations (YouTube: 1.00, Instagram: 1.10, TikTok: 1.15) show the variability in responses. YouTube's lower standard deviation (1.00) suggests more consistent opinions, likely due to its widespread use. Instagram (1.10) and TikTok (1.15) have higher variability, indicating diverse opinions, possibly driven by differing preferences for content type or accessibility. TikTok's higher standard deviation suggests the most polarized views, likely reflecting its appeal to specific subgroups.

Table 7 on motivation for Entertainment showed that demonstrate moderate to high engagement levels, with TikTok recording the highest mean score (M=3.66, SD=1.13), followed by Instagram (M=3.56, SD=1.08), and YouTube (M=3.31, SD=1.11). The overall aggregate mean scores of 3.51 (SD=1.11) indicates that undergraduate students generally demonstrate favorable usage patterns across these platforms, positioning their engagement slightly above the neutral midpoint of the scale.

TikTok's superiority in mean score aligns with its highest adoption rate, where 67.2% (n=350) of respondents expressed agreement or strong agreement regarding usage frequency. Instagram followed closely with 63.5% (*n*=331) positive responses, while YouTube recorded 58.2% (*n*=303) agreement levels. The relatively low disagreement rates across all platforms-ranging from 13.6% for TikTok to 18.0% for YouTube-further underscore the pervasive integration of these social media tools into students' daily routines. The standard deviations, ranging between 1.08 and 1.13, indicate moderate variability in responses, suggesting that while most students engage with these platforms, individual usage patterns vary considerably.

The hierarchical pattern of adoption (TikTok >Instagram >YouTube) reflects platform-specific characteristics that resonate with undergraduate populations. TikTok's short-form, algorithm-driven content delivery system appears most aligned with contemporary student preferences, while YouTube's comparatively lower mean score may reflect its positioning as a more purpose-driven platform utilized selectively for educational content, entertainment, or skill acquisition rather than continuous engagement.

Table 8 on motivation for Creative Expression showed that TikTok emerged as the most frequently used platform with the highest mean score (M=3.76, SD=1.07), followed by Instagram (M=3.54, SD=1.09), and YouTube (M=3.23, SD=1.12). The overall aggregate mean scores of 3.51 (SD=1.09) indicates that students generally demonstrate favorable attitudes and consistent usage patterns across these three platforms, positioning their engagement above the neutral midpoint of the scale.

The adoption rates further reinforce this hierarchical pattern, with TikTok recording the highest agreement level at 67.8% (*n*=353), Instagram at 63.3% (*n*=330), and YouTube at 51.2% (*n*=267). These percentages indicate that more than half of the surveyed students actively engage with all three platforms, though with varying degrees of frequency and intensity. Notably, YouTube exhibited the highest disagreement rate at 25.4% (*n*=132), compared to Instagram's 19.0% (*n*=99) and TikTok's 17.2% (*n*=90), suggesting

that YouTube may serve more specialized or selective purposes within students' media consumption repertoire.

The standard deviations across all three platforms (1.07-1.12) demonstrate moderate variability in usage patterns, indicating that while the majority of students engage with these platforms, individual differences in adoption and usage frequency exist. The relatively low standard deviations suggest reasonable consensus among respondents, with most clustering around moderate-to-high usage levels. Interestingly, TikTok demonstrates the lowest standard deviation (1.07), suggesting more consistent usage patterns across the student population compared to YouTube (1.12), which shows greater variability in adoption and may reflect diverse purposes for platform engagement.

The gap between TikTok's mean score (3.76) and YouTube's mean score (3.23) represents a 0.53-point difference, which is statistically meaningful and highlights the contemporary shift toward short-form video content among university students. Instagram occupies a middle position (3.54), reflecting its versatility in offering both static visual content and dynamic video formats through Reels and Stories. The data suggest that LASU undergraduates prefer platforms that prioritize algorithmic content curation, visual storytelling, and rapid content consumption over longer-form video content that requires sustained attention.

DISCUSSION

1. The high adoption of YouTube among LASU undergraduates, with a mean score of 3.59, reflects its role as a versatile platform for education and entertainment, aligning with global trends (Smith and Anderson, 2018). Its extensive content library, including academic tutorials and recreational videos, makes it a preferred tool in resource-constrained settings like Nigeria, where students rely on free platforms for learning (Moghavvemi *et al*., 2018; Oyedemi, 2015). This supports YouTube's high adoption rate (72.4%), indicating its perceived utility for both academic and leisure purposes, distinguishing it from platforms with narrower functionalities. In contrast, Instagram and TikTok, with lower mean scores (2.36 and 2.30), exhibit limited adoption, likely due to their focus on social networking and entertainment, which may be less prioritized by students facing data costs and academic pressures (Adegboyega, 2020; Oyedemi, 2015). The variability in responses, particularly for YouTube (SD=1.04), suggests diverse usage patterns driven by individual needs, aligning with research on differential social media engagement among students (Moghavvemi *et al*., 2018). Future studies should explore barriers to Instagram and TikTok adoption to better understand these trends.

2. The unexpectedly low social media usage among LASU students, with 67.5% disagreeing with frequent use across platforms, challenges assumptions of universal digital engagement among youth (Auxier and Anderson, 2021; Perrin and Anderson, 2019). YouTube's lowest mean score (2.09) contradicts its global popularity for educational and entertainment purposes, possibly due to bandwidth limitations and data costs in Nigeria, as noted by Nwagwu and Oshiname, (2019) and Giunchiglia *et al*., (2018), highlighting the influence of local infrastructure on platform preferences. Instagram and TikTok show comparable adoption (M=2.64 and

Table 6: Motivation for Learning (*n*=521).

Platform	Response	Frequency	Percentage	Score	Mean	Standard Deviation
YouTube	Strongly Agree/Agree	365	70.1%	5/4	3.95	1.00
	Can't Say	106	20.3%	3		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	50	9.6%	2/1		
Instagram	Strongly Agree/Agree	238	45.7%	5/4	2.90	1.10
	Can't Say	54	10.4%	3		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	229	43.9%	2/1		
TikTok	Strongly Agree/ Agree	163	31.3%	5/4	2.68	1.15
	Can't Say	44	8.4%	3		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	314	60.3%	2/1		

Note: Score values represent aggregated Likert scale responses: 5/4 (Strongly Agree/Agree), 3 (Can't Say), and 2/1 (Disagree/Strongly Disagree). Mean and standard deviation were calculated using the original 5-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) prior to aggregation.

Table 7: Motivation for Entertainment (*n*=521).

Platform	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
YouTube	Strongly Agree/Agree	303	58.2%	3.31	1.11
	Can't Say	124	23.8%		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	94	18.0%		
	Subtotal	521	100%		
Instagram	Strongly Agree/Agree	331	63.5%	3.56	1.08
	Can't Say	115	22.1%		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	75	14.4%		
	Subtotal	521	100%		
TikTok	Strongly Agree/Agree	350	67.2%	3.66	1.13
	Can't Say	100	19.2%		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	71	13.6%		

Note: Score values represent aggregated Likert scale responses: 5/4 (Strongly Agree/Agree), 3 (Can't Say), and 2/1 (Disagree/Strongly Disagree). Mean and standard deviation were calculated using the original 5-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) prior to aggregation.

2.63), likely due to their mobile-first, low-bandwidth designs, which suit resource-constrained contexts (Murire and Cilliers, 2020). Moderate standard deviations (0.97-1.11) indicate varied engagement, with some students showing intensive use, aligning with Andreassen *et al*., (2017). The high "Can't Say" responses for Instagram and TikTok (18.1% and 18.6%) suggest irregular engagement, possibly due to limited access or ambivalence, as observed in resource-constrained settings (Wyche and Olson, 2018).

3. YouTube's dominant adoption (M=3.74, 72.4% frequent users) among LASU students underscores its multifunctionality for education, entertainment, and information, aligning with global trends (Auxier and Anderson, 2021; Pew Research Center, 2021). Its academic utility, including access to tutorials and supplementary materials, makes it indispensable in university settings, as supported by Balakrishnan and Griffiths, (2017) and Moghavvemi *et al*., (2018). This positions YouTube as a socially acceptable and institutionally aligned platform compared to entertainment-focused alternatives. Instagram (M=2.71, 24.0%) and TikTok (M=2.62, 25.7%) show lower adoption, likely due to high data demands and cultural disconnects in Nigeria, as noted by Kazeem, (2019) and Murire and Cilliers, (2020). TikTok's higher variability (SD=1.17) indicates polarized engagement, with some students heavily engaged and others disengaged, aligning with Omar and Dequan, (2020). The high "Can't Say" rate for Instagram (23.8%) suggests irregular use or passive consumption, complicating usage assessments (Throuvala *et al*., 2019).

4. YouTube's overwhelming adoption (M=3.85, 75.6% frequent users) establishes it as critical digital infrastructure for LASU students, driven by its educational and entertainment utility, as confirmed by Auxier and Anderson, (2021) and Moghavvemi *et al*., (2018). Its viewer-centric model supports passive consumption without social pressures, making it more accessible than Instagram and TikTok, which require active participation and higher data usage (Balakrishnan and Griffiths, 2017; Chen and Cheung, 2019). This aligns with its compatibility with students' economic and psychological needs in resource-constrained contexts. The low adoption of Instagram (M=2.46, 22.5%) and TikTok (M=2.31, 18.8%) reflects infrastructural barriers like data costs and cultural irrelevance, as noted by Kazeem, (2019) and Porter *et al*., (2020). TikTok's low engagement, despite global popularity, may stem from its recent entry and participatory demands, which are less feasible in Nigeria (Schellewald, 2021). Consistent standard deviations (1.03-1.15) suggest uniform variability across platforms, indicating common external constraints like data access influencing usage patterns (Kircaburun and Griffiths, 2018).

5. The moderate adoption of TikTok (27.9%) and Instagram (24.4%) among LASU students aligns with their appeal for social interaction and entertainment, as noted by Adeyemi and Adeyinka, (2023) and Ojo and Nwankwo, (2022). However, low mean scores (2.33 for both) and high disagreement rates suggest limited frequent use, likely due to academic pressures and data costs, as reported by Chukwuere and Chukwuere, (2021). This reflects a pragmatic approach to social media use in resource-constrained settings. YouTube's lower adoption (M=2.09, 13.2%) compared to TikTok and Instagram is consistent with Smith and Anderson

(2024), who highlight its use for specific purposes like tutorials rather than daily engagement. TikTok's high variability (SD=1.11) indicates polarized usage, supporting Adeyemi and Adeyinka's (2023) findings on diverse engagement patterns. These results underscore the influence of content type, accessibility, and cultural relevance on platform adoption.

6. YouTube's high adoption (M=3.95, 70.1%) reflects its role as a multifunctional platform for academic and leisure purposes, as supported by Adeyemi and Adeyinka, (2023). Its accessibility and diverse content make it a preferred tool among LASU students, unlike Instagram (M=2.90, 45.7%), which is moderated by data costs and academic demands (Ojo and Nwankwo, 2022). TikTok's lower adoption (M=2.68, 31.3%) aligns with Chukwuere and Chukwuere (2021), noting its recreational focus limits its appeal among students prioritizing academics. The polarized engagement with TikTok (SD=1.15) compared to YouTube's consistency (SD=1.00) supports Smith and Anderson's (2024) findings on TikTok's niche appeal. YouTube's broad adoption reflects its accessibility and utility, as noted by Adeyemi and Adeyinka, (2023). These findings highlight how platform functionality and external constraints like data affordability shape social media use among LASU students.

7. The high adoption of TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube among LASU students aligns with global trends, with TikTok leading due to its algorithm-driven content, as noted by Auxier and Anderson, (2021) and Montag *et al*., (2021). Instagram's strong adoption (M=3.56) reflects its visual appeal and social functions, as supported by Sheldon and Bryant (2016), while YouTube's moderate score (M=3.31) indicates purpose-driven use for education and entertainment (Moghavvemi *et al*., 2018). The moderate-to-high mean score (3.51) suggests balanced engagement, aligning with Kircaburun *et al*., (2020). Variability in responses (SD=1.08-1.13) reflects diverse user needs, supporting uses and gratifications theory (Katz *et al*., 1973; Whiting and Williams, 2013). TikTok's cultural resonance in Nigeria, as noted by Adegbola and Gerpott, (2023), explains its lead, while YouTube's lower frequency may reflect intentional usage patterns (Khan, 2017). These findings support the technology acceptance model (Davis, 1989) and suggest platforms' utility and ease of use drive adoption, with implications for educational strategies (Manca and Ranieri, 2016).

8. The high adoption of TikTok (M=3.76, 67.8% frequent users) among LASU undergraduates aligns with global trends, as Anderson *et al*., (2022) reported a 67% usage rate among 18-29-year-olds, highlighting TikTok's universal appeal driven by its algorithmically curated, short-form content (Montag *et al*., 2021; Scherr and Wang, 2021). This platform's ability to deliver personalized entertainment with low cognitive demand explains its dominance, resonating with Generation Z's fragmented media consumption patterns and reinforcing its position as a leading social media platform in Nigeria. Instagram's strong adoption (M=3.54, 63.3%) reflects its visual appeal and multifunctional role in identity construction and social networking, as noted by Sheldon and Bryant, (2016) and Chiluwa and Ifukor, (2015). YouTube's lower adoption (M=3.23, 25.4% disagreement) suggests more intentional, education-focused use, consistent with Moghavvemi *et al*., (2018), with its moderate usage potentially limited by its less ambient engagement compared to TikTok and Instagram (Khan, 2017). These findings align with

Table 8: Motivation for Creative Expression (*n*=521).

Platform	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
YouTube	Strongly Agree/Agree	267	51.2%	3.23	1.12
	Can't Say	122	23.4%		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	132	25.4%		
	Subtotal	521	100%		
Instagram	Strongly Agree/Agree	330	63.3%	3.54	1.09
	Can't Say	92	17.7%		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	99	19.0%		
	Subtotal	521	100%		
TikTok	Strongly Agree/Agree	353	67.8%	3.76	1.07
	Can't Say	78	15.0%		
	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	90	17.2%		

Note: Score values represent aggregated Likert scale responses: 5/4 (Strongly Agree/Agree), 3 (Can't Say), and 2/1 (Disagree/Strongly Disagree). Mean and standard deviation were calculated using the original 5-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) prior to aggregation.

uses and gratifications theory, indicating students select platforms based on specific needs like entertainment, social interaction, or learning (Katz *et al*., 1973; Whiting and Williams, 2013).

CONCLUSION

This study illuminates the nuanced roles of YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok in the academic and social lives of 521 LASU undergraduates, revealing a clear hierarchy in platform adoption driven by functionality, accessibility, and cultural relevance. YouTube emerges as the dominant platform (M=3.95, SD=1.00 for learning motivation), valued for its educational utility and low distraction (M=2.09, SD=0.97), aligning with its global role as a versatile resource for academic tasks and information access (Moghavvemi *et al*., 2018). Instagram and TikTok, while popular for entertainment (M=3.56, SD=1.08; M=3.66, SD=1.13) and creative expression (M=3.54, SD=1.09; M=3.76, SD=1.07), show lower academic relevance (M=2.36-2.46) and higher distraction levels (M=2.64-2.63), reflecting their recreational focus and data-intensive nature, which may be less feasible in Nigeria's resource-constrained context (Kazeem, 2019). The findings underscore the applicability of the Uses and Gratifications Theory, as students selectively engage with platforms to meet specific needs-learning for YouTube, social interaction for Instagram, and entertainment/creativity for TikTok (Katz *et al*., 1973). The moderate variability in responses (SD=0.97-1.17) highlights diverse usage patterns, suggesting that while YouTube enjoys near-universal adoption, Instagram and TikTok appeal to specific subgroups, influenced by data costs and academic priorities (Chukwuere and Chukwuere, 2021). These insights challenge assumptions of universal social media engagement among youth and emphasize the need for tailored educational strategies to leverage these platforms effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the mean scores, the primary recommendation is to integrate YouTube into LASU's academic curricula to enhance learning outcomes, given its high adoption (M=3.95, SD=1.00 for learning) and low distraction (M=2.09, SD=0.97). the following is therefore recommended:

1. Educators should curate YouTube playlists aligned with course objectives, incorporating tutorials and lectures to supplement classroom instruction, as supported by Hanson and Haridakis (2008). They can collaborate with academic departments to embed YouTube-based assignments, ensuring content relevance and quality.
2. University administrators should invest in digital literacy programs to train students and faculty on evaluating YouTube content for accuracy, leveraging its high academic benefit (M=3.59, SD=1.18) to foster critical thinking (Andrew, 2025).
3. Librarians can develop YouTube channels with curated educational resources, enhancing information access (M=3.85, SD=1.03), particularly for underserved students, as recommended by Buffardi and Eickholt, (2022).
4. Students should be encouraged to use YouTube for self-directed learning, guided by faculty to avoid misinformation.
5. IT departments should ensure campus Wi-Fi supports YouTube access to mitigate data cost barriers, aligning with Oyedemi, (2015). This collaborative approach, involving stakeholders across academic and administrative units, maximizes YouTube's educational potential while addressing infrastructural constraints, ensuring equitable access and minimizing distractions from less academically relevant platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

ABBREVIATIONS

LASU: Lagos State University; **UGT:** Uses and Gratifications Theory; **GPA:** Grade Point Average; **SD:** Standard Deviation; **M:** Mean; **SPSS:** Statistical Package for the Social Sciences; **ANOVA:** Analysis of Variance; **n:** sample size; **r:** correlation coefficient; **p:** probability value; **β:** Beta coefficient; **d:** effect size.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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