



**Social Media and its Influence on Users: The Case of Hate Speech  
Circulation on TikTok**

By

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*A Research Submitted to School of graduate studies in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts In Journalism and Communication*

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May,2023

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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## **Declaration**

I, the undersigned, pronounce that this research is my original work and every one of the wellsprings of materials utilized for the research has been properly recognized.

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Place of submission: Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

## Approval

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend to Addis Ababa University to accept the Thesis submitted by Meron Beyene entitled ‘Social media and its influence on users: The case of hate speech circulation on TikTok’ in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Master’s Degree in Journalism and Communication.

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Internal examiner Signature Date	Signature	Date

## **Acronyms**

CSSN -computer-supported social networks

TPLF-Tigray people liberation front

ICT-information communication technology

DWTV-Demtsi weyane television

OMN-Oromia media network

CNN -Cable News Network

## **Acknowledgments**

Foremost I am thankful to almighty God. I would like to say my most profound genuineness and conscious appreciation to my advisor, Yohannes Shiferaw (Ph.D.), for his veritable and amazing counsel.

Besides my advisor, I would also like to thank my sister Mahlet Beyene, who without this would have not been possible. You were always someone whom I could always turn to for advice. You have always stopped me from making the wrong decisions in life. Thank you for being such a great influence, sister. I also appreciate all the support I received from my mom, brother, and the rest of my family.

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## **Abstract**

*Numerous studies show that there are increasing allegations that social media may be used in Ethiopia to promote hate speech and cause violence. In addition, it has been noted in reviews of other works that while some studies have reached the conclusion that hate speech is prevalent on social media platforms, no research has yet examined the impact on TikTok users or Ethiopian viewers. Therefore, the goal of this study is to pinpoint the difficulties that arise as a result of hate speech that is shared on TikTok. In order to achieve the specified purpose, both qualitative and quantitative research approaches are used. To gather the essential data and information, survey-questionnaire and in-depth interviews are specifically used. A questionnaire is used as a scientific tool to collect data from 200 randomly chosen samples of Addis Abeba University students. Additionally, ten chosen individuals are subjected to in-depth interviews. In order to do this, samples of Ethiopians who use the TikTok app will be chosen using a purposive sampling technique. Microsoft Excel is used to show and analyse the quantitative data. Tables and charts are used to convey quantitative data. Accordingly, this study tried to reveal the various challenges that the youth are facing as a result of hate speech spreading on TikTok. The majority of the respondent agree that hate speeches and comments are spreading on TikTok. 30% of respondents agree that hate speech in TikTok video make them feel angry or fierce toward the characters in the video. The study come up with a result showing that 25% of respondents saw ethnic and religious-based hate speech on TikTok frequently. They also mentioned that hate speech on TikTok makes them depressed, and stressed, and that they have also seen other people affected by this situation. Many hurt people are unverified. So, the youth need to develop critical thinking to combat online hate speech among Ethiopians and the government should also commit to disseminating timely and accurate information on domestic developments as a way to eliminate the opportunity for rumors and misinformation.*

*Keywords- hate speech, social media, TikTok*

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The frequent and quick connection offered by social media has connected people locally and worldwide; anybody can publish anything from anywhere. Social media usage in Ethiopia has increased along with the development and spread of ICT and communications. The growing use of social media, which has presented a significant issue by opening the door for the spread of hate speech, is of current concern in Ethiopia and many developing nations. On Ethiopian social media, verbal assaults against religious and ethnic groups have been reported (Abraham, 2019). This study suggests that hate speech has evolved into a common user language practise on Ethiopian social media. The rapid expansion of hate speech and propaganda with a hate-based agenda has presented new difficulties as a result of social media's phenomenal growth. Any statement that disparages a person or a group based on attributes including race, colour, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, or religion is considered hate speech. Online hate propagation is becoming a significant issue that has contributed to ethnic-based conflicts in various nations (Matamoros-Fernández, 2021), and Ethiopia is no exception. Since many young people in Ethiopia, especially those enrolled in higher education institutions, are said to often use TikTok and other social media platforms, it would be very beneficial to study social media, especially TikTok. Particularly, the usage of short videos on TikTok has caught the attention of young people at colleges, and it is definitely worth looking into. The Cable News Network (CNN) said that TikTok, a Chinese short video app, and the new video format that can be shared on media platforms had "been gaining global momentum" (Chen, 2021). The software for TikTok was released in September 2016. The product is launched in an effort to create a community for short music videos that targets young people. However, there have also been negative effects and worries about TikTok. The impact of hate speech may shift due to TikTok's short video format, which differs from other social media sites that rely on text. The purpose of this study is to better understand the difficulties that students from various ethnic groups at Addis Abeba University encounter as a result of hate speech on TikTok. The study will also look at the difficulties kids face as a result of hate speech on TikTok. The study aims to pinpoint the pervasive issue of hate speech on Ethiopian social media, particularly on TikTok. Ethiopia is a multicultural, religious, and ethnically diverse nation. Many Ethiopians in Ethiopia and the diaspora expressed a lot of support for Abiy Ahmed after he was elected prime minister on April 2, 2018, despite differences in ethnicity and religion. Ethnic tension subsided after that, and love prevailed over hate. The trend is evident both online and offline as a result of the

media, particularly social media, delivering upbeat and consistent messages. The Ethiopian government has reopened more than 246 websites and blogs that had been barred for more than ten years as well as mobile data and broadband services that had been suspended since 2016. The political reform scenario, however, did not survive very long with the same attitude. Religious and racial strife has returned. As a result, many people now often encounter hate speech on social media. According to studies, as social media became more open, misinformation, fake news, and hate speech became more prevalent in Ethiopia. Following the students' national test and the assassinations of political and military officials in Addis Abeba and the Amhara regional state during the current political transition, internet services were shut down twice in June 2019 alone. In addition, from the end of June to the first week of July 2020, the government shut down the internet in response to the murder of the well-known Oromo musician Hachalu Hundessa. Online conflict seems to be commonplace in the nation as the reform takes hold (Chekol et al., 2021).

During most of 2016 and 2018 Ethiopia, a country of diverse ethnicities and religions, experiences ethnic clashes, and subsequently thousands of people internally displaced. Ethiopian Somalis and Oromos largely fled following deadly clashes between ethnic Somalis and Oromos. Historically, ethnic Somalis and Oromos has been characterized by territorial competition which often leads to disputes and conflicts over resources, including wells and grazing land. Hostility flanked by the Oromo and Somali peoples beside the communal border between their two states take place intermittently throughout 2017 other than the condition deepen in September, parting hundreds of people lifeless by a government approximate and relocate get of others trying to escape the aggression. These conflicts can cause the displacement of tens of thousands of people. Though, the higher displacement was occurred in between ethnic Somalis and Oromos there are also displacements from Amhara and Benshangual following ethnic disputes. And also there is worry between ethnic Amhara and Tigray due to the question of identity belong of Raya and Wolkayite. The rise of irresponsible social media activism and fake news in recent times is being blamed as the catalyst especially for ethnic related violence in various parts of Ethiopia. There are 4 growing concerns about hate speeches and uncensored activism in the country. Believing social media is contributing to provoke these ethnic disputes among all explained ethnic groups, the Ethiopian government is planning to draft a law an against hate speech which can be prohibited by the law of the country (Addis standard, 2018). Gelashvili (2018) indicates that the effects of online hate speech show that the greater danger, nevertheless, can stem

from the normalization of hate through social media. The aim of the hate groups is not only to publish the content that contains messages but also to make such content appear as a normal part of society. If the hateful message can be perceived by the society as just another opinion on social media, then such hate can be openly expressed. Understanding the danger of hate speech in different countries mentioned above and the growing concerns of hate speech in accordance with the contexts of political and social conflict happening in Ethiopia, this research mainly focused on mapping the nature of hate speech online and identifying the depth of the problem.

The major causes of hate speech in Ethiopia include challenging historical recollections and connecting racial difficulties with issues of religion, culture, and language. Additionally, it is believed that the current upsurge in reckless action on social media and fake news is a fuel for ethnic and religious violence in several regions of Ethiopia. The government intends to write a rule against hate speech, which may be forbidden by national law, believing that social media contributes to these debates among Ethiopians (Addis Standard, 2018). Hate speech grew in popularity throughout this battle, not just on social media but also in traditional media. For two years, the Tigray area and other war zones had limited access to the internet. The country lost educated youth as a result of the young man's intense motivation to fight on both sides of the conflict. Despite the fact that the internet has been outlawed in some areas of the nation, hate speech is rampant on social media and is still unacceptable today. Religious organisations are also involved in this ethnic scenario, which leads to miscommunication and bloodshed. As was already noted, the development of ICT and the Internet nowadays presents both opportunities and difficulties. As a result, social media now has a huge effect. Particularly prevalent in the social and political lives of the residents can be seen in the usage of Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and TikTok. The usage of these social media platforms is widespread, particularly when there are social and political tensions. The platforms are frequently used to increase confrontations, but they are also occasionally used to de-escalate and moderate social and political life among Citizens. The present study focused on the impact of social networks, particularly TikTok, and it is now typical to see young people utilizing, creating, and sharing short films on TikTok. Sharing of incidental information, humor, social and political data, as well as criticism of the administration, institutions, and people, was fairly common. TikTok, in particular, has grown in popularity among young people and has become a tool for many of them to freely and artistically express themselves, (2022). TikTok is used by many individuals, although the

majority of its users are teens. It has gained notoriety and is beginning to change. In a research by Ngilangil, the level of TikTok's influence and involvement among university students in the state of Auriga del North was examined, with a focus on how frequently students browsed the app. The effect degree of the material, quality, and music was taken into consideration in the study. In order to better understand how TikTok has been utilised by Ethiopian young, this research will involve students and government employees from several institutions.

TikTok is one of the most popular video-sharing platforms and social media applications among teens and youth. It becomes a popular form of sharing creative videos about cooking, drawing, dancing, singing and exciting games. It uses artificial intelligence techniques to display personalized content to special users without having any troubles, by analyzing the users' interests, preferences and interactions with the app content. (Haleem, Javaid, Qadri, Singh, & Suman, 2022). TikTok is a significant aspect of today's young people lives. They are attracted to this application for many reasons; it enables them to self-express, to have fun and enjoyment, to share information and interests, to build social relationships, to record moments and memories and to make short videos that last for a few seconds with various contents. (Cervi, 2021; Palupi, Meifilina, & Harumike, 2020; E-ISSN 2281-4612 ISSN 2281-3993 Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies www.richtmann.org Vol 12 No 3 May 2023 97 Yang, Zhao, & Ma, 2019). As the coronavirus has spread, the application has taken a higher position, its download and use rates have increased. The most recent data shows that 2020 had the highest rates of downloading this application on Google Play Store. (Banskota, Healy, & Goldberg, 2020) With the increase of using social networking applications, the traditional communication has changed and the cross-cultural communication has grown and provided tools to collaborate and share information. As a result, citizens are now faced with values, roles, thoughts, identities and ideas that may be very different from what they are used to (Liaw, 2019). Concerns have been raised about the threats and risks of using social networking applications, namely TikTok. Discussions have centered on whether TikTok tracks its users' online behavior without their consent and whether it collects more user personal data and misuses them (Montag, Yang, & Elhai, 2021). Studies have shown that high use of social media applications may result in person feeling more socially isolated, as he feels alone and remains physically cut off from people and objects that provide him with support resulting in physical and psychological isolation. Also, they have confirmed that these applications alienate people from their own culture and society. (Dainow, 2016).

TikTok's mission is "to capture and present the world's creativity, knowledge, and precious life moments, directly from the mobile phone. TikTok enables everyone to be a creator, and encourages users to share their passion and creative expression through their videos." What helps TikTok stand out among the competition is that practically anyone can become a content provider because of the simplicity of using the app. That is why it appeals to so many young users around the world. The popularity of TikTok amongst the younger generation could also be explained by the fact that the app creators decided to choose teenagers as their target audience from the very beginning. By using a short video format unlike other social media sites such as YouTube, TikTok can target teenagers and young adults with shorter attention spans. It also encourages creativity with its wide range of effects and challenges and due to the nature of its algorithm, it is easier to go viral on TikTok compared to other social networking websites.<sup>19</sup> With teens as the target audience specified from the start, TikTok designers matched the habits and preferences of this age group, thus creating a platform gives their audience exactly what they like. It allows the younger crowd to express themselves creatively, by dancing and singing, while using their favorite music clips

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Social media is a way for individuals to communicate with one another by creating, sharing, and exchanging information via online communities and networks. With the use of social media platforms, anybody may immediately communicate with millions of people for a little cost. Bocar & Gina (2022) claim that as a result, the majority of today's teenagers in all age groups are quickly transferring from electronic media like television watchers and radio listeners to social media. On the other hand, Mikwa (2015) points out that these affordable and fruitful social media platforms have drawbacks. It quickly rose to the top spot for promoting the spread of hate speech. Brown (2017) defines the term "hate speech" as the explicit or implicit display of hate or hostility towards members of groups or classes of people who are defined by protected characteristics. According to Gagliardone (2015), there are more and more allegations that social media may be used in Ethiopia to disseminate hate speech and encourage violence. However, this study was limited to Facebook and was carried out when internet connection was sparse. Three million Twits posted in three Ethiopian languages—Amharic, Tigrinya, and other—were gathered by Yimam et al. (2019), who also found that abusive Amharic language occasionally rises online. The type and prevalence of hate speech on the various social media platforms used by Ethiopians (Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter) are examined in another research by Abrha (2019). Additionally, to demonstrate

the prevalence of hate speech on social media, Chekol et al. (2021) analyse user comments gathered from rival ethnic-based television stations, Facebook, and YouTube. By gathering information from three specifically chosen ethnic-media social media sites, namely ASRAT, OMN, and DWTV, Muluken (2021) also highlighted the superiority of hate speech on social media that is characterised by offensive intensity rather than incitement to violence and genocide. According to the research mentioned above, hate speech on social media has increased in Ethiopia over time. Our issues won't be resolved by merely demonstrating the proliferation of hate speech. Showing how hate speech affects various societal groups will instead assist us to become more aware of how much our comments may harm or even kill other people. Ethiopians continue to experience violence and civil unrest, and the Tigray region's civil war has not yet completely healed the nation. Additionally, earlier research has concentrated on social media websites including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and racial social media sites. In contrast to other research, this one concentrated on Tik-Tok, a popular and widely used app today. Additionally, there is little research on quick video applications for hate speech in Ethiopia. This study focuses on the effects TikTok is having primarily on university students because hate speech is already becoming more prevalent on other social media platforms. TikTok is a mobile or laptop programme that is used to build and create short films that are 15 seconds long, according to the statement. It is advertised as a social network for sharing films and is the fastest-growing social media programme (Ngilangil, 2022). It's a platform that enables the creation of a range of videos, including reviews, hilarious films, and stunts. As a result, their impacts are now quite evident. As a result, as young people are expected to be frequent TikTok users, the current study concentrated on determining the effects of disseminating hate speech via TikTok on young people.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

#### **1.3.1 Main Objective**

- To determine the impact of social media on users, with a particular focus on hate speech spread on TikTok.

#### **Specific Objectives**

- To identify major problems that people experience from hate speech on TikTok
- To identify the focus areas of hate speech on TikTok in Ethiopia.
- To examine the severity of hate speech on TikTok.
- To identify the major triggering factors of TikTok hate speech in Ethiopia

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. How does the severity of online hate speech among Ethiopians look?
2. What are the major problems that people experience as a result of hate speech?
3. What are the focus areas of hate speech on TikTok in Ethiopia?
4. What are the major triggering factors of TikTok hate speech?

#### **1.5. The scope of the study**

The study's primary objective was to uncover the issues that students encounter as a result of hate speech on social media. And because there are so many other kinds of social media, this study is just focused on TikTok. The most popular platform in use now is TikTok. However, the effects of TikTok on hate speech have not yet been investigated, and this study specifically did not look at the effects of TikTok on Ethiopia's institutional context. Although TikTok is thought to be more popular, no studies have been identified, therefore it is unclear how much of an influence it has. As a result, the study selected the TikTok platform to discover the problems caused by hate speech. Only young individuals from Addis Abeba University were the subject of the study.

#### **1.6. significance of the study**

Once the difficulties people encounter as a result of hate speech have been discovered, the researcher hopes that this study will provide light on current and potential solutions to it. Additionally, the study would shed light on the frequency, gravity, and effects of TikTok hate speech on young people. In fact, it may inspire politicians, activists, and psychiatrists to aid the neighbourhood. Ethiopia is one of the nations that might be impacted negatively by hate speech. Afterwards, lawmakers can use this report to guide their deliberations on whether to criticise Proclamation 1185/2020 to Prevent and Combat Hate Speech and Misinformation. Additionally, the government can create regulations that influence social media user involvement and hold social media firms responsible. In Ethiopia, civil society organisations that combat hate speech also have access to research facilities to create initiatives and campaigns. Overall, the study can assist lawmakers in controlling misuse of internet technologies and halting assaults using derogatory language on online platforms, such as social media. The dysfunctions of TikTok and their effects on our culture, economics, and politics have been revealed through empirical study and scholarly discussions, helping to transform drawbacks into advantages. Therefore, studying hate speech on TikTok is important and timely for efforts in the 21st century in general and for Ethiopia's political unrest in particular.

**Hate speech:** is a term for discourse that are insulting, intimidating, degrading,, or intended to incite violence or prejudice against a person or group of people based and calling or 8 mentions specific name on their race, gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, language, moral or political views, socioeconomic class, occupation or appearance (such as height, weight, and hair color), mental capacity and any other similar distinction. The term covers written as well as oral and visual communication including in the mass media as well as some other forms of behaviors in a public setting, e.g. on the social media(McGonagle, 2002) Social media: refer to a group of Internet-based applications built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content<sup>20</sup>. Social media is an umbrella term and can take many forms, including blogs (e.g., Twitter), content communities (e.g., YouTube), social networking sites (e.g., Facebook(gelashivili,2018)

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.REVIEW OF THE LITERATUTRE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter's goal is to offer an overview and context for the primary issues discussed in this book. This chapter compiles the most relevant study findings and interpretations on social media, hate speech, and TikTok to date. Furthermore, a theoretical framework is provided to assist grasp the 'meaning of social media' and its benefits and drawbacks. In addition, broad and conceptual explanations of hate speech are provided. As a result, there is a common knowledge of TikTok and its influence on youngsters.

#### **2.2 The Internet and New Media**

The evolution of various forms of social media has paved the door for new methods of communicating with users. According to Ships et al. (2020), new media is a type of electronic communication that allows people to exchange information and material online. In contrast to professional journalists, the arrival of ICT has resulted in a new institutional framework and has transformed the old manner of conducting journalism by allowing citizens to be users, creators, and publishers of varied material on social media. The Internet, social media platforms, mobile applications, and other digital communication technologies have evolved into new media systems, influencing people's everyday lives in countries and throughout the world and altering the way we interact. As a result, the advancement of communication technologies has a significant influence on people's lives. According to Elena-Iulia (2020), information technology has accelerated the trend of globalisation. Technological advancements have made it simpler for people to access knowledge and economic potential since the early 1990s. As a result, technology has strengthened global interconnectedness by allowing individuals to communicate and interact with one another regardless of physical proximity. It has been demonstrated that the value of social media may be observed in its qualities. It is a communication medium, similar to a newspaper, radio, or television, and, in a larger sense, social media is a social communication tool that promotes worldwide cooperation and the sharing of multimedia information among users at the national, continental, and global levels. After the Internet and the growth of digital technology, today's communication system has altered modern society in ways that no one could have predicted. According to Bocar and Gina (2022), social media is a collection of online communication

platforms dedicated to community participation, engagement, content exchange, and cooperation.

### **2.3 Definition of social media**

The term “social media” was first used in 1994 in an online media community in Tokyo called “Matisse” (Bercovici, 2010). However, after two years, the first formal definition in 1996 uses "Computer Social Network" or "CSSN". The researchers then used different terms such as "virtual communities", "social networks", "social network services", "online social networks", "social networking sites", "social networking sites" and "social media". Although there are minor differences between these terms, it has been said that all terms describe the same concept. Although many people use social media in their daily lives, most of us cannot define what social media is. Scholars define the term in different ways.

Aichner et al. (2021) give a comprehensive list of all key social media definitions (and synonyms) developed between 1994 and 2019. According to the findings of this study, the similarities and differences observed over 25 years allow for the definition to be divided into two primary streams: those published before 2010 and those released after 2010. Before 2010, social media was commonly seen as a form of communication among individuals who had common interests. After 2010, the focus point for the creation and dissemination of user-generated content shifted. Other academics, such as Kaplan and Heinlein (2010), define social media as a set of Internet programs that enable the creation and sharing of user-generated content and are founded on the ideological and technological underpinnings of Web 2.0. According to Wilson et al. (2011), Internet 2.0 is a concept that was coined in 2004 to describe a completely new manner for software developers and end users to interact online. i.e. H. as a platform where information and applications are no longer developed and published by people but are continually altered with the participation and collaboration of all consumers. Carr and Hayes (2015) give a more specific definition of social media, one that is adequate to make the technology a reality while also being resilient enough to persist until 2035. They formally defined social media as an internet medium with limited communication capabilities but enormous value. Exchanges that reveal information about user interactions and gain value from user-generated material. The researchers clarified essential components of the formal definition in their research. They also provided current instances of social media that fit their description. According to the findings, social media (e.g., Facebook, HQ, Google C, YouTube, Yelp, Heed), professional social networking sites (e.g., LinkedIn, Beehive IBM), chat rooms, and discussion forums, board/outdoor games

(e.g., Farmville), and wikis such as Talk, Tinder, Instagram, Wanelo, and Libya are all examples of social media. Internet news sites (e.g., NYT Online, PerezHilton.com), Wikipedia, Skype, Netflix, Email, IM, SMS/SMS, Movies, Tumblr, and Whisper, on the other hand, are not considered social networks. According to Buffer (2023), Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, WeChat, TikTok, Sing Weibo, HQ, Telegram, and Snapchat are among the top ten social media platforms in 2023 based on their value to companies and artists; monthly active users.

Social media refers to the means of interaction among people in which they create share and or exchange information ideas in virtual communities or networks using technology based applications. Heanlein (2010) defines social media as a group of internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of the web and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. The content might include text, video, images, podcasts and other multimedia communications. The most prominent examples of social media include, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Reddit, Google +, Google talk, Yahoo chat, Skype, Whatsapp (Kaplan, M. and Michael Haenlein 2010). Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends' family and 21 colleagues. Twitter is a free micro blogging service that allows registered members to broadcast posts called tweets. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other user's tweets by using multiple platforms and devices (Tommo, 2012). Furthermore, social media depends on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share co-create discuss and modify user generated content. It introduces substantial and persuasive changes to communication between organizations communities and individuals. It is argued that social media has introduced positive effects such as allowing the democratization of the internet while also allowing individuals to advertise and form friendship. Much of criticism of social media has been that it has decreased face-to-face interactions, there have been issues of trustworthiness and reliability of information presented, concentration, ownership of media content, and the meaning of interactions created by social media.

## **2.4. Youth Exposure and Social media**

Every nation's and country's future progress and development is dependent on youth. Today, social media is critical for young people in education to learn about new educational trends in order to enhance literacy and communication, promote culture, and gather and share religious and political information in order to create a better lifestyle and social development. Social media is often regarded as the easiest and most successful method of disseminating information using multimedia technology. People nowadays utilise social media to share information with their friends and other users. According to Nawi et al. (2020), one of the good consequences is that individuals utilise social media to create more friends. According to them, "most younger generations did not see social media activity as something unrelated to their relationship, but as an informal and unspoken way to respond to friendship and to foster the bonding of existing partnerships." In general, this technology has strengthened long-distance contacts amongst young people." also proposed that individuals utilize social media to develop empathy with outsiders. People spend a lot of time on social media, sharing their lives with people they believe care about them. Another reason individuals favor social media is the quickness with which they can communicate with family and friends. Because of their employment and other connected commitments, a person's everyday life is considered to get shorter. Social networks, on the other hand, allow for rapid communication. Another advantage of utilizing social media is that it allows you to keep connected to the rest of the world. While social media has many advantages for young people in terms of acquiring information, exchanging files, learning, and teaching, there is no disputing that it has certain drawbacks. Khurana (2015) investigated the influence of social media use on Nigerian students. According to this report, 45% of the population spends more than two hours every day on social media. This condition takes individuals away from their purpose for existing and from connecting with their natural surroundings. The findings also show that young people want to know more about what is going on in their loved ones' life. This keeps them engaged in some ways while also distracting them from their own goals, as only a tiny number of young people attempt to gather useful knowledge about jobs and general awareness. In Ethiopia, however, the predicted number of young people is over 30%, accounting for nearly one-third of the population (Ahmed & Ahmed, 2021). Furthermore, studies such as Berhe and Mekonnen (2021) suggest that young unemployment is on the rise. Ethiopian youth, like those in most other nations, are social junkies. This productive social group is preoccupied with numerous social media platforms and pays little attention to the

impacts of social media. The benefits and drawbacks of social media are thoroughly covered in the sections that follow

#### **2.4.1 Benefits of social media**

Social media's primary objective is to bring people together and foster relationships. It also raises your visibility and keeps you and others updated. Social networking platforms allow you to communicate directly with your followers. The old communication approach has been affected, and a more interactive and participatory one has been established. Siddiqui and Singh (2016) briefly discussed the advantages of social media. According to the report, social media allows students to interact with one another regarding classroom events, group tasks, or homework assistance. Teachers may also use it to share information about class activities, school events, and assignments on social media, which is quite beneficial to them. During the epidemic, social media was critical for communities, parents, youth, and even children to conduct online transactions

#### **2.4.2 Disadvantages of Using TikTok and Social Media**

Despite the numerous benefits of social media, the disadvantage is rising. According to Kolhar et al.(2021), just 1% of students who utilized social networking applications did so for academic objectives. Furthermore, 52% said that their usage of social media interfered with their studying efforts. Social media sites generate both positive and negative comments. As demonstrated by Siddiqui and Singh (2016), social media platforms damage society by breaching people's privacy, and many huge organizations have been hacked. Sharing information on social media might result in kidnapping, murder, and robbery. Otkarini et al. (2022) investigated TikTok's positive and negative impacts. It demonstrates that sexual harassment, hate speech, sickness, fake news, and bullying are among the harmful consequences of the epidemic. According to Kolhar et al. (2021), university students' use of social networks has expanded dramatically. The study also found that when students utilise such platforms for enjoyment and recreation rather than for academic goals, the negative consequences are more prominent. Worse, hate messages are easily circulated, pushing young people to perform violent crimes.

According to Mathew (2019), hostile UGC spreads quicker and wider than ordinary UGC, reaching a substantially bigger audience. Once anything is online, it might be difficult, if not impossible, to totally remove it. Hate speech can endure in many versions across several channels, making monitoring difficult. Furthermore, online information is sometimes

provided under the pretext of anonymity, which adds to the difficulty of combating hate speech online. As previously said, the Internet has a global component, which creates cross-border issues when it comes to legal measures to prevent hate speech. In light of these factors, the law should govern incidents of online hate speech, differentiating between frivolous words hurriedly uploaded on the internet and a danger that is part of a systemic hate campaign.

### **2.5. Third-person effect and first-person effect**

Davison (1983) first proposed the third-person effect hypothesis in 1983, and since then, the third-person effect theory has attracted extensive attention and considerable research. The thirdperson effect hypothesis holds that when individuals perceive media information, the influence on others is more significant than that on themselves (Davison, 1983). This hypothesis explains why the public is biased against others under the influence of the media. Past research included ego involvement, the elaboration likelihood model, social categorization theory, attribution theory, and biased optimism, which have been used to explain the third-person effect and its consequences (Paul, Salwen, & Dupagne, 2000). Brown and Stayman (1992) stated that biased optimism is motivated by the need for self-improvement, and this optimism is made up of 8 comparisons between an individual self and others. Biased optimism leads individuals to believe they enhance their view of themselves, and other people are more likely to be influenced by the media (McLeod, Eveland, & Nathanson, 1997). Therefore, when information is perceived to be highly negative, the gap between the impact on the individual and others would become much greater (Eveland & McLeod, 1999). Meanwhile, Eveland and McLeod (1999) believed that the lower the social desirability of information, the stronger the third-person effect. In other words, the third-person effect is influenced by social expectations of information. If the media information has nothing to do with an individual's own benefits, the individual could feel it is unwise to be influenced by the media, and the third-person effect will rise (Perloff, 1989). White (1997) suggested that the audience who thinks that they are smarter than others will more likely resist a topic they determine has no benefit or may even have harmful consequences. Several factors may influence the existence and intensity of the third-person effect. When individuals try to understand the impact of media on them, they would compare themselves with others. Banning and Sweetster (2007) suggested that the third-person effect could be particularly pronounced if the person thinks they are more socially distant from others. The types of content that one individual receives from media may also affect third-party effects.

Undesirable media content may cause third-party effects, while popular media information may not have the same effect (Gunther & Mundy, 1993). Research on the third-person effect has long been focused on mass media. However, the third-person effect could also be seen on social media. In the research on online game addiction, the third-person effect is related to network performance; that is, the more effective an individual think self, the more worried he is about others than self (Zhong, 2009). Facebook users tend to 9 attribute privacy risks more to others than to themselves, therefore, third-person effects may also occur in Facebook privacy violations (Debatin et al., 2009). Lev-On (2017) believed that due to the influence of the third-person effect, individuals always think that others are more vulnerable than themselves in the face of several Facebook risks. Pham, Shancer, and Nelson (2019) found that individuals believe they post less frequently on Facebook than others, especially about objectionable content. In social media, in the case of a small number of sharing and comments, individuals believe that the general story has a more substantial impact on others than themselves (Stavrositu & Kim, 2014). The first-person effect is different from the third-person effect. The first-person effect says that people often think that positive information affects them more than it affects others (Gunter & Thorson, 1992). After studying unattractive advertisements, Sharma and Roy (2016) found that the positive influence on consumers' perception would affect consumers' purchase intention. Innes and Zeitz (1998) stated that individuals who receive public service announcements believe that the media affects them more than others. Other research supports the idea that individuals who read news articles with many social media indicators believe that the media affects themselves more than others (Chung, 2018). In the past research on the third-person effect, the restrictions on the Internet such as advertising, prejudiced speech, and fake news have been studied (Jiang & Kim, 2018; Ho et al., 2019; Driscoll & Salwen, 1997; Dority, 1989; Shah & Faber, 1996). When an individual shows more third-party effects, the individual is more likely to support intervention and restriction of fake news (Jiang & kim, 2018). The third-person effect affects parents' attitudes towards Internet legislation to protect their children (Ho et al., 2019). The bias of the media has a third-person effect, and the bias of the media guides the public's attitude toward ethnic minorities, such as 10 Korean Americans (Park et al., 2012) and African Americans (Driscoll & Salwen, 1997). Censorship is a psychological condition or behavior, and the purpose of censoring pork belly is to protect the public from being harmed by reading, seeing, or hearing content (Dority, 1989). Rojas, Shah, and Faber (1996) state that the perceived gap between first-person and third-person effects results in individuals showing support for censorship.

## 2.6. The Dark Side of TikTok

The popular teenage platform has a dark side too. TikTok has been the subject of troubling reports about its content, which is reportedly filled with nude images of children, child predators, devious algorithms, lack of privacy, and teens bullying and harassing one another.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the seemingly innocent video-sharing platform is hiding a much more sinister side: it allows for a steady stream of drugs, predatory messages and animal cruelty. Its lax security and control have allowed it to become a magnet for pedophiles, profanity, crime, violence and extremism. On 3 July 2018, TikTok was banned in Indonesia, after the Indonesian government accused it of promulgating “pornography, inappropriate content and blasphemy.” *STUDIES IN CONFLICT & TERRORISM* 755 Shortly afterwards, TikTok pledged to task 20 staff with censoring TikTok content in Indonesia, and the ban was lifted on 11 July 2018. In February 2019, several Indian politicians called for TikTok to be banned or more tightly regulated, after concerns emerged about sexually explicit content, cyberbullying, and deepfakes in which a person in an existing image or video is replaced with someone else’s likeness. Extremist content has also been lurking on TikTok. In October 2019, it was reported that ISIS recruitment content was discovered on TikTok.<sup>21</sup> The videos featured ISIS fighters with guns, corpses, as well as videos of beheadings.<sup>22</sup> Some of the videos reportedly targeted potential future fighters, with shots glorifying militants set to ISIS songs. Others seemed to target young girls, reportedly using the term “jihad lover,” and women calling themselves “jihadist and proud.” The videos also used TikTok’s in-app features, like filters and hearts as well as catchy music. On December 24, 2019, an ISIS supporter posted a TikTok video featuring an audio message by an unknown ISIS fighter vowing that “the Islamic State will remain” despite the online clampdown. The video concludes with a recording of Al-Baghdadi’s voice, in which he says: “Steadfastness, and no retreat.” Recently TikTok contains additional toxic contents, those of far-right groups. An investigative report by the British Sun Online revealed that the app is exposing young children and teens to a “cesspit of hate”.<sup>23</sup> The reporters revealed a series of posts celebrating terrorist killings and promoting Holocaust denials and anti-Jewish conspiracy theories. Scores of posts feature sickening anti-Semitic taunts - with cartoons depicting Jewish men with large noses and joking about the Holocaust receiving hundreds of likes and comments. In one video, racist sketches of characters labeled ‘A Sneaky Jew’ and ‘Mega Jew’ are followed by anti-Semitic tropes that Jewish people control the media, financial sector and government. Hate speech on TikTok largely flew under the radar until December 2019, when Motherboard reported that it had found examples of “blatant, violent white

supremacy and Nazism,” including calls for the murders of Jews and black people.<sup>24</sup> Some accounts verbatim read “kill all n,” “all jews must die,” and “killn.” (The words are uncensored on the app). The hate speech material on TikTok is varied. Some accounts signaled support for Atomwaffen, a violent Neo-Nazi group linked to the murders of several Jewish people across the United States. One account Motherboard found was called “Race War Now.” The user profile photo of another account was of an offensive caricature of a Jewish person, depicting a greedy rat. One video contained a succession of users making Nazi salutes. Another video included the message, “I have a solution; a final solution,” referring to the Holocaust. These reports, based on journalists’ exploration of TikTok’s contents, call for systematic empirical research. The present study sets out to study and analyze the presence of far-right extremism on TikTok

## **2.7. The Attraction of Online Platforms**

The far-right’s online presence had developed over three decades, using bulletin board systems, websites, online forums, and more recently, social media.<sup>10</sup> Social media has “algorithmically amplified, sped up and circulated a political backlash by White voters that the alt-right has exploited...,making extreme viewpoints more tolerable in public discourse”.<sup>11</sup> As Ganesh argues, much of the far-right groups’ ability to manipulate public discourse is due to their adoption of the practices and esthetics of misogynist, trolling, and gaming subcultures, where they have honed their ability to use text, memes, and videos to use emotional appeals and encourage participation with anti-immigrant and white supremacist discourse.<sup>12</sup> The growing presence of extremist’s groups in cyberspace is at the nexus of two key trends: the democratization of communications driven by user-generated content on the Internet, and the growing awareness of modern vigilantes of the potential of the Internet for their aims. Terrorists have used the Internet, as several studies have revealed, for numerous purposes.<sup>13</sup> They use the Net to launch psychological campaigns, recruit and direct volunteers, raise funds, incite violence and provide training. They also use it to plan, network, and coordinate attacks. Thus, not only has the number of terrorist online platforms increased but also the ways in which terrorists use the Internet has diversified. The network of computer-mediated communication (CMC) is ideal for extremists-ascommunicators: it is decentralized, cannot be subjected to control or restriction, is not censored and allows free access to anyone who wants it. The typical, loosely knit network of cells, divisions, and subgroups of modern extremist organizations finds the Internet both ideal and vital for inter- and intra-group networking. The great virtues of the Internet—ease of access, lack of

regulation, vast potential audiences, fast flow of information, and so forth—have been converted into advantages for groups committed to terrorizing societies to achieve their goals. The anonymity offered by the Internet is very attractive to modern radicals, terrorists and vigilantes. Because of their extremist beliefs and values, these actors require anonymity to exist and operate in social environments that may not agree with their particular ideology or activities. The online platforms, from websites to social media and the Dark Net, provide this anonymity and easy access from everywhere with the option to post messages, to e-mail, to upload or download information and to disappear into the dark. These advantages have not gone unnoticed by far-right groups, who moved their communications, propaganda, instruction and training to the cyberspace. As Hoffman and Ware concluded, “today’s far-right extremists, like predecessors from previous generations, are employing cutting-edge technologies for terrorist purposes”.<sup>14</sup> The far-right online presence is not restricted to a single online platform or space but is instead a patchwork of various types of platforms and spaces, from websites to social media and even the Dark Net. Far-right extremists are generating their content on a variety of online platforms and increasingly also utilizing a wider range of new media technologies for their purposes.<sup>15</sup> A range of relatively new and highly accessible communication “applications” is another component of this trend. One of them is TikTok.

## **2.8. Hate speech**

Hate speech is no consistent definition of academic. Matsuda (1993) believes that hate speech is a message of persecution, hatred, and insulting low racial self-esteem directed at oppressed groups in history. Extensive explanations for hate speech are "based on race, religion, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and other identity characteristics, deliberately inciting violence and prejudice against individuals or groups" (Hylton, 1996, p. 35). Speech and expression are hatred of someone or a group of people because of the characteristics of someone or a group of people (Saleem, Dillon, Benesch & Ruths, 2017). Hate speech is generally expressed through aggressive and insulting speech. Meanwhile, hate speech targets the disadvantaged or a specific minority. Therefore, hate speech can be a "mechanism of violent subversion," including fear, harassment, intimidation, and discrimination (Lederer & Delgado, 1995, p. 3-13). Although the victimized group can fight back with language, a social environment created or maintained by hate speech is harmful and disadvantageous to members of vulnerable social groups, making its statements challenging to work (Simpson, 2012). Susan (2014) believes that hate speech could cause

actual violence against a group of people. For example, the Stormfront website users incite and express hate speech, and they are indirectly responsible for the deaths of 11 nearly 100 people (Cohen-Almagor, 2018). Therefore, hate speech on the Internet may have an impact on the real world. Social media becomes the primary platform for online hate speech. Social media provides users with anonymity for encouraging users to express themselves. Users can make hate speech without exposing their information. Therefore, social media users perceive higher exposure to hate speech (Barnidge et al., 2019). In addition, the preservation of information by social media has resulted in the information being retained indefinitely on social media. Hate speech on social media may not be deleted. As a result, the possibility of hate speech appearing and reusing indefinitely on social media is provided (Jakubowicz et al., 2017, pp. 95-145). Hate speech is increasingly becoming an important issue on the Internet in China, and hate speech is not defined in Chinese law. Many attacks on women, homosexuals, ethnic minorities, and Africans appeared on Chinese social media (Wu & Liang, 2020). Chinese hate speech targets can be divided into four categories: racial hate speech, regional hate speech, religious hate speech, and gender hate speech. Li (2020) study offensive language on Weibo. Chinese Internet users prefer strong or directly offensive words to express anger, and offensive language is becoming a common issue in China (Li, 2020). Anger emotions spread faster in Chinese social media than other emotions (Song, Dai & Wang, 2016). Therefore, hate speech can spread widely on Chinese social media. TikTok is a social media based on visual platforms. Video, as a unique form, facilitates the spread of hate speech. In the United States, hate groups use visual communication functions in videos to provide hate speech content on the Internet (Barnett, 2007). Moor, Heuvelman, and Verleur (2010) research a kind of hate speech (flaming) on YouTube, and they found that YouTube users think hate speech videos are ubiquitous. Some YouTube users intentionally offend other users only for entertainment purposes (Moor, Heuvelman & Verleur, 2010). In addition, a study of the use of YouTube by young Czechs found that most people have been insulted and attacked (Kopecký et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the previous research on hate speech on YouTube includes video content and focuses on a large number of comments (Döring & Mohseni, 2019; Ernst et al., 2017). For example, lots of genders hate speech in the comments of the failed videos of women on YouTube (Döring & Mohseni, 2019)

Hate speech usually goals ignorant businesses to exhibit an opposing conduct on them. The superiors will forget about that the ignorant organization will also have an identical proper while making hatred statements. Hate speech is extra unfavorable and threatening when it

targets traditional image, event or an pastime. The messages exchanged on people related to country, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, profession, gender or incapacity have a greater effect than the individuals personal statistics. Almagor (2011, p. 1) has defined hate speech “as bias encouraged, opposed, malicious speech geared toward a person or a set of human beings because of some of their real or perceived innate characteristics”. the european court docket of Human Rights, adopted a definition on hate speech as “all sorts of expression which spread, incite, sell or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or different kinds of hatred based on intolerance, which include intolerance expressed by competitive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility in the direction of minorities, migrants and people of immigrant foundation” (Council of Europe, 1997, p. 107). With this idea, we expect that “hate speech is any speech, which assaults an character or a group with an aim to hurt or disrespect based totally on identification of someone”. as soon as the detest speech is expressed, hurting or disrespecting relies upon on the notion of the sufferer. For some, it may or won't have an effect on. normally, an effect of hate speech depends on the originator, content material and the focused one. If a hate speech does not incite to discriminate (do no longer hurt the centered one), then, there arises a query that whether or not this kind of speech is hatred or not? here it is established as hate speech because of the intention and content material. For readability recall a felony framework, in which an try and Vol.11 No.01 (2020), 352- 365 Research Article Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education 359 homicide is handled as a criminal offense, accused may be penalized and the sufferer will be supplied more protection. here purpose and action executed via the murderer are counted. similar ideology is applicable inside the context of hate speech.

### **2.8.1 An Overview of Hate Speech**

Hate speech is a dangerous way of inspiring mass crimes, bloodshed, civil war, and genocide. Hate speech restricts minorities' freedom of expression by establishing an environment that discourages them from speaking out against the different types of discrimination they suffer. As the balance of opinion moves between abuses of human dignity and hate speech, the problem of hate speech and international law becomes a concern. According to Barendt (2019), hate speech is a particularly offensive type of communication that does not fit within the concept of free expression.

As a result, it is critical that defines "hate speech" and what criteria might be used to target it. A restriction on hate speech may infringe on the right to free expression, and criteria may be imposed. Hate speech laws that go too far can violate the right to free expression, while

inadequate control can lead to intimidation, harassment, and violence against minorities and protected groups. It is vital to stress that hate speech should not be confused with offensive speech, as the right to free expression encompasses strong, critical, or upsetting or offensive speech. According to Elliott et al. (2016), "freedom of expression" refers to discursive activities, frequently political, that can be offered or received without limitation or censure, notably by government authorities. Thus, freedom of expression is a multifaceted notion that encompasses many arguments regarding fundamental political concepts and ideologies, as well as their interpretation and control. Yong (2011) questioned whether freedom of expression encompasses hate speech and attempted to differentiate between different types of hate speech. Targeted defamation is deemed open remarks, whereas dispersed defamation and organized political support for exclusionary and elimination actions are unprotected utterances. According to Mafeza (2016), hate speech is typically used to refer to communication that is offensive, abusive, insulting, frightening, or harassing and/or incites violence, hatred, or discrimination against groups characterized by particular traits. Hate speech designed to inspire animosity, prejudice, or violence is an example of a language that must be limited by worldwide legislation. However, the problem with regulating hate speech is that the uncertainty in the definition of what constitutes a criminal offense is utilized to penalize speech that has neither the aim nor the genuine likelihood of inspiring hatred. sophies, their interpretation, as well as their regulation.

A first issue, for the identification of a content as hateful, is that there is no universally accepted definition of hate speech, mainly because of the vague and subjective determinations as to whether speech is "offensive" or conveys "hate" (Strossen 2016). A comprehensive overview of different definitions can be found in Sellars (2016) who derives several related concepts that appear throughout academic and legal attempts to define hate speech as well as in attempts of online platforms. The identified common traits refer to: the targeting of a group, or an individual as a member of a group; the presence of a content that expresses hatred, causes a harm, incites bad actions beyond the speech itself, and has no redeeming purpose; the intention of harm or bad activity; the public nature of the speech; finally, a context that makes violent response possible. Sellars (2016) stresses, however, how the identified traits do not form a single definition, but could be used to help improve the confidence that the speech in question is worthy of identification as hate speech. In addition to the ambiguity in the definition, hate speech creates a conflict between some people's speech rights, and other people's right to be free from verbal abuse (Greene and Simpson 2017). The complex

balancing between freedom of expression and the defence of human dignity has received significant attention from legal scholars and philosophers and, according to Sellars (2016), the different approaches to define hate speech can be linked to academics' particular motivations: "Some do not overtly call for legal sanction for such speech and seek merely to understand the phenomenon; some do seek to make the speech illegal, and are trying to guide legislators and courts to effective statutory language; some are in between." Advocates of the free speech rights invoke the principle of viewpoint neutrality or content neutrality, which prohibits bans on the expression of viewpoints based on their substantive message (Brettschneider 2013). This protection extends even to speech that expresses ideas that most people would find distasteful, offensive, disagreeable, or discomforting, and thus extends even to hate speech (Beausoleil 2019). According to Strossen (2016, 2018) hate speech laws not only violate the cardinal viewpoint neutrality, but also the emergency principles, by permitting government to suppress speech solely because its message is disfavoured, disturbing, or feared to be dangerous, by government officials or community members, and not because it directly causes imminent serious harm. On the other hand, Cohen-Almagor (2016, 2019) insists that it is necessary to "take the evils of hate speech seriously" and that "certain kinds of speech are beyond tolerance." The author criticizes the viewpoint neutrality concept arguing that a balance needs to be struck between competing social interests because freedom of expression is important as is the protection of vulnerable minorities: "people must enjoy absolute freedom to advocate and debate ideas, but this is so long as they refrain from abusing this freedom to attack the rights of others or their status in society as human beings and equal members of the community." An alternative remedy to censoring hate speech could be to add more speech, as suggested by the UNESCO study titled "Countering On-line Hate Speech" (Gagliardone et al. 2015) which argues that counter-speech is usually preferable to the suppression of hate speech. The rising visibility of hate speech on online social platform has resulted in a continuously growing rate of published research into different areas of hate speech. The increasing number of studies on this subject is beneficial to scholars and practitioners, but it also brings about challenges in terms of understanding the key research streams in the area. Previous surveys highlighted the state of the art and the evolution of research on hate speech (Schmidt and Wiegand 2017; Fortuna and Nunes 2018; MacAvaney et al. 2019; Waqas et al. 2019). The survey of Schmidt and Wiegand (2017) describes the key areas that have been explored to automatically recognize hateful utterances using neural language processing. Eight categories of features used in hate speech detection, including simple surface, word generalization, sentiment analysis, lexical

resources and linguistic characteristics, knowledge-based features, meta-information, and multimodal information, have been highlighted. In addition, Schmidt and Wiegand (2017) stress how a comparability of different features and methods requires a benchmark data set. Fortuna and Nunes (2018) carried out an in-depth survey aimed at providing a systematic overview of studies in the field. In this survey, the authors firstly pay attention to the motivations for studying hate speech and then they conveniently distinguish theoretical and practical aspects.

### **2.8.2. Hate Speech on Social Media**

Despite the worldwide expansion of internet users and social media platforms in particular, hate speech on social media constitutes a significantly higher environmental threat to social peace than hate speech in the offline world. In reaction to the UN report, multiple accounts on social media sites such as Facebook and YouTube have been suspended for propagating hate speech. Hate speech is becoming more common. Using YouTube as an example, Ring (2013) investigates the scope and nature of the problem of hate speech on social media. Despite having regulatory procedures in place, YouTube is plagued with hate speeches and comments. The analysis reveals that laws and regulations are not being followed correctly. For example, Google was widely chastised in 2012 for removing the hate-propaganda film "The Innocence of Muslims" from their YouTube video platform in some countries but not others. The one-hour video, which insulted the prophet Mohammed and offended many Muslims, provoked deadly upheaval throughout the Middle East. Google removed the item from seven countries but allowed it to remain in others because it did not match their definition of "hate speech." The ensuing riots in Pakistan killed 19 people, and some blamed Google for permitting the information. According to Mafeza (2016), hate speech played a crucial part in the Tutsi massacre. The usage of various social media platforms encourages hate speech among many ethnic groups. Several scholars are investigating hate speech on social media. Several studies have looked at Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram as potential sources of online hate speech. (Wilson and Land 2021) (Mathew, 2019). In Africa, hate speech has frequently resulted in violence and civil conflicts (Chekol et al, 2021). Mikwa (2015) discovered that the most common types of hate speech on social media are ethnic, political, and religious. According to the European Institute of Peace (2021), ethnicity is a major source of fake news and hate speech. Abraham (2019) discovered that ethnic hate speech, along with politically driven hate speech, is the most common type of hate speech among Ethiopians. Furthermore, this survey discovered that Facebook is the most

popular medium for facilitating hate speech, followed by YouTube and Twitter. All of the above research look at the prevalence of hate speech on social media platforms other than TikTok.

## **Conceptual issues on hate speech**

### **2.8.3. Historical background and trends of hate speech**

As said by Brown (2017), the term hate speech is think up by a group of legal scholars in the late 1980s in the United States in response to what they adage as the means diverse legal systems attempted convinced class's of destructive bigoted speech. In the past, there has been a soaring acceptance of racially prejudiced expressions and discrimination, but after World War II, and in particular since the 1960s, the common trend is that European countries have brought hate speech under increasingly more strict regulation; the USA remains one of the very few countries to refuse to accept the trend to ban hate speech (Bleich, 2011; Parekh, 2006 cited in Fladmoe & Nadim, 2016). The anti-Semitic propaganda machinery that was part of Hitler's anti-Semitic policy in —das Dritte Reich— is history's most famous and most horrific example of hate speech with its consequences (Hollander, 2007). Africa, Rwanda, amid April and July of 1994, at least 500,000 Tutsi were killed when a Hutu extremist led government commenced a plan to murder the country's entire Tutsi minority and any others who opposed the government's policies. The perpetrators set free half truths movements, crammed with hate speech, through the radio and print media and made direct refrains to group of people wiles them to take part in the fighting before and during the genocide as United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) report summary (2009) shows. As the December 2007 presidential election in Kenya was encircled by disagreement and widely considered to have been manipulated by the government, Political parties in Kenya divide largely along ethnic streaks and fury over the election results exploded into political violence with ethnic connotation. Following, Media, particularly local-language radio stations, spread hate speech before and while the violence occurred. Text-messaging and 11 blogs also played a large role in the dissemination of information in both positive and negative ways (USHMM report summery, 2009). Besides, while the January 25th Uprising in 2011, diverse forms of hate speech have been on the climb in Egyptian media. These can be divided into xenophobic, political, religious and cultural forms. Politically-tempts hate speech encloses hate speech touching political groups for their political views (Zahraa, 2014). Moreover it contains hate speech grounded on nationalist dialogues closest to some Arab nationals. Xenophobic hate speech is hate speech that incites the hatred or rejection of foreigners,

particularly Westerners. Cultural forms of hate speech include forms of hate speech against religious groups, particularly religious minority groups (Allam, 2014), ethnic groups as well hate speech against members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community (cited in Elliott, Chuma, Gendi, Marko, & Patel, 2016). In Nigerian's case, many Igbo people have called for the independence of Biafra, in Nigeria's south-east, which was last independent during Nigeria's civil war, from 1967-1970. Biafra was melted into the Federal Republic of Nigeria after the conflict, which finished in millions of losses and there have been worries that hate speech may basis a revisit to violence. Radio Biafra was accused of hate speech and of Nigeria. —Hate speech has contributed to increased tensions in Nigeria during a time of bloodshed and violence not seen since Nigeria's civil war (Snaddon, 2017).

#### **2.8.4 Definitions of hate speech**

“Hate speech is understood to be inflammatory language, often insulting and derisive, that targets an individual or group, and that may or may not include a call to violence,” -USHMM summery report, 2009(p.8) Gagliardone, Gal, Alves, & Martinez (2015); Gelber& McNamara (2016) cited in Fladmoe& Nadim (2016) asserts —Hate speech is a contested term, and there is no shared definition of the concept (p.48). Thus, the definition of hate speech basically depends on a context and a jurisdiction it is likely to place boundaries and identify workable definition. Waldron (2012) defines hate speech as an expression that can be considered hateful, be it conveyed through text, images or sound, sends two types of messages. First, it functions to dehumanize and diminish members assigned to out-group. 12 Second, function of hate speech is to let others with similar views know they are not alone, to reinforce a sense of an in-group that is (purportedly) under threat. Therefore, hate speech relies on tensions, which it seeks to re-produce and amplify. Such speech bonds and segregates at the meantime. It creates —us and —them (cited in Jubany&Roiha, 2015). Hate Speech is not only verbal expressions, which are discriminatory towards people or groups due to characteristics such as ethnicity, origin and cultural background, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability but also includes non-verbal expressions such as those contained in images, videos or any communicative form of online and offline activity (Pálmadóttir&Kalenikova, 2017). Hate speech is a term for discourse that are offensive, insulting, intimidating, degrading, and further intended to incite violence or prejudice against a person or group of people based on their gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sex, gender identity, disability, language, moral or political views, socioeconomic class, occupation or appearance (such as height, weight, and hair color), mental capacity and any other similar distinction. The term covers

written as well as oral and visual communication including in the mass media as well as some other forms of behaviors in a public setting, e.g. on the social media (McGonagle, 2002).

### **2.8.5 Legal understanding of hate speech**

There are different accords, pacts, agreements and conventions, which have globally all touched and laid emphasis on the doctrine of hate speech. For instance, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) states that any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law (ICCPR, 1996). The UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression in his 2012 Annual Report (as cited in Article 19, 2015) provides a classification of hate speech and distinguishes between three types of expression: expression that needs to be prohibited as it constitutes an offence under international law; expression that may be prohibited, even though it does not constitute a criminally punishable act; and expression that constitutes hate speech and raises concerns in terms of tolerance, but is still justified under international law.

### **2.8.6 Prohibited Hate speech**

Beneath international law, states are requisite to ban the mainly stern types of hate speech. The prohibitions are tailored to preventing the exceptional and irreversible harms the speaker intends and is able to incite. Direct and public incitement to genocide and Prohibition of incitement to other discriminatory violations of international criminal law, such as the war crime of persecution, is not required by either the Genocide Convention (1948) or the Rome Statute (1998) but should be considered within as decidedly prohibited hate speech (cited in Article 19, 2015). Also, any advocacy of discriminatory hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence is prohibited. Additionally, all propaganda and all organizations which are based on ideas of theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one color or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form of communication are prohibited under ICERD (1996).

### **2.8.7. Hate speech that perhaps prohibited**

International human rights law permits states to restrict expression in limited and exceptional circumstances, complying with the three-part test under Article 19(3) of the ICCPR. These restrictions must be first, provided for by law and second, in pursuit of a legitimate aim, such as respect for the rights of others, and finally, must be necessary in a democratic society (Article 19, 2015). There are several types of hate speech, which may be comprehended as individually marking a certain fatality. This form of hate speech does not vigorous within the

criterion of Article 20(2) of the ICCPR as the speaker do not look for to incite others to seize an action touching persons based on a confined trait. These types of ‘hate speech’ include threats of violence, harassment and assault (cited in Article 19, 2015).

### **2.8.8. Lawful hate speech**

Expression may be inflammatory or offensive, but not meet any of the thresholds described below on (2.5.1). This expression may be characterized by prejudice, and raise concerns over intolerance, but does not meet the threshold of severity, at which restrictions on expression are justified. 14 This does not preclude States from taking legal and policy measures to tackle the underlying prejudices of which this category of hate speech is symptomatic, or from maximizing opportunities for all people, including public officials and institutions, to engage in counterspeech (Article 19, 2015).

### **2.8.9. Common Grounds and Characteristic of hate speech**

As stated in Article 19 (2015), the largest range of protected characteristics is found in the offence of persecution, which can be committed against any group based on their, political opinion, race, nationality, ethnicity, culture, religion, gender or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law. Thus, hate speech can be commonly based on gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, language, descent, social status, religion, beliefs or opinions. Fladmoe & Nadim (2016) maintains that —the targets of hate speech are first and foremost members of minority groups‖ (p.51). But also, more general (majority) group attributes, such as gender, may be targeted. Practically, according to Reuters (2018) special report, several 700,000 members of the Rohingya community had recently fled the country amid a military crackdown and ethnic violence. Hate base, a database that gathers instances of hate speech globally, similarly finds that ethnicity and nationality are the most common targets for hate speech and indicates that there has been a clear increase in hate speech based on religion and class background (cited in Fladmoe & Nadim, 2016). Hate speech includes things like identity-prejudicial abuse and harassment, certain uses of slurs and epithets, some extremist political and religious speeches and certain displays of hate symbols e.g. burning crosses (Simpson, 2013). Under above mentioned grounds, Sikorskaya and Gafarova (2014) point out common forms of hate speech such as accusations against other groups or individual for separatism; territorial acquisition, or other negative ambitions; statements regarding on historical crimes of one group or individual against the other; creating negative image of other group or individual; and creating negative image of other group or individual by covering domestic conflicts and accusations of

criminality. Searching for enemies among others or projecting one group's or individual problems onto others; expressions of the superiority of other groups or individual; accusing of other group or 15 individual of unwelcomed willingness to settle down in the region; and accusing other groups or individual of reluctance to learn the language and culture of native people are also common forms of hate speech as mentioned in Sikorskaya and Gafarova (2014).

### **2.8.10 The danger and severity of hate speech**

As cited by Fladmoe& Nadim (2016) , hate speech is found to have a range of consequences for individuals, such as fear and other emotional symptoms, lowered self-esteem, loss of dignity, and withdrawal from the public –both physically and in terms of participation in public debate (Boeckmann& Liew, 2002; Boeckmann&Petrosino, 2002; Eggebo, Sloan, &Aarbakke, 2016; Gelber& McNamara, 2016; Herek, Cogan, & Gillis, 2002; Leets, 2002; Midtboen& Steen-Johnsen, 2016; Pew Research Center, 2014). Hate speech can in itself have a —discouraging effect on the exercise of free speech (Fladmoe& Nadim, 2016, p.47). One purpose of hate speech is to incite fear in the groups targeted. Hate speech works to guard and reinforce boundaries and hierarchies between groups, and to remind those who are considered ‘different’ or ‘other’ of where they belong (cf. Perry, 2001, cited in Fladmoe& Nadim, 2016). Fladmoe&Nadim (2016) concurs that —Experiences with, or fear of, hate speech can shape individuals’ propensity to speak their mind, and make targeted individuals or groups more cautious in expressing their views and making themselves visible (p. 47). They also maintain that a potential consequence of hate speech is that certain groups are silenced, so excluding voices and viewpoints from public debates. Thus, while legislation against hate speech poses a legal boundary on free speech, hate speech can, in effect, also function to limit the individual’s exercise of the right to free speech through instilling fear and causing withdrawal from public debate for those targeted. In this sense, hate speech can represent a social boundary for free speech. Shaw (2012) agrees hateful words, even those that do not rise to the level of incitement to violence, can cause very real psychological hurt to the victims even while reinforcing potentially dangerous beliefs in the minds of the audience. The racist messages that hate speech often encapsulates, for instance, have been shown to have significant negative impact on parenting practices, and have even been linked to mental illnesses and psychosomatic disease. The guardian (2007) notice hate speech as gateway to discrimination, harassment and violence as well as a precursor to serious harmful criminal acts called as- hate crime. The hate crime sort includes not only hate speech that may

incitement to hatred, contempt, marginalization and psychological abuse against the groups of people characterized by certain features, but also physical violence against them like killing and bodily harm. Property crimes like property damage, vandalism, church and cemetery desecration as well as other criminal acts are hate crimes following hate speech (Human rights monitoring institute(HRMI), 2013).

#### **2.8.11. Severity threshold**

Article 19's six-part test (Context of the expression, the speaker, Intent, Content of the expression, Extent and magnitude of the expression, and Likelihood of harm occurring, including its imminence), incorporated to the Rabat Plan, and was designed to assist in determining in which situations the danger of violence, hostility or discrimination is sufficiently present to justify prohibitions on the expression of hate speech (Article 19, 2015). To understand the severity of hate message, first; the expression should be considered within the political, economic, and social context in which it was communicated, as this will have a bearing directly on both intent and/or causation. The contextual understanding should take into account, extra with the existence of conflict in society, for example, recent incidents of violence– the existence and history of institutionalized discrimination, for example in law enforcement and the judiciary; the legal framework, including the recognition of the targeted group's protected characteristic in any anti-discrimination provisions or lack thereof; – the media landscape, for example regular and negative media reports about the targeted group with a lack of alternative sources of information; and – the political landscape, in particular the proximity of elections and the role of identity politics in that context, as well as the degree to which the views of the targeted group are represented in formal political processes. And, the position of the speaker, and their authority or influence over their audience is critical. Contemplation should be made when the speaker is a politician or a prominent member of a political party and public officials or persons of similar status (e.g. teachers or religious leaders) due to the stronger attention and influence they exert over the others. This analysis should also examine the relationship of the audience to the speaker, and issues such as the degree of vulnerability and fear among the various communities, including those targeted by the speaker, or whether the audience has high levels of respect or obedience of authority voices. If there is intention to take on in advocacy to hatred; purpose to target a group based on a protected characteristic and having comprehension of the consequences of their action and knowing that the consequences will occur or might occur in the ordinary course of events (i.e. in which no unforeseeable change or event has occurred) it also helps to measure the

severity. But, this should be judged on the facts of the case and its circumstances, considering, *inter alia*, the language used the scale and repetition of the expression, and any stated objectives of the speaker. Recklessness and negligence are not sufficient as a standard of intent; thus, consideration should be giving to protecting communications that are simply ill-judged or flippant (such as a bad joke), or where the intent is more nuanced (to satire, provoke thought or challenge the status quo, including through art). Additionally, what was said is relevant, including the form and the style of the expression, whether the expression contained direct or indirect calls for discrimination, hostility or violence, and the nature of the arguments deployed, and the balance struck between arguments. The audience's understanding of the content of the expression is particularly important, where incitement may be indirect. International standards have recognized that certain forms of expression provide—little scope for restrictions, artistic expression, public interest discourse, academic discourse and research, statements of facts and value judgments. To test the severity as well, it is vital to analysis and examines the public nature of the expression, the means of the expression and the intensity or magnitude of the expression in terms of its frequency or volume (e.g. one leaflet as opposed to broadcasting in the mainstream media, or singular dissemination as opposed to repeated dissemination). If the expression was disseminated through the mass media, consideration should be given to media freedom, in compliance with international standards. Yet, there must be a reasonable probability of discrimination, hostility or violence occurring as a direct consequence of the expression, but the proscribed outcome itself need not actually occur; actual occurrence of harm may be considered an aggravating circumstance in criminal cases.

### **2.8.12. Climates for hate speech**

Hate speech have been understood and think up in response to specific and perniciously discriminatory social phenomena or incidents. Shaw (2012) indicates that Social and historical context plays such an important role in determining which words are hateful. —The most destructive messages are those that rely on historically established hatreds and symbolism to awaken dormant cultural prejudices“ (p.287). The precarious economic and political situation of transitional societies aggravate the risks of practices such as hate speech to be allowed by parties motivated by the desire for political power (Elliott et al., 2016). In line with council of Europe (2017), Hate speech can be understood as a —‘manifestation of unequal social and power relations and as a mechanism for reproducing them“ (p. 35). Also, the climate for hate speech is likely to become the most conducive in situations where the

political stakes are high, such as during elections and protests (Gagliardon, Gal, Alves, & Martine 2015). Along with, the use of hate speech during elections, particularly in the campaign period, is a dynamic and rapidly evolving issue. Rumors and accusations before Election Day may create the hate speech and pre-conditions for calls to violence. Furthermore, ethnic tensions through in marginalization are likely potential to create fertility to hate speech. Ethnic clashes are usually pinpointing of lack of discussion and benevolence among the clashing gathering. When conflicting views are expressed through the media, the resulting visibility and position taking only escalates the conflict. Accessibility of new media during which each individual can articulate their observations devoid of regulation or limit, has contributed to the increased expression of ethnic hate speech through the digital platform (Musa & Willis, 2014 cited in Kimotho&Nyaga, 2016).

### **2.8.13.During a conflict, hate speech on social media**

During disputes and conflicts, hate speech becomes more powerful. According to Almutawa (2022), the war in Ethiopia's northern region is one of the most serious and hardest crises the Horn of Africa has faced in decades. Instead of bringing people together, social media has the opposite effect. Stremlau (2022) demonstrated how internet discourses in Ethiopia lead to offline violence in his study. He referred to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's address, in which he urged Ethiopians to help rid the country of cancer and "clean the weeds out of the country." He used the term 'weed collectively' to allude to the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) or Tigrayans in general. Another hate remark by a Prime Minister ally referring Tigrayan insurgents to the devil was also reported by the researcher. Such a remark aligns with his recent appeals for Addis residents to take up weapons against the TPLF. Many others posted speeches like these on social media. According to Hurley (2023), the battle impacted civilization by causing famine, rampant rape, and sexual brutality. Tigrayans were detained, persecuted, and imprisoned in distant camps. Their tales were appropriated and shut down, resulting in long-term online ramifications. Millions of residents were displaced from their homes in Tigray, Amhara, and Afar during the conflict, which began in November 2020. The repercussions of this conflict have been felt by people all around Ethiopia. People have grown brutal towards one another as a result of the constant hostility displayed on social media.

Outsized range and extraordinary gripes brushed through Ethiopia's major region of Oromia commencement in November 2015, and in the Amhara district from July 2016(Human rights watch, 2017). According to relief web (2017), Concerns about the government's proposed

expansion of the municipal boundary of the capital, Addis Ababa, triggered widespread protests across Oromia. Dissenters expected that the Addis Ababa Integrated Development Master Plan would uproot Oromo ranchers, as has progressively happened over the previous decade. There were wide questions about the truthfulness of the administration's reported crossing out of the Master Plan in January 2016, due generally to past broken guarantees. Dissidents communicated worries over many years of chronicled complaints and the improper utilization of deadly power by the security powers. Also, as said by the conversation (2016), Qeerroo's, organizing the Oromo community to the mass protests extended demands are about achieving self-determination and sovereignty by replacing the Tigrayan-led regime with a multi-ethno-national democratic government. These 22 demands gradually emerged to create solidarity with other ethno-national groups, such as the Amhara's, who also have grievances with the regime. Amhara also held titanic protest. The huge demonstration held in Amhara is a request by representatives from the Welkait Amhara Identity Committee. The Welkait committee says community members identify themselves as ethnic Amhara's and say they no longer want to be ruled by Tigrayans (Tesfa news, 2016). In July 2016, challenges spread to the Amhara area, activated by the capture of Welkait Identity Committee individuals, a gathering looking to determine long-standing worries over regulatory limits. Dissidents in Amhara district are principally worried about the unequal dispersion of intensity and monetary advantages for those adjusted to the legislature. On August 6 and 7, security powers murdered more than 100 individuals in Amhara and Oromia, including more than 30 individuals executed in Bahir Dar alone. The town saw one of the biggest challenges. There were reports of enormous scale captures all through Amhara, as Human rights watch (2017) shows. Amhara protestors were motivated not only by the arrests, but also by persistent government brutality toward opponents, and a sense of disempowerment under the Tigrayan-dominated government. Some protests became violent. In Gondar—to which Welkait historically belonged—protesters burned Tigrayan businesses. Too, dozens of ethnic Konso were killed by security forces in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) following protests over administrative boundaries in the Konso area in the same year (All Africa 2016). In large, The Oromo and Amhara protest movement has started to change the political landscape of Ethiopia and shaken the regime's foundations. Emitting like a social fountain of liquid magma, it has sent swells through the nation with various gatherings changing their demeanors and remaining in solidarity with the Oromo (the conversation, 2016). In mid-February 2018, following the sudden resignation of Prime Minister Haile Mariam Desalegn, In April 2018, Ahmed Abiy,

was sworn in as Ethiopia's new Prime Minister. Abiy, Ethiopia's first Oromo leader has called for reconciliation and reform, including the privatization of some government-run firms and the liberalization of Ethiopia's political system. 23 Though there is climate of change after the sworn of Abiy as a prime minister, aggression has persistent in some parts of the country, and Ethiopia's political and security situation remains shaky. Abiy himself was the supposed target of a recent bomb attack at public gathering in Addis Ababa.

## **2.9 Emergence of TikTok**

Douyin, also name for TikTok, is a well-known social networking and video website with roots in China Iqbal (2020). TikTok was the most downloaded app in 2020 and 2021, and it achieved 1 billion users in the third quarter of 2021, according to this survey. The bulk of TikTok users, according to the survey, are under 30 years old, with the oldest age group being between 20 and 29. The short video often lasts for a few seconds. Mobile media is mostly utilised for thorough grooming, video editing, and quick filming. TikTok is a short video platform that blends music and video with user-generated content at its heart, enabling users to quickly see the world through their own eyes. Quick public adoption of high-caliber short video works will facilitate a more rapid information flow on mobile short films. With unparalleled access to information and methods of distribution, anybody may serve as a source of information and a facilitator of information. It offers advantages like information collecting and scholarly objectives. The social lifestyle of individuals has been significantly impacted by TikTok as a new social media platform (Nawi et al. 2020). Despite its advantages, the well-liked adolescent platform also has a negative aspect. There have been troubling concerns concerning the content of TikTok. It permits a steady stream of drug use, sexual harassment, hate speech, criminal activity, and violence. According to Ngilangil (2022), the majority of pupils frequently see and are affected by TikTok videos. According to Nichita & Andreescu (2021), the drawbacks can be overcome depending on the user's analytical skills or the type of material they desire to view. Regarding hate speech, Chen (2021) investigates how TikTok influences Chinese university students and the effects of hate speech on them. The findings indicated that Chinese university students thought hate speech on TikTok had an impact on them. The study looked at how hate speech affected people's views towards it as well as their opinions of themselves, others, and censorship.

According to Weimann & Masri (2020), TikTok was outlawed in Indonesia in 2018 because the government accused it of disseminating pornographic, offensive, and profane content. There were 196 papers in all that dealt with right-wing extremism, according to this

systematic study. According to their claims, the tweets promoted far-right beliefs such as fascism, racism, anti-Semitism, hostility towards immigrants, chauvinism, nativism, and xenophobia. These contributions included promoting violence, disseminating conspiracies, and elevating terrorists. The disadvantages of TikTok were briefly discussed in this paper. On TikTok, far-right terrorists and murderers are exalted. Extremists on the right have also utilised features on TikTok including filters, backdrops, and effects. According to Biswas and Paul (2020), extremism is a political and spiritual philosophy that is more in conflict with society norms and is fundamentally related to terrorism. Publications with accounts managed by youngsters and teenagers are popular on TikTok. The abundance of messages encouraging their followers to use violence is another trend. On TikTok, a number of "related" hate posts that targeted various groups could be seen. By omitting hashtags or choosing to submit a "profile video" rather than a profile image, users might evade detection. Furthermore, TikTok's hallmarks, such as a video platform where users may view material from random people rather than just a small group of friends, present additional potential for abuse to propagate and for individuals to avoid discovery.

Less monitoring of keywords, according to the researchers, makes it more challenging for machines to automatically tag postings. They said that due to the complexity of users, the scanning procedure required extremely complicated ways to detect extremist messages (combining names, phrases, symbols, and codes in a way that would make it hard for machine scanners to locate them). According to TikTok, it is "raw," "real," and "without bounds." However, this platform is a perfect breeding ground for violent and extremist content because of its lack of geographic boundaries and rising popularity. The outcomes also demonstrate that TikTok is unable to establish its own criteria. Acts of violence and ethnic and religious unrest rapidly occur after arrival in our nation, Ethiopia. The impact of online hate speech is becoming increasingly apparent as Ethiopia's Internet usage has grown over the previous two years (Ethio-Telecom Annual Report 2019). Furthermore, TikTok users are infiltrating other locations and aggravating the problem by disseminating hate speech and false information. According to Oktarini et al. (2022), numerous issues propagate unchecked using the TikTok app. The effects of hate speech on TikTok are ignored, though. This research made an effort to pinpoint the problems people are experiencing as a result of hate speech on TikTok. The survey also pinpointed the subject matter and motivators of hate speech among students at Addis Ababa University.

## **2.10 Theoretical Framework of the Study**

### **2.10.1. Media Effects Theories**

New media is a form of electronic communication that allows users to share information and content online (Valkenburg et al., 2016). Research on the influence of the media emerged between 1920 and 1930” and gained prominence in the late 1950s after the advent of television and the emergence of educational communication services in Europe and the United States. The impact of media, especially with the advent of social media, has become very clear and a more scientific approach is needed to determine the impact of social media. Especially with the rise of Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and now especially TikTok, the influence of social media is huge. Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2015) claim that "social media has become a category of online discourse where individuals create, share, bookmark, and interact at rapid speed. Since consumers rely heavily on media platforms, this has resulted in new media material that touches on social, political, cultural, and economic topics. It is common knowledge that the mainstream media produces tailored messages for the general populace. The media disseminates messages, and these messages particularly affect the behaviors of young people. Social media's effect has grown mostly as a result of the fact that "social media have removed all communication and interaction barriers and interactions and now you can communicate your ideas and thoughts on various topics" (Jyoti Suraj Harchekar, 2017). Naturally, doing so would make it easier "to share and communicate with like-minded people and ask for feedback and opinions on a particular topic" (ibid.).

### **2.10.2 Theory of Media Exposure**

As was already noted, one of the major significant ideas that serve as one of the study's theoretical frameworks is the media exposure hypothesis. The extent to which viewers have come into contact with particular messages or lessons learned from messages/media content is how Vreese & Neijens (2016) define media exposure theory. However, this is a simple definition, and even in this context, the "found" explanation raises conceptual and methodological issues.

The risks associated with the pervasiveness of hate materials, both on online platforms and in traditional media, have been of growing concern among scholars, decision-makers, and practitioners (Hawdon et al., 2017; Merklejn & Wiślicki, 2020; Perry, 2019; Straus, 2007; Tynes et al., 2008). Individuals may be daily exposed to hate content through media and actively consume, seek it out, or promote it. Therefore, engagement with hate could have multiple impacts or associated effects on the exposed individuals and the communities and

societies to which they belong. These impacts include victimization and psychological distress (Lee & Leets, [2002](#); Leets, [2002](#); Tynes, [2006](#); Ybarra et al., [2008](#)) and risk of violence (Foxman & Wolf, [2013](#); Hawdon et al., [2017](#); Kiilakoski & Oksanen, [2011](#)). To address the complexity of these impacts, we have developed a logic model which exemplifies how hate rhetoric operates and provides insights on the potential impacts of this and related content on individuals, communities, and societies (see [Figure 1](#)). Although the logic model will inform our systematic review, we will not be bound by it. Indeed, the model may be subject to iterative refinement depending on the dynamics of the relationships between hate and its impacts as identified during the development of the systematic review.

Exposure to or consumption of hate speech can have multiple consequences for individuals, particularly associated with changes in behaviors, attitudes, and emotions. These changes may involve experiencing different forms of harm and increasing the risk of engaging in hate speech or acts of hatred, including violent radicalization. From this point of view, hate speech is not only a set of utterances but also an action carrying real-world outcomes (Salminen et al., [2020](#)). Regarding emotional impacts, studies talk of anxiety and depression as being associated with exposure to online hate material. Specifically, experiences of being a target of online hate speech are linked to depression among young African Americans (Tynes et al., [2008](#)). Also, some research claims that Muslims living in non-Muslim western societies are likely to suffer from anxiety as they anticipate online threats against them becoming a reality (Awan & Zempi, [2015](#)). Exposure to or consumption of hate speech could also lead to changes in attitudes and then targeted actions. These may include violent acts offline resulting from the hateful rhetoric's capacity to spread antagonisms and influence motivations to take action (Moule et al., [2017](#)). For example, some studies suggest the increased use of Facebook is associated with increased acts of violence against refugees (Müller & Schwarz, [2020](#)).

### **2.10.3 Theory of Media Dependence**

The present study applies Media System Dependency Theory (MSD) to explore the level of dependence on TikTok as a social media platform among Gen Y & Z by determining their dependency motives (understanding - entertainment - guidance) and its effects (cognitive - emotional - behavioral), in addition to testing the relationship between TikTok dependency and the level of social alienation among them. This theory was first introduced by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur explaining the interaction between society and media as open systems which influences each other (Otto & Stausberg, 2014). It is a well-known fact

that media system is an important part of the social structure, and has multiple significant relationships with individuals, groups and other social systems.(McQuail & Windahl, 2015). According to this theory, individuals rely on the media as a source of information to achieve their various personal and social goals.(Baran, Davis, & Striby, 2012). It has been observed that the nature of these relationships may be strong or weak, static or dynamic, cooperated or conflicted. The theory determines motives of dependency on media in understanding different topics and issues, having fun and entertainment as well as guiding behavior. (Severin & Tankard, 1997).As per the theory, cognitive effects, affective effects and behavioral effects are the three types of media influences on the audience (Ball-Rokeach, 2008).

The first people to use the term "media dependency theory" was Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur (1976). They suggested a media dependency theory that focuses on media influences since media creates a knowledge system. The theory emphasizes an ecological approach that looks at the contributions made by many systems, such as the political, religious, social, and cultural systems (Nawi et al., 2020). As a result, users or target audiences rely heavily on the mass media system as a source of knowledge. People nowadays rely on the media to provide them with the knowledge they require to accomplish their goals and comprehend what is happening in society. In connection with this, they rely on tools to accomplish their objectives. The present study employs dependence theory as one of its theoretical frameworks because this is also true of emerging media and social media.

The intensity of dependence on social media leads to addict it causing high levels of interaction with virtual reality. Abuse in social media can lead to a state of mental illness where users feel detached from their surroundings (N. Karizat, D. Delmonaco, M. Eslami, & N. Andalibi, 2021). Jean-Jacques Rousseau believes that despite the advantages of civilization, it has enslaved and corrupted the human and made him unnatural because it increased materialism and consumption. Also, Rousseau believes that urbanization has changed human nature, as modern society depends on reification and the power of capital which increases the individual's feeling of alienation (Nicolas, 2020; Ortiz, Chih, & Tsai, 2018). Hegel sees that the concept of alienation is linked to person's estrangement from his own self, community, culture, values and morals on which he was raised As a result of being affected by the cultural invasion of alien cultures and ideas (Sayers, 2011). Karl Marx determined three types of alienation in human kind. The first is the alienation of worker as he loses the ability to determine his life, destiny, and work by feeling powerless and being deprived of his right to think, the second is alienation from others as the person loses his

ability to develop his social relationships, and becomes isolated from others, and the third is self-alienation as the person feels separated from his own self due to his ineffectiveness in making life better and his feeling of helplessness.(Marx, 2019) Sartre believes that the individual's feeling of social alienation is resulted from the huge technological development which has made man a slave to the machine. Thus, technology has destroyed human values and affected his social relations negatively. It has caused the absence of human activity and made people feel alienated. Kensington considers that alienation is the rejection of the prevailing trends, values and foundations, which are translated by behaviors such as withdrawal from society or rebellion and revolution against it (Birt, 1986). According to Ducharme, alienation is the feeling of loss, disintegration, isolation and failure to adapt to the surrounding social conditions, which makes the individual separate from his social environment and its interactions. It is a social and psychological state resulting from the individuals' opposition of values and traditions which leads to various reactions such as withdrawing from reality, being unable to interact with social situations (loss of control), feeling isolated from cultural goals (social isolation) and then being unable to self-adjusting and self-satisfaction (psychological isolation) (Wu et al., 2022).

The social alienation has four varieties; the innovative type is a kind of rejecting the social norm in creative ways, the ritualistic type is a kind of rejecting local cultural goals as a result of boredom and attracting to another culture, the withdrawal type means complete separation from the society and its culture, and the rebellious or revolutionary type means rejecting the social and cultural system and revolting against it by organizing protests and defamation campaigns and replacement of new social and cultural systems.(O'ralovna, 2022; Wu et al.,

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.RESEARCH METHEDODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the respective research design, study area, population, population samples, sampling technique, data collection tools, and data analysis methods.

#### 3.1. Research Design

The study design determines what information is required, how it will be gathered and analyzed, and how it will respond to the research question.

As was already said, the primary goal of this study is to investigate the effects that users encounter when posting hate speech on TikTok.As a result, this study uses a descriptive research approach to give systematic information on phenomena while also describing the present level of TikTok usage. To methodically and precisely characterize the facts and traits of a certain population or area of interest is the goal of descriptive research.

#### 3.2 Research Approach

In order to perform this study, both quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysed. Therefore, the research topics are processed using a mixed methodologies technique. With the quantitative approach, surveys are used to gather data. Additionally, data is gathered through in-depth interviews using the qualitative technique.

#### 3.3 Mixed methods

Toward obtain the needed statistics, quantitative and qualitative research methods are used together- as they are jointly supportive on exploring the selected issue. Having the Focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used, specially, mixed methods research represents research that involves collecting, analyzing, and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data in a study that investigate the same underlying phenomenon(Creswell,2014).

Since the researcher believes that both qualitative and quantitative method, in combination, provides a better understanding of a research problem or issue than either research approach alone, they are selected together for this study .

Quantitative method is employed while the researcher gathered data through survey. And the descriptive and statistical analysis, as method of analysis also makes the choice of

quantitative method. Qualitative method is employed since the researcher proposed collects data through in-depth interview and qualitative survey questionner. Consequently, both quantitative and qualitative research method in combination, are employed to collect and analyze both types of data to nurture and get better understanding toward the social media and its unfluence:the case of hate speech on tiktok among Addis Ababa university students. Here under the mixed methods convergent parallel design is employed since it is the main design in mixed researches used to best understand or develop more complete understanding of the research problem by obtaining different but complementary data on topics that are not well researched (Creswell,2014). Thus, the issue of hate speech in Ethiopia is still not well investigated. 26 In this study, convergent parallel design is used to collect and analyze two independent strands of qualitative and quantitative data at the equal time in solo face.

### **3.4. Research Techniques**

#### **3.4.1 Sampling Techniques**

Hate speech can be motivated by a variety of factors, including gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, language, political or moral ideas, socioeconomic status, occupation, or physical characteristics (such as height, weight, and hair color). It can also be motivated by a person's mental capability. Therefore, this research is restricted to hateful communications based on race and religion due to the vast array of motivations for hate speech. Following, college students from various Ethiopian ethnic groups and religious institutions are chosen since Chekol et al. 20221 found that ethnicity and religion were mostly to blame for the greatest displacements and political instability since 2018.

#### **3.4.2 Sample Size**

The size of the qualitative sample, which is often selected in a targeted manner, is larger than the quantitative sample. For qualitative data, the researcher chooses 10 interview subjects. This is so because the aim of gathering qualitative data is to identify and gather data from a small sample. However, gathering quantitative data necessitates a sizable sample. 200 students from Addis Abeba University who often use TikTok and are between the ages of 20 and 35 are chosen on purpose. Undergraduate and graduate students make up these two groups. The impacts that hate speech based on race and religion has on young people, who use TikTok primarily, are examined in this research.

### **3.4.3 Data collection tools**

#### **3.4.4 Survey- Questionnaire**

One of the strengths of a survey is that it is possible to gather data on a limited number of variables from a large number of subjects and it can be used for many different populations. Questionnaires are survey instruments that are employed to estimate the opinions, views, and experiences of many active social media users on the influences due to hate speech. In this study, the questionnaire met of the survey is used to obtain data from the 200 selected Addis Ababa university students. The survey questionnaires included open-ended questions cautiously.

#### **3.4.5 In-depth Interviews**

Interviewing is a qualitative research method that engages in performing rigorous individual interviews with a small number of respondents to discover their perspectives on an idea or situation. According to Krishna Kumar (1989), key informant interviews are qualitative in-depth interviews with people who know what is going on in a society or forum. Having these advantages of in-depth interviews, the researcher used semi-structured interview questions with 10 individual interviewees to obtain qualitative data. The researcher chooses semi-structured individual interviews based on their open-ended nature, suppleness, and compatibility with the subject under study. This helped the researcher to acquire detailed information on the questions and the key informants will have an opportunity to clarify their answers due to the semi-structured interview. The researcher recorded the data in an audio recorder, and then write out it.

#### **3.4.6 Method of Data Analysis**

Data obtained through both questionnaire and interview were later analyzed and presented based on the the nature of the data. Accordingly, qualitative data were presented using percentage and frequency and displayed using tables, charts and graphs. The qualitative data ob the other hand were first categorized and them thematically summerized.

### **3.5 Ethical Considerations**

To gather information, the aim and objectives of the study are clearly explained to the participants. Additionally, participants are informed about the right to ask questions and stop responding anywhere. The confidentiality and privacy of the primary data collected is ensured throughout the execution of the study and the information collected is used only for the intended research. Any work taken from others' previous work is cited by the APA system to avoid plagiarism.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The main objective of this study was to determine the influence of social media on users with a particular focus on the spread of hate speech on TikTok. The study primarily focused on identifying the problems that students experience because of hate speech on social media. So, four main research questions were identified and both qualitative and quantitative research methods were selected to realize the affirmed objective. And survey questionnaires and in-depth interviews were employed under mixed approaches as research methods to collect important data and information in accordance with mentioned research questions. In this chapter, data collected through primary data are presented, analyzed, and discussed to address the study's objectives and answer the posed research questions. Here quantitative data is presented and analyzed first. Then qualitative data is pursued and data is collected from in-depth interviews presented and analyzed after everything else. And the data is obtained from the survey questionnaire; in-depth interviews are discussed jointly in part of this chapter.

#### **4.2. Data Presentation**

##### **Demography of the Respondents**

The data collected using the questionnaire set are categorized under different topics that would help to indicate what TikTok users respond regarding the prevalence of hate speech, and to what level the hate speech is being circulated using the responses given by the respondents taken as samples from the selected university are presented below. Primarily the demographic data that indicates the nature of the respondents are presented based on their gender, age, and educational status of the respondents.

##### **1. Gender of the selected respondents**

Here below the gender representation of the selected respondents is presented below. As it is observed from the pie chart, the majority of the respondents are males.

## Gender

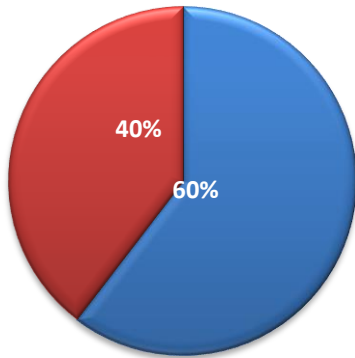


Figure1.

Figure 1 demonstrates gender of the selected respondents (TikTok users). As can be seen, 60% of the respondents were male and while 40% were female which shows large parts of the respondents are male. The selection of respondents was made with much care to include female respondents in the study despite some variations, however.

### 2. Age of the selected respondents

As the respondents of the questionnaire are from a university, the majority of the students are expected to be young. Here in Table 1, the information about the age of the selected TikTok users tells that 93.5% are below 30 years of age.

Age	Frequency	Percent
20-24	171	85.5
26-29	14	7.0
30-35	15	7.5
Total	200	100.0

Figure2: age of the selected respondents (Tiktok users)

As Table 2 demonstrates, 85.5 % of the respondents are aged between 20-24. This indicates that the majority of the respondents are at a youth age. As the students were selected from the undergraduate classes, it is expected that their age is mainly youth group. However, there were postgraduate students who took part in the study from the School of Journalism and Communication at Addis Ababa University. These students were purposefully taken

from the very reason that how they use social media as they mainly work in media and related fields and wanted to identify the influence of social media on society. Hence, based on the data those who belong to the age group of 30-35 are from postgraduate classes which accounts for about 7.5 % of the respondents who are aged 30-35. The least percentage which is 7% counted for respondents aged 26-29.

### 3. Educational Status of Respondents

The use of TikTok in one way or another other related to the educational status of the users. This is because it is mostly targeted to attract the youth section of society. Table 2 represents the current educational status of the respondent

Current Educational status	Frequency	Percent
Freshman	65	32.5
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	27	13.5
Senior	69	34.5
GC	39	19.5
Total	200	100

Figure 3: current educational status of the respondents (TikTok users)

Table 2 indicates 34.5 % of the respondents are senior students, and this indicates that the majority of the respondents are senior students. Following 32.5 % are freshman students. Then 19.5 respondents are GC. The least respondents are second-year students, which accounts for 13.5%. As the sample, demonstrated TikTok users are mostly at youth ages that is between 20-29 ages, which includes freshmen, seniors, and second-year students. As mentioned above in the literature review various studies reported that the majority of TikTok users are aged fewer than 30, with the largest age bracket aged between 20 and 29 years old. This is related to a short video that usually lasts around seconds and seems to be framed and set to attract the youth group. This, thus, seems a worldwide phenomenon, and TikTok is highly preferred by the youth for its short video upload, and its contents touch the emotion of the young.

### 4.3. Basic Data Analysis

The data analysis of the study is based on addressing the research questions that focused on identifying how audiences prefer the use of social media particularly TikTok, the severity of online hate speech among Ethiopians look, the major problems that people experience as a result of hate speech, the reason why users rely on the use of TikTok in disseminating hate speech and identifying the major triggering factors of TikTok hate speech. Hence, based on these issues are treated in the following sections.

### 4.4. TikTok Usage of Respondents

The use of TikTok by users would indicate the level at which the platform influences its users. The influence and effects of a media can be seen from how frequently viewers or listeners of a media use it. This would also imply how much viewers or listeners are exposed to the media. As presented in the following graph, about 44.5% of the respondents use the app frequently and more frequently whereas 55% of the respondents either rarely use TikTok or they rarely use the media.

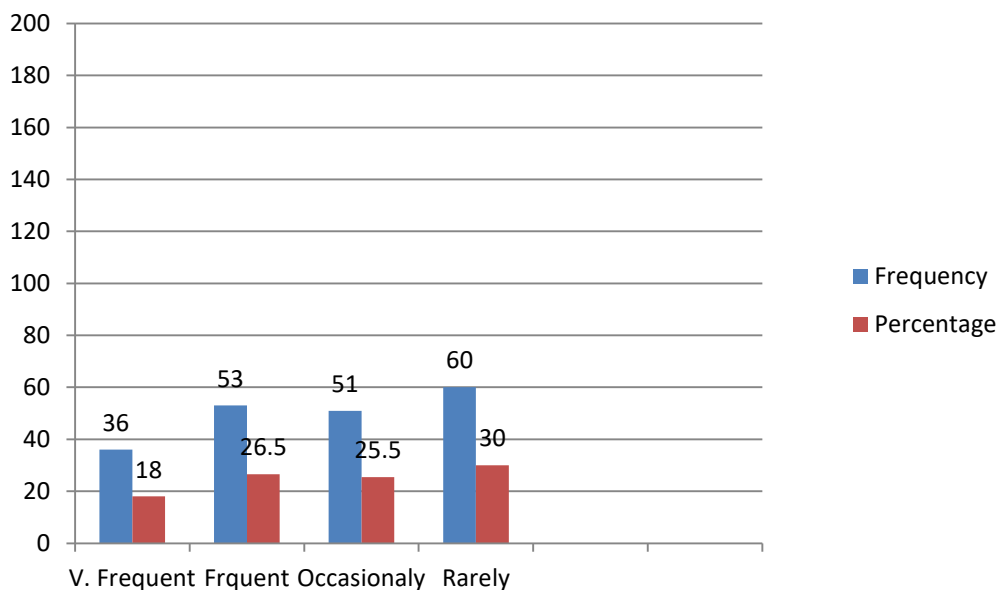


Figure 4: TikTok platform used by selected respondents

figure two indicates. 30% of the respondents use TikTok rarely whereas 26.5% of the respondents use TikTok frequently. On the other hand, 25.5% of them use TikTok occasionally, and the rest 18% use TikTok very frequently.

With regard to the frequency of covering hate, speech on TikTok the respondents express their idea that in most cases, that is, 72.5 % do not think there is frequency of coverage. However, no insignificant number of respondents, 27.5% of them think that there is frequency of coverage hate speech on TikTok.

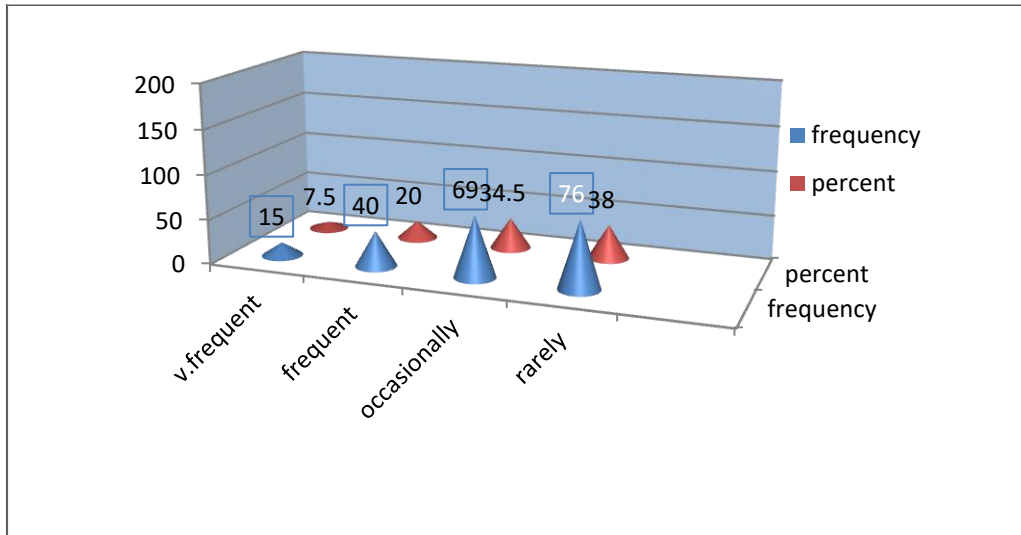
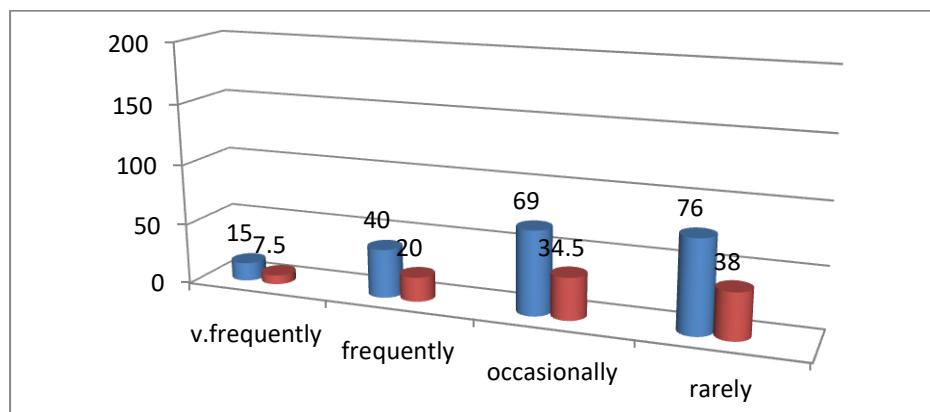


Figure ...indicates that 38 % of respondents saw hate speech on TIKTOK rarely whereas 34.5% respondents saw hate speech on TikTok occasionally. on the other hand, 20% of respondents saw hate speech on TikTok frequently, and 7.5 % of the respondents saw hate speech on TikTok very frequently.

## 6. How often does the respondent see ethnic-based hate speech on TikTok



According to figure 6. respondents who saw ethnic based hate speech on TikTok rarely are 47.5%. On the other hand, respondents who saw ethnic based hate speech on TikTok occasionally are 25% .respondents who saw hate speech on TikTok frequently are 19.5 and the least respondents who saw ethnic based hate speech very frequently on TikTok are 8%.

Respondents were also asked how often they saw religious based hate speech on TikTok. Most of them replied that they never saw such contents as 73.5 % agree as they rarely saw or occasionally saw such contents. That means, there are, however, instances in which such religious hate speech contents are sometimes observed as 26.5% of them expressed that they saw very frequently or frequently.

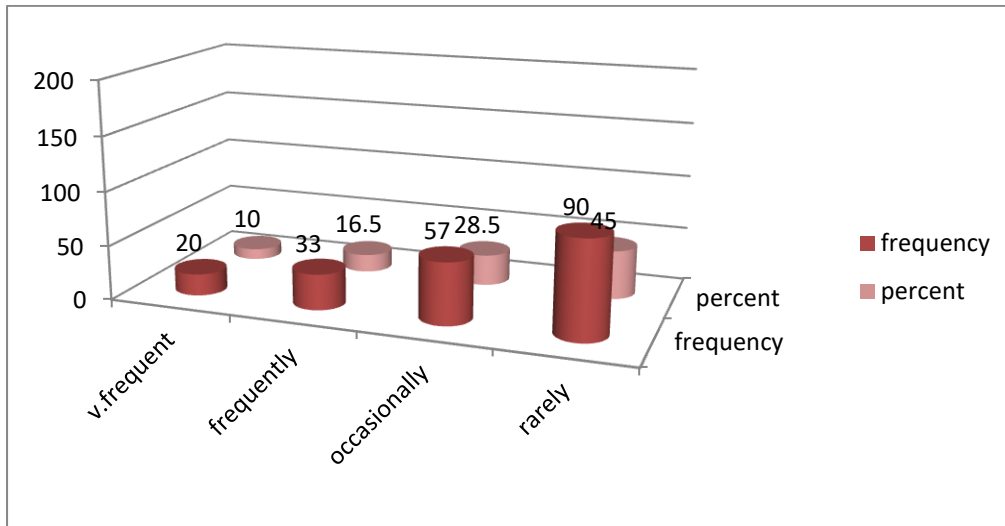
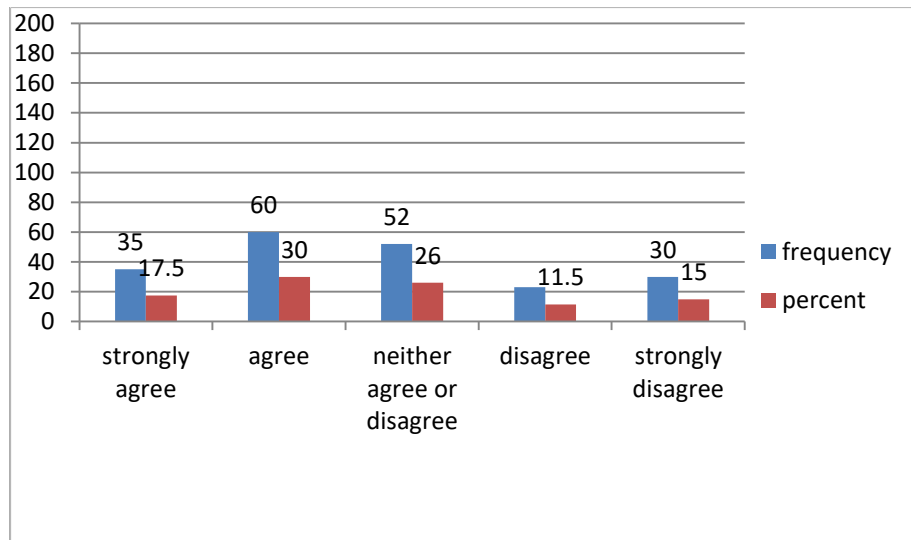


Figure 7 demonstrates respondents who see religion-based hate speech on TikTok

In this graphic 45% of respondents, saw religious hate speech on TikTok rarely and 28.5 percentage of respondent see religion-based hate speech occasionally. However, 16.5% of respondents saw religion-based hate speech frequently. In addition, 10% of respondents see religion-based hate speech on TikTok very frequently.

#### 4.4.5 Influences of TikTok in Disseminating Hate Speech

Questionnaire respondents were asked to reflect their emotions towards hate speech on TikTok platforms. Thus, figure 8 indicate that hate speech on TikTok can make the respondents feel angry or fierce toward the characters in the video.

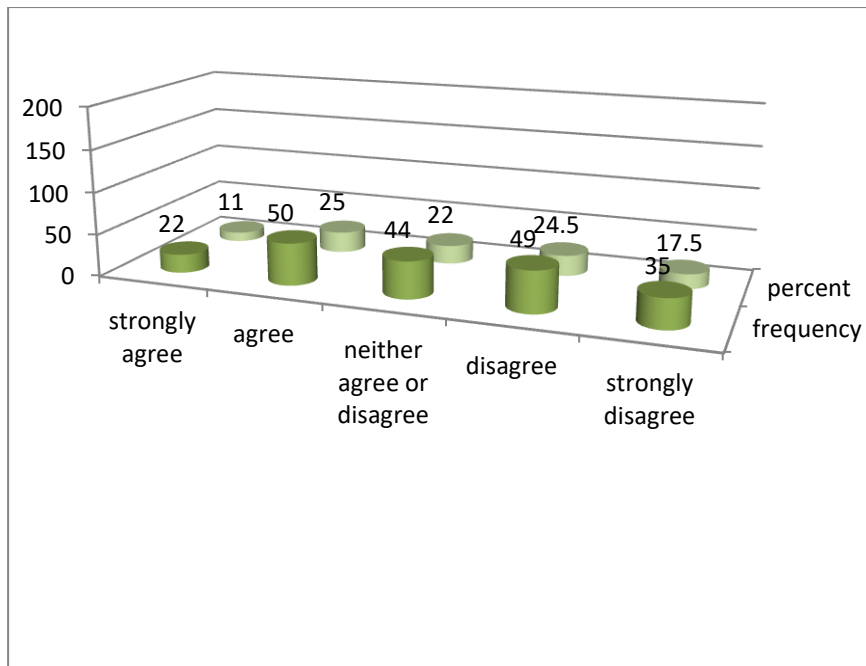


**Figure 8: Hate speech on TikTok can make the respondents feel angry or fierce**

As to the respondents, 30% or majority of respondents agree that hate speech TikTok video make them feel angry or fierce toward the characters in the video. In addition, 26% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that the video make them feel emotional. Still, 17.5% of respondents strongly agree that hate speech on TikTok make them feel angry or fierce toward the video. 15 percentage of the respondents strongly disagree that hate speech TikTok video make them feel angry.

In regards to whether hate speech contents lead the TikTok users/respondents to depression/stress, respondents were asked to reply about it.

Figure 9 demonstrates below how much hate speech content led the respondents to depression or stress. Thus, 25% of respondents agree that hate speech on TikTok leads them to stress and depression, whereas 24.5% of the respondents disagree that hate speech on TikTok makes them be stressed and depressed. Nonetheless, 22% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree that hate speech on TikTok leads them to stress and depression, and 17.5 respondents strongly disagree that hate speech on TikTok leads them to depression and stress. In addition, 11% of them strongly agree that hate speech on TikTok lead them to stress and depression.



Moreover, respondents were asked to answer the question whether hate speech on TikTok make respondents hate other ethnic groups. 36% of them do agree with this idea whereas 52% of them do not agree with the idea. Figure 10 shows that hate speech on TikTok make respondents hate other ethnic groups.

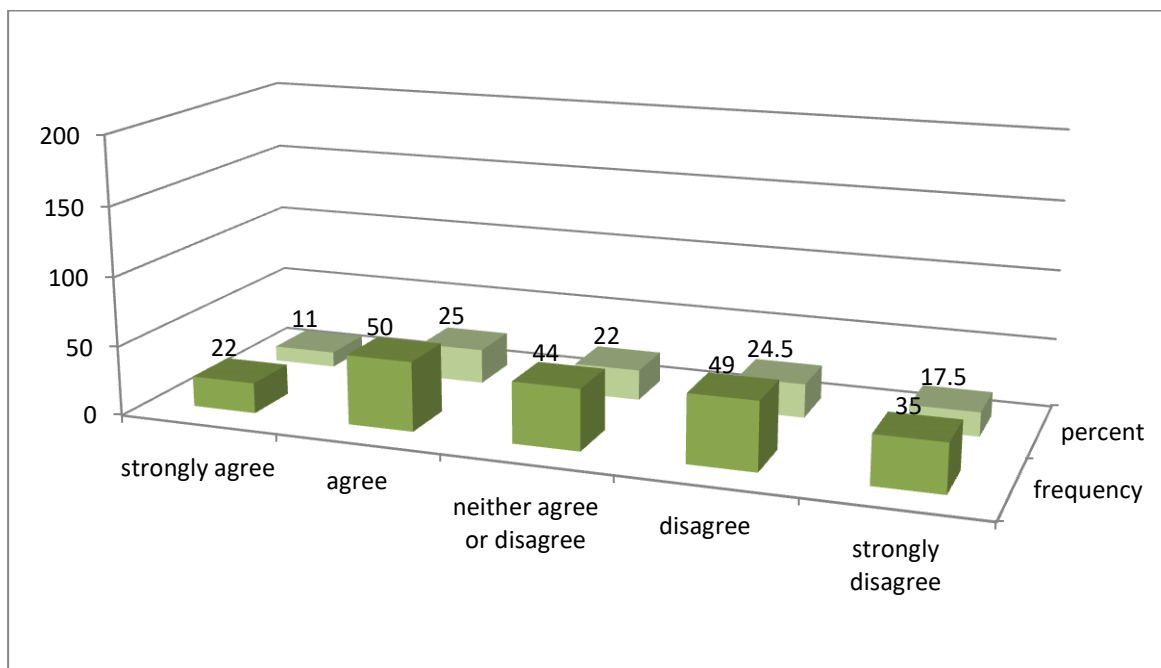


Figure 10 -hate speech on TikTok make respondents hate other ethnic groups

From the selected TikTok users, 32% of the respondents strongly disagree that hate speech on TikTok makes hate other ethnic groups. Whereas 25.5% of users disagree that hate speech on TikTok make hate other ethnic groups. 17.5% of users neither agree or disagree that hate speech on TikTok make other ethnic groups hate, 16.5% of users agree that hate speech on TikTok make other ethnic group hate. Moreover, 8.5% of the respondents strongly agree that hate speech on TikTok hate other ethnic groups.

The effect of social media has been quite noticeable as some other use social media messages and takes positive or negative actions. Whether the TikTok users come to hate other religious people based on the information they obtain from TikTok is also become part of the study questions to identify whether TikTok is intensifying or not religious tensions or differences. Whether hate speech on TikTok make hate other religions is considered in the following figure.

Figure 11 hate speech on TikTok makes hate other religions

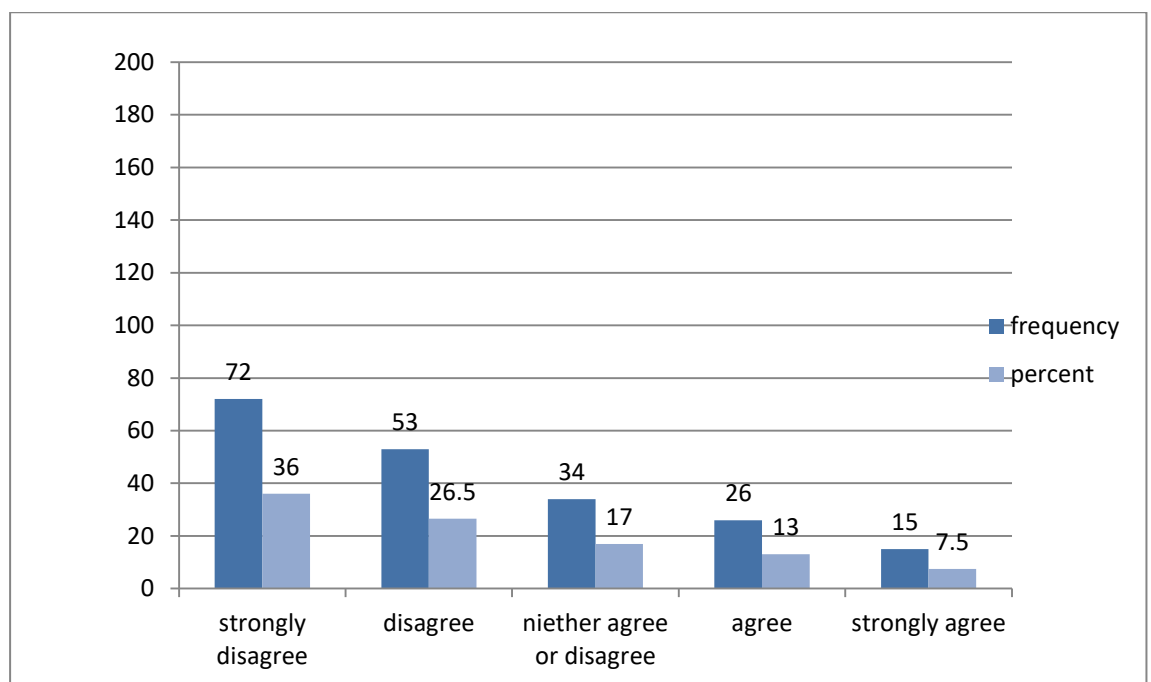


Figure 11 demonstrates about respondents or TikTok users what they say about hate speech on TikTok make hate other religions. 36% of respondents strongly disagree that hate speech on TikTok make them hate other religions or religious persons, whereas 26.5 percentages of respondents disagree that hate speech on TikTok make other religions hate. Then 17% of respondents neither agree nor disagree that hate speech on TikTok make hate other religions hate. 13percentage of respondents agree that hate speech on TikTok make hate other religions

hate. Moreover, 7.5% of respondents strongly agree that hate speech on TikTok make hate other religions hate.

#### 4.4.6. The Effects of TikTok

As the questionnaire was prepared for respondents, they were asked to answer whether TikTok hate speech contents have affected them psychologically. Figure 12 below indicates that how much TikTok hate speech affected the respondents/TikTok users psychologically.

26% of respondents strongly disagree that hate speech on TikTok affected them psychollogically. 25% of respondents disagree that hate speech on TikTok affected psychologically. 26% of respondents neither agree or disagree that hate speech on TikTok affected psychologically. 14.5% of respondents agree that hate speech on TikTok affected psychologically. In addition, 8.5% of respondents strongly agree that hate speech on TikTok affected psychologically.

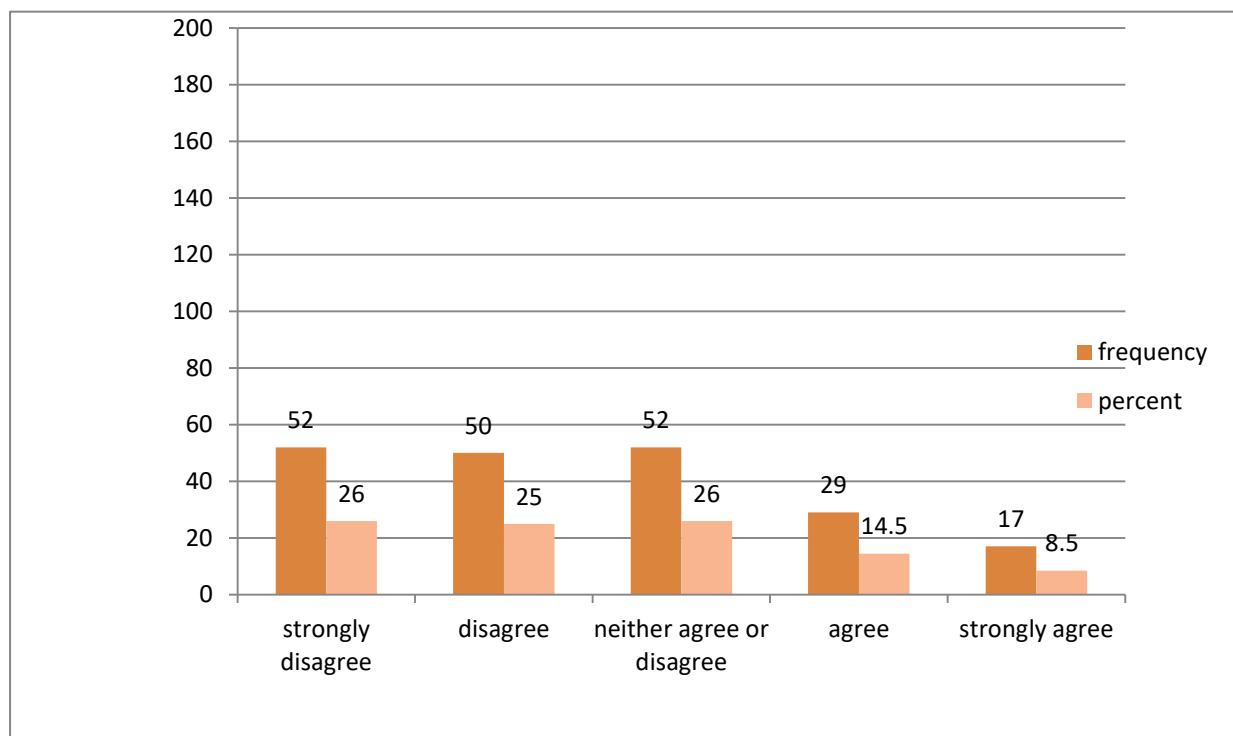
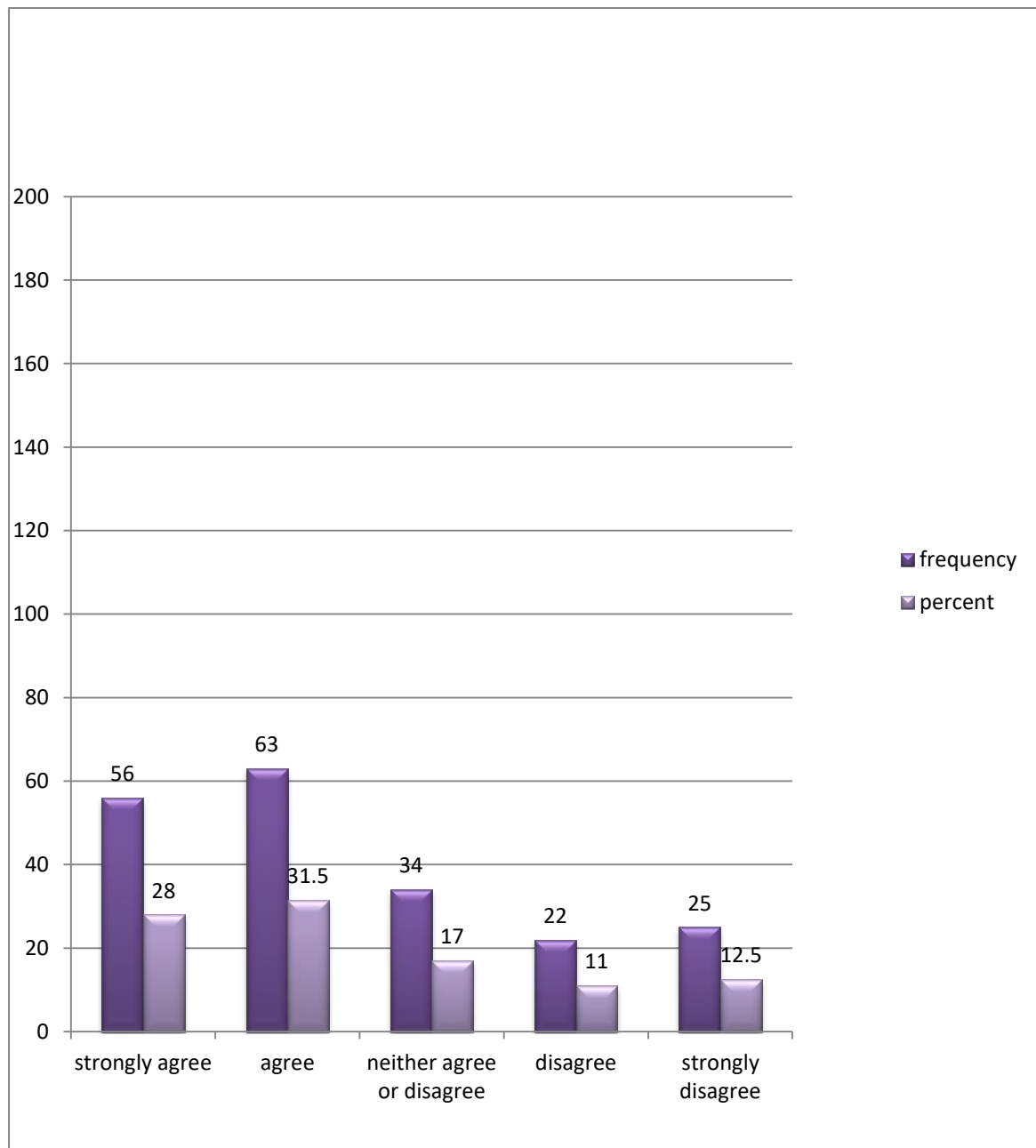


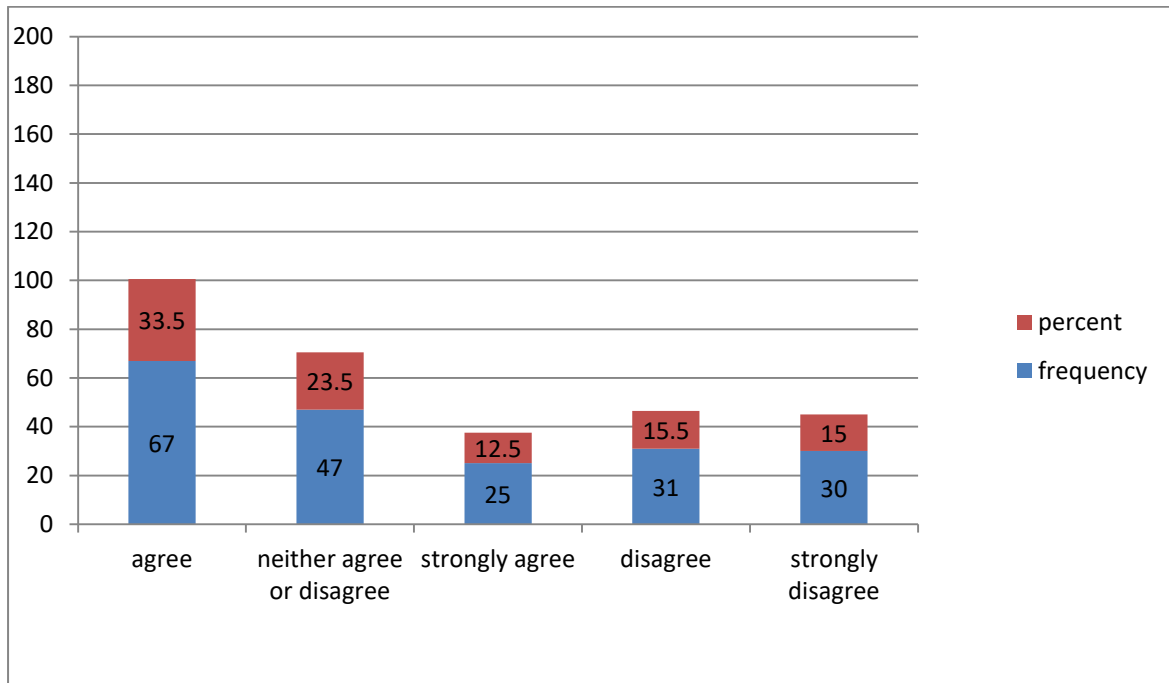
Figure 12. Psychological Effects of TikTok hate speech on respondents

### 13. I have seen people affected by TikTok hate speech

Figure 13 shows that 31.5% of respondents agree that they have seen people affected by TikTok hate speech. 28% of respondents strongly agree that people are affected by TikTok hate speech. 17% of respondents neither agree nor disagree that other people are affected by TikTok hate speech. 11% of respondents disagree that they have seen people affected by TikTok hate speech. Moreover, 12.5 respondents strongly disagree that people are affected by TikTok video.

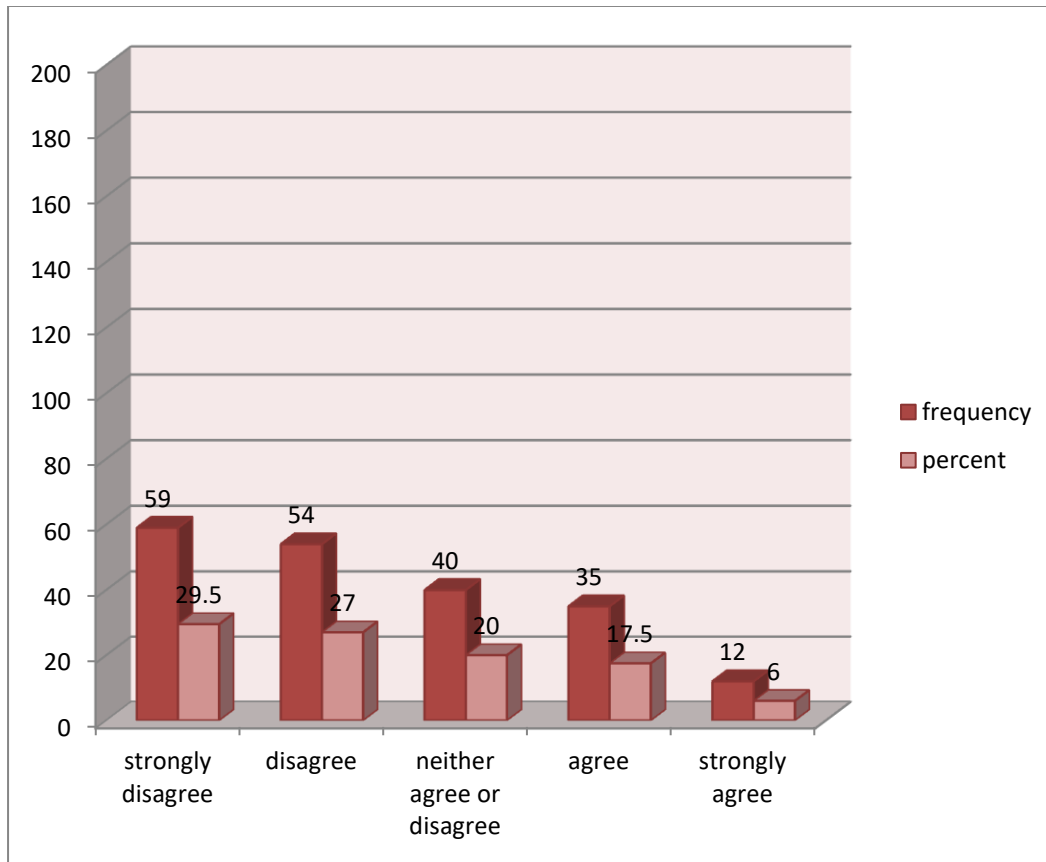


#### 14. Hate speech on TikTok has led me to argument



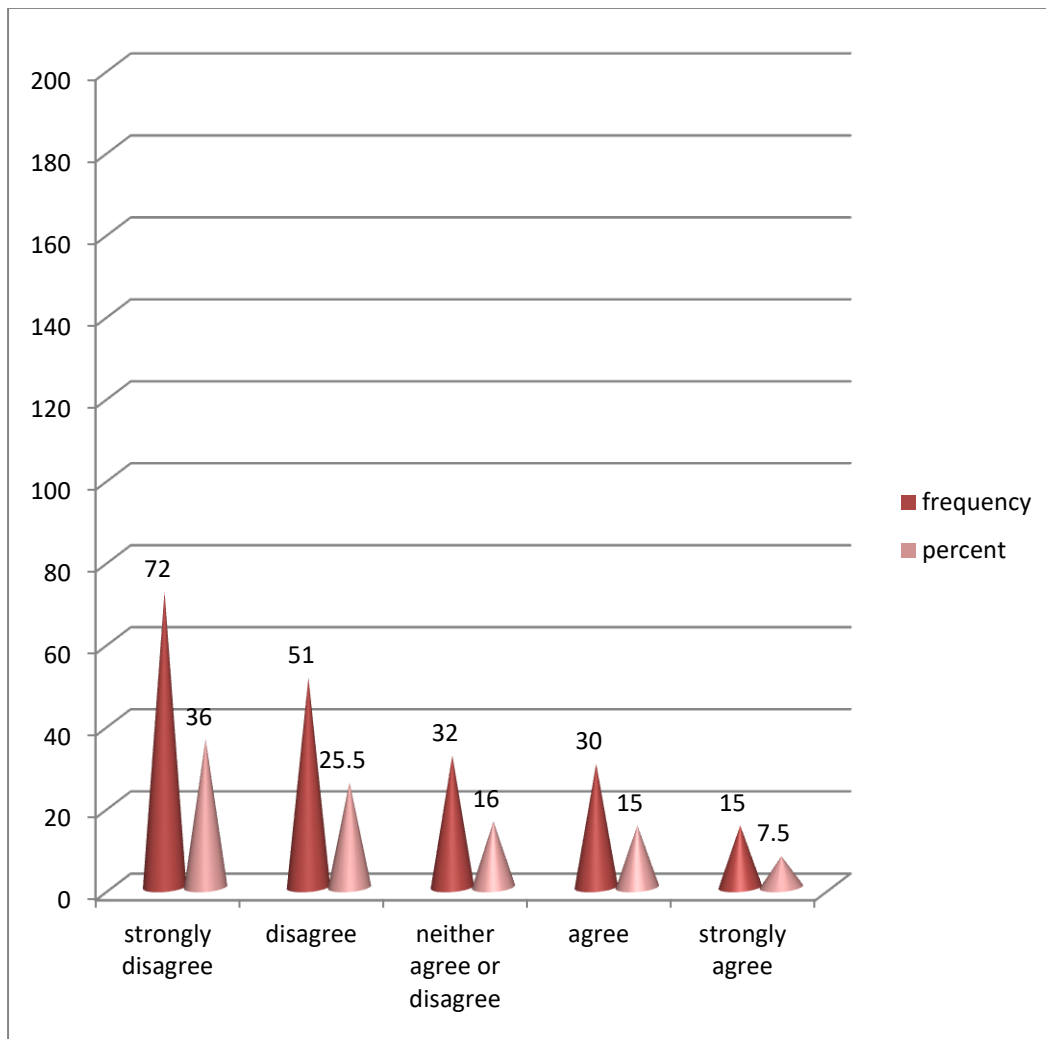
**Figure 14.** demonstrates that 33.5% of respondents agree that hate speech on TikTok has led them to argument. 23.5% of respondents neither agree or disagree that hate speech on TikTok led them to argument. 15.5% of respondents disagree that TikTok has led them to argument. 15% of respondents strongly disagree that hate speech on TikTok has led them to argument. In addition, 12.5 respondents strongly agree that hate speech on TikTok led them to argument.

### 15. Hate speech on TikTok has led me to conflict with my friends



**Figure 15** shows that 29.5% of respondents strongly disagree that hate speech on TikTok led them conflict with their friends. 27% of respondents disagree about hate speech on TikTok has led them conflict with their friends. 20% of respondents has led them to conflict with friends. 17.5% of respondents agree that hate speech on TikTok led them conflict with their friends. In addition, 6% of respondents strongly agree that hate speech on TikTok led them conflict with their friends.

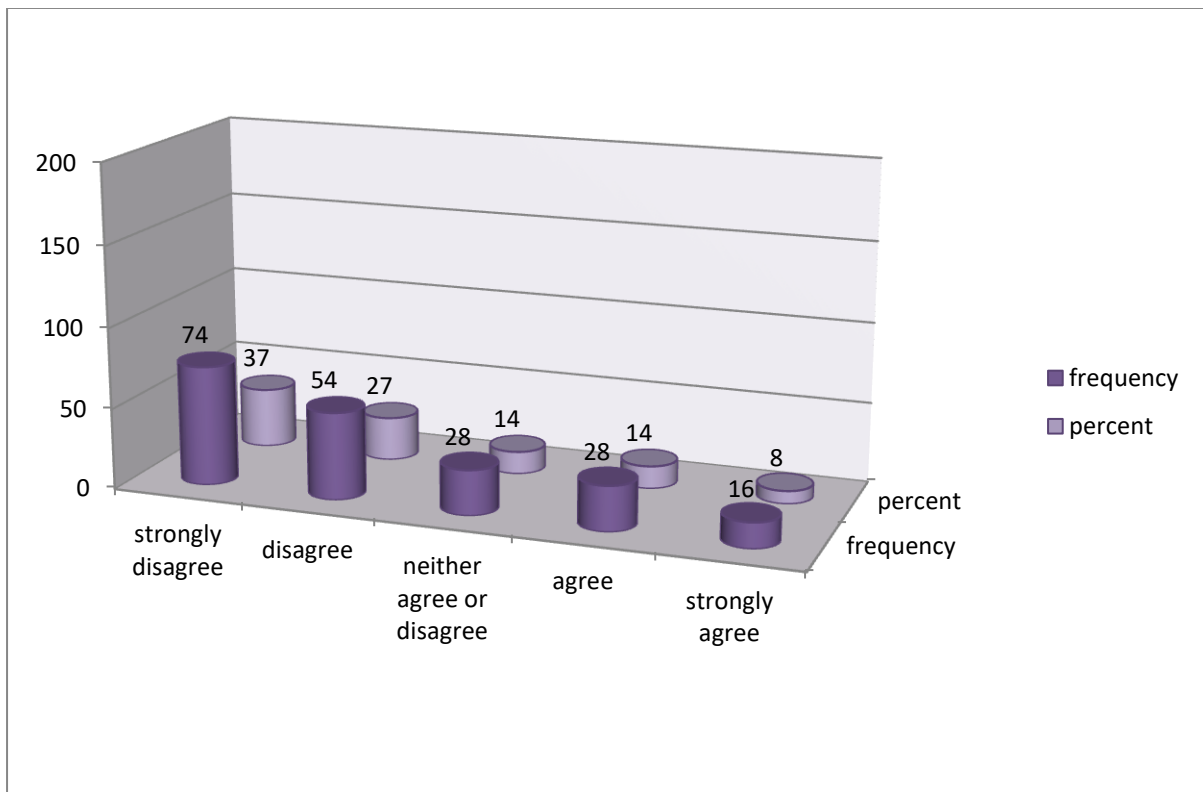
## 16. Hate speech on TikTok has affected my academic status.



**Figure 16 shows respondents hate speech on TikTok has affected their academic status**

36% of respondents strongly disagree that hate speech on TikTok has affected their academic status. 25.5% of disagree that hate speech on TikTok affected their academic status. 16% of respondents neither agree nor disagree that hate speech on TikTok affected their academic status. 15% of respondents agree that hate speech on TikTok affected their academic status. 7.5% of respondents strongly agree that hate speech on TikTok affected their academic status.

### 17. I am addicted to TikTok messages.



**Figure 17** shows that 37% of respondents strongly disagree that they are addicted to TikTok messages. 27% of respondents disagree that they are addicted to TikTok messages. 14% of respondents neither agree or disagree that they are addicted to TikTok messages. 14% of respondents agree that they are addicted to TikTok messages. In addition, 8% of respondents strongly agree that they are addicted to TikTok messages.

#### 4.5.Hate speech circulation

The respondents' answers by whom hate speech is circulated on TikTok

By famous people	frequency	Percent
Infrequently	65	32.5%
Occasionally	65	32.5%
Frequently	47	23.5%
Very frequently	23	11.5%

By known individual	frequency	Percent
Infrequently	42	21%
Occasionally	70	35%
Frequently	65	32.5%
Very frequently	23	11.5%

By unknown individual	frequency	percent
Infrequently	31	15.5%
Occasionally	44	22%
Frequently	60	30%
Very frequently	65	32.5%

By known groups	frequency	Percent
Infrequently	44	22%
Occasionally	61	30.5%
Frequently	67	33.5%
Very frequently	28	14 %

My friends	Frequency	Percent
Infrequently	153	76.5%
Occasionally	23	11.5%

<b>By unknown groups</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Infrequently	41	20.5%
Occasionally	52	26%
Frequently	59	29.5%

Frequently	16	8%
Very frequently	8	4%

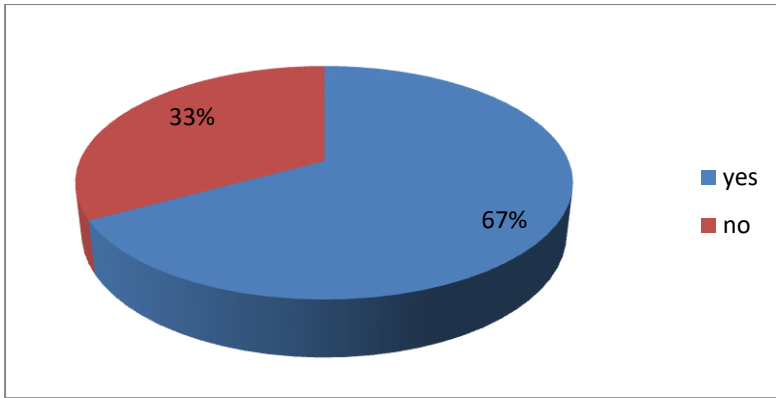
Table 21 indicates the respondents' answer by whom hate speech on TikTok is circulated. The respondents answered hate speech on TikTok is circulated infrequently by their friends 76.5%, by famous people 32.5%, by known groups 22%, by unknown groups 20.5%, by known individual 21% and by unknown individuals 15.5%.

Then respondents answered hate speech circulated on TikTok circulated frequently by known groups 33.5% and very frequently 14%. By unknown individuals 32.5% very frequently and 30% frequently. By unknown groups 29.5% frequently and 24% very frequently. Then by famous people 23.5% frequently and 11.5% very frequently. In addition, by their friend 8% frequently and 4% very frequently.

Respondents answered hate speech circulated on TikTok circulated occasionally by known individual is 35%, by famous people 32.5%, by known groups 30.5%. By unknown groups 26% and by their friends 11.5%.

### **18. Do you read comments on TikTok?**

Figure 18 demonstrates the respondents who read comments on TikTok takes majority, which is 67% and those who do not read comments on TikTok, are 33%.



**19. The comments also spread hate speech**

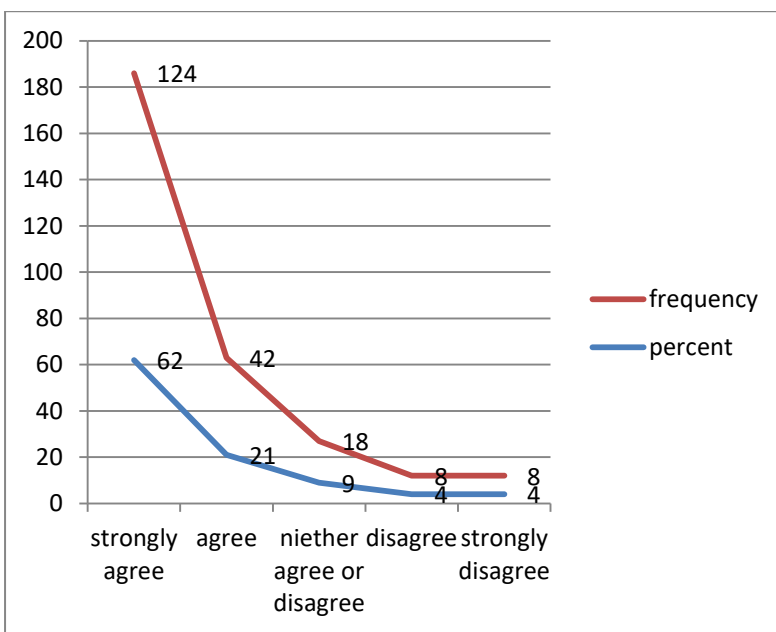


Figure 19 indicates that 62% of respondents strongly agree that comments on TikTok spread hate speech. 21% of them agree that comments on TikTok spread hate speech and 9% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree. Then 4% of respondents strongly disagree and disagree that comments on TikTok spread hate speech.

## 20. The comments counter hate speech

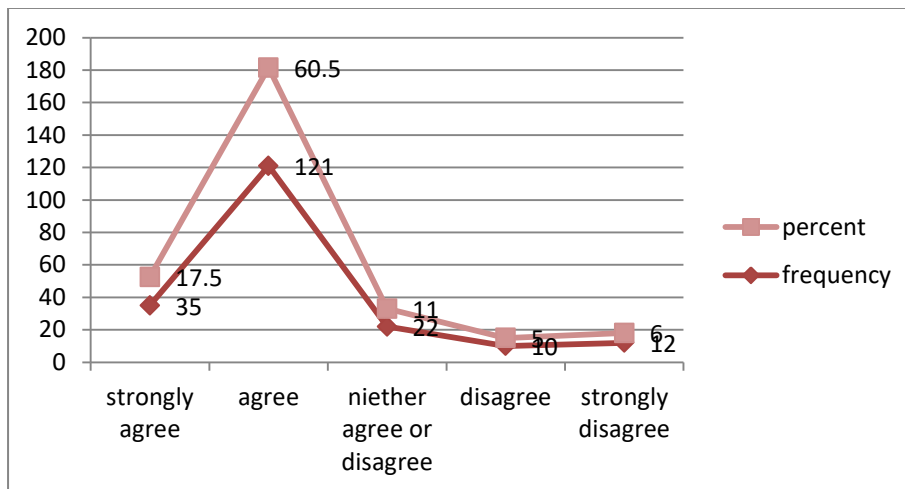


Figure 20 demonstrates 60.5% of respondents agree that comments on TikTok counter hate speech. 17.5 percentage of respondents strongly agree, 11% of respondents neither agree nor disagree that hate comments on TikTok counter hate speech. In addition, 6% and 4% of respondents disagree and strongly disagree that comments on TikTok counter hate speech.

### 4.6. Interview data analysis

#### 1. TikTok usage among university students in Ethiopia,

Almost all sources concur that students commonly use TikTok. Informer 1 agrees that more individuals are using social media and TikTok, especially young people, and students, especially as Wi-Fi connections grow; middle school is a hotbed of TikTok usage. TikTok is mostly utilized by young people since it provides entertaining material and has a wide user base. *"I understand that TikTok is primarily a platform for young students," informant 8 remarked. Due to their extensive awareness of social media and information, students rely heavily on TikTok. The primary causes are: TikTok is a platform for promoting content, developing talent, and commercializing it. Second, TikTok was the first platform for alternative business and trade.*

*Students are therefore the greatest consumers of the technology in terms of usability. Students also utilise their talents to value what they learn in class, progress education, entertain, and influence policy when it comes to creating information. I believe that TikTok is used by most pupils. I have seen that TikTok tempts them to various locations.*

## **2. Do you think that using TikTok affects student learning?**

They are slightly impacted by their time there, according to informant #4, and it has an impact on their study time. In particular, when they visit the library in the morning, we saw that they are occupied with it for a considerable amount of time. When you examine TikTok's features, you'll see that its brief, transitory videos and hastily written postings cause you to perceive things differently. Additionally, students spend less time on TikTok than they do in other social settings.

*"I see that it influences the student's learning activity, sometimes it is addictive, but it also depends on the student's personality," said the researcher. This, in my opinion, will significantly affect how they are educated. Additionally, it is challenging for teachers as well as pupils. 4th Informant*

## **3. Do you think hate speech is widespread on TikTok?**

Most said hate speech was rampant on Tiktok. For example, informant 7 says, *"I don't think it's any more common than other social media; it depends on the usage. But since TikTok is a short video, it's easy to spread hate speech."* Since most young people use it and see viral videos circulating on TikTok, it can be very widespread, but that depends on the user. Thanks to modern technology, Facebook has spread hate speech and spread hate in different situations, regardless of the impact it has on people, and TikTok has become a dangerous platform for the dissemination of issues that lead to the degradation of ethnic groups, religions and different ones Ways that endanger people can be It is an advanced voice transmission platform.

*"I don't think hate speech is widespread on TikTok; still growing. When it comes to YouTube and other social media platforms, TikTok is constantly evolving. However, it appears to be a threat in the future. Informant 7.*

## **4. Do you think TikTok is responsible for hate speech in Ethiopia?**

Since you can cut the video you want and download it from YouTube, I don't believe TikTok is to blame. There are occasionally listeners who stop by, sure, but most individuals stay to observe what is being said before acting as though they immediately get it. Hate speech has an impact on all parties. Don't forget that when hate speech is condemned in a message someone hears on a platform, that person is also condemned. You must take action and fulfil

your obligations since TikTok does not have moderators in our nation who know our language. did not attempt to use technology to solve issues.

### **5. What type of hate speech do you think is the most common on TikTok?**

According to Informant 1, it might be either faith or religion, depending on the season. The roots of modernity may be found in people's ignorance of history, social class differences, and ruling classes' wagers against people abusing history. Selfishness, which results from political ideologies and views that are just for me, is the main driver of hate speech in today's society.

### **6. What factors do you think trigger hate speech?**

The majority of respondents said that this is mostly due to the political climate right now. The trouble with religion is that TikTok seems to be the place to discuss it. Hate speech can be caused by a variety of factors, including payment. However, politics or business might be the real problem. The issue, in my opinion, is people's attitudes, particularly those who have political allegiances.

### **7. How do you rate the severity of hate speech on TikTok?**

On TikTok, several kinds of content are streamed. Numerous hate speech concerns affect universities, some of which have recently intensified into hate crimes and violent acts. Hatred is a serious issue. It has a significant influence, but I don't believe the kids are negatively affected because the majority of them use it for enjoyment. Informant 10 reported: TikTok messages are serious; posting them as jokes causes major problems.

### **8. Do you think hate speech on TikTok affects students?**

On TikTok, several kinds of content are streamed. Hate speech is a major issue at universities, and some of these issues have gotten worse in the previous three to two years, leading to hate crimes and violent acts. Hatred is a serious issue. It has a significant influence, but I don't believe the kids are negatively affected because the majority of them use it for enjoyment. Informant 10 reported: The TikTok message is serious; a phoney message creates a significant issue. Due to the wide range of racial and ethnic origins among university students, there may be conflicts and inconsistencies in how hate speech and conflict-instigating messages are spread. causes an intellectual disagreement. What does artificial intelligence do, for instance? If you enjoy something and view it repeatedly, it considers the

time and keeps showing you the same videos. Thus, it is clear that our attitude is polarised in this regard, resulting in tension and dread.

**9. What do you think are the main problems university students face because of hate speech?**

This technology cannot be stopped since it has no boundaries and cannot be controlled. Conflict resolution, criminality, and students' social responsibilities can all contribute to insecurity, risk, and poor performance.

**10. Do you think there should be a law to control hate speech on TikTok?**

On social media and the internet, there is legislation that addresses fake news and hate speech. Media outlets and people that propagate misinformation and hate speech ought to be held accountable around 2021. You can see that it can be provided in line with TikTok and the current legal framework; it may be published individually for TikTok. Regulating the use of TikTok to propagate hate speech online is necessary. The material on TikTok has to be monitored, just like on other social media sites.

**4.7. Discussions of findings**

**1. Severity of Online Hate Speech among Ethiopians**

Nearly every respondent who filled out the surveys on hate speech claimed to experience identical effects in three stages: feeling (affect), thinking (cognition), and acting (behaviour) in regard to other traumatic occurrences. Additionally, those who have experienced hate speech exhibit psychological signs like PTSD, such as discomfort, anxiety, agitation, nightmares, and persistent thoughts of intimidation and denigration.

Some earlier research has revealed that minority groups at universities may experience stress and reduced self-esteem, even if they are not directly impacted by prejudice, discrimination, intolerance, hostility, and conditions that impede a student's social and academic integration. Events are the facts gathered from the surveys assured that online hate presents itself mostly in short videos that are appealing and not dull, contextual, frequent and intense, and created and uploaded by personalities. The study also discovered that because students mostly utilise these platforms for leisure and amusement rather than for academic goals, the negative consequences are more prominent. Even worse, it may propagate violent content that incites

hatred with ease. Mathew (2019) discovers that hostile UGC spreads more quickly and widely, reaching a substantially wider audience.

### **What are the main problems people face because of hate speech?**

The impact of hate speech on people's emotions is the biggest issue, according to data gathered via questionnaires. The interviewer reports that the majority of participants concur that watching hate speech videos on TikTok may aggravate them or the characters in the videos. The researcher's data analysis in Figure 9 supports this as well. The majority of responders concur that users' melancholy and stress are exacerbated by hostile TikTok material. The majority of responders concur, as shown in Figure 14, that a hate video on TikTok caused fighting. Researchers claim that the primary issue facing students at Addis Ababa University as a result of hate speech videos on TikTok is that it stirs up strong emotions in them, causes melancholy and tension, and results in conflicts. All of the interview data, therefore, support that having experienced hatred causes emotional discomfort, including feelings of rage, guilt, and fear. Additionally, victims frequently have mental health problems such as despair, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal thoughts and actions.

### **In what areas does hate speech on TikTok occur in Ethiopia?**

In Ethiopia, TikTok, which has high active users, is growing as a platform that encourages unrestrained violence, putting many people's lives in jeopardy. This may not come as a surprise in today's environment, where hate speech and false information thrive on social media. However, certain adjustments have been made recently as a result of pressure from international governments and organizations battling misinformation. Facebook has made several changes in the case of Ethiopia over the past two years, including the deployment of more than three dozen moderators to monitor activity in the nation and take action against accounts that disseminate hate speech, fake news, and propaganda. Although Twitter has improved, it doesn't necessarily follow that there aren't still any holes.

However, little has been done to stop the transmission of false information and hate speech on TikTok and Telegram, which are considerably worse for distributing graphic content without notice. TikTok is also well-liked by individuals who wish to disseminate violent pictures and bogus news, whether on purpose or accidentally. Although its primary function

is entertainment, the increasingly popular live chat functionality is sometimes utilised by violent people or organisations to further their political or personal agendas.

### **What are the main causes of hate speech on TikTok?**

TikTok is popular with those who seek to promote violent imagery and bogus news, either purposefully or unintentionally, according to respondents. The majority of respondents said that this is mostly due to the political climate right now. The issue with religion is that it seems to be in season on TikTok. Several things might cause someone to utter hate speech, such as being paid to do so. Politics, ethnicity, and religion, however, maybe the real problem. Another report claimed that a trigger might also be a person's mindset. Hate speech on TikTok refers to actual or imagined "identity factors" of a person or group, such as "religion, ethnicity, national origin, race, colour, ancestry, gender," as well as traits like language, economic or social origin, disability, state of health, sexual orientation, and many more. Ethnicity and religion, however, can play a significant role in Ethiopia.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The major goal of this study was to ascertain how social media affects users, particularly about TikTok's ability to disseminate hate speech. Four major research questions were developed to direct the process, and approaches were chosen to accomplish the stated objective. The required data and information were gathered in a mixed-methods manner in compliance with the identified study topics using questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The analysis and interpretation will be carried out by the given aims as soon as enough data are available.

#### 5.1 Conclusion

The results of the study have undoubtedly demonstrated that students commonly use TikTok, as indicated by the data from the questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Since TikTok is now the most well-known platform, it is also highly-liked by individuals who wish to purposefully or inadvertently distribute false information as well as violent pictures. Although it is mostly utilised for amusement and business, violent individuals or groups sometimes use the live chat feature to achieve their political or personal interests. The majority of students at Addis Ababa University who use TikTok are between the ages of 20 and 30. It may be presumed that the majority of the students are young because they are chosen from the first year. But graduates from universities also took part. Respondents who have encountered hate speech on TikTok are quite uncommon, though. Respondents who have observed incitement to racism or another race are likewise uncommon. According to survey results, hate speech on TikTok makes people furious or resentful of the character, and the content depresses and stresses out users. They got into disputes because of the hate speech on TikTok. The majority of respondents also concur that they have witnessed people who have been impacted by a TikTok video. Respondents concur that hate speech is shared and countered via comments on TikTok. The interview claims that TikTok is a platform for short videos where hate speech can be distributed easily. It may be utilized widely because the majority of young people use it and watch viral videos on TikTok, but it depends on the individual. Since Facebook spreads hatred in various contexts, hate speech has become more widespread thanks to contemporary technologies. Regardless of the effects on individuals, Facebook has developed into a risky medium for the dissemination of information that may be used to degrade individuals, organizations, or faiths. This speech communication platform is highly advanced. Additionally, virtually all respondents concur that the majority of hate

speech on TikTok in Ethiopia is motivated by racial and religious motives rather than political ones.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The fact of hate speech among Ethiopians must be acknowledged by every individual who is involved. In addition to keeping an eye out for hate speech by Ethiopians, governments, the media, lawmakers, activists, religious leaders, and morally upright educators should work to lessen hate speech and foster civil and democratic discourse among individuals. TikTok is a new platform, and since the films are brief and simple to use, it is very easy for it to influence people, especially young people. Videos are accessible due to the fact that even users with small followings may access tens, hundreds, or even thousands of times more people than their Facebook friends. Unverified millions of individuals harmed by false information propagating on social media, particularly through TikTok. Numerous children are dying at the same time in the area. Therefore, based on the findings of scientific research, the current administration should pay attention to the character of political culture and adopt the required corrective steps. In order to reduce the likelihood of rumours and false information spreading, the government should also make a commitment to provide timely and accurate information on domestic issues. Contrary to platforms like TikTok, organisations, journalists, artists, and civil society, who must exert every effort to halt misinformation before the situation spirals out of hand, the battle against disinformation must be reinforced as technology advances. To recognise the various media kinds and comprehend the information they convey, more media literacy and education effort is required. To do this, students must be critical readers who approach the media with the intention of not only consuming it but also challenging ideas and asking why. assisting kids in developing the ability to think creatively, produce ideas in the face of uncertainty and novelty, and critically evaluate other viewpoints. Positive and critical thinking are emphasised in media literacy, which aids this.

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## Appendices

### SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH)

**Personal Information:** 1. What is your gender? A. Female B. Male

2. What is your age: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your current status? A. Freshman B. Senior C. GC

#### Exposure to hate speech

No.	Items	I	O	F	VF
1	How often do you use TikTok?				
2	How often do you see hate speech on TikTok?				
3	How often do you see ethnic-based hate speech on TikTok?				
4	How often do you see religion-based hate speech on TikTok?				

I- Infrequently, O-Occasionally, F-Frequently, VF-Very frequently

#### Influences from hate speech

	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	
1	Hate speech on TikTok can make me feel angry or fierce toward the characters in the video.						
2	Does hate speech content lead me to depression &/or stress?						
3	Does hate speech on TikTok make me hate other ethnic groups?						
4	Does hate speech on TikTok make me hate other religions?						
5	TikTok's hate speech affected me						
6	I have seen people affected by TikTok's hate speech						
7	Hate speech on TikTok lead me to the argument						
8	Hate speech on TikTok lead me to conflict with my friends						

9	Hate speech on TikTok affected my academic status						
10	I am addicted to hate messages on TikTok						

SA- Strongly agree, A- Agree, N- Neither agree nor disagree, D- Disagree, SD- Strongly disagree

**Other questions**

1. By whom hate speech is circulated on TikTok?

Hate speeches	Infrequently	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently
By famous people				
By known individuals				
By unknown individuals				
By known groups				
By unknown groups				
My friends				

2. Do you read comments on TikTok? A. Yes B. No

3. If your answer to Q2 is yes fill in the table below.

	The Comments	SA	A	N	D	SD	
A	The comments also spread hate speech						
B	The comments do not spread hate speech						

4. Have you ever been seriously affected by hate speech on TikTok? If yes, explain more.
5. Have you ever seen another person being affected by hate speech on TikTok? If yes, explain more.

**Interview Questions**

1. How do you express TikTok usage among university students in Ethiopia
2. How do you express hate speech?
3. Do you think hate speech is prevalent on TikTok?
4. Do you believe that TikTok is responsible for hate speech in Ethiopia?
5. Which type of hate speech do you think is mostly circulated on TikTok?
6. What do you think are the triggering factors of hate speech?
7. How do you express the severity of hate speech on TikTok?

8. do you believe that university students are affected by hate speech on TikTok?
9. What do you think are the major problems that university students experience as a result of hate speech?
10. Do you think there should be a law that controls hate speech on TikTok?

**List of selected professional's interview**

<b>No</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Profession/activity</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
1	Mohammed Edris	General director	Ethiopia media authority
2	Dr Elias worku	Academician	Addis Ababa university
3	Ashenafi Endale	Journalist	Ethiopia broadcasting corporation.
4	Haftom G/silasse	Academician	Haromaya university
5	Gira kinfu	Journalist	Ethiopia media authority
6	Seife haile	Postgraduate student	Addis Ababa university
7	Mahlet Beyene	Postgraduate student	Jimma university
8	Frehiwot guale	Undergraduate student	Addis Ababa university
9	Beletu haile	Postgraduate student	Addis Ababa university
10	Kaleab Beyene	Undergraduate student	Addis Ababa university