













THE INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION ON SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION



20TH AUGUST 2025

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION, DRIVING INNOVATION AND ADVANCING LIFELONG LEARNING FOR EMPOWERED WORLD

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION ON SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION 2025

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Phone: 06-4832100

E-mail:fid@uitm.edu.my

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TEACHING FOR TOMORROW: TRANSFORMING ASSESSMENT FOR SUSTAINABILITY Nooraslinda Abdul Aris*, Normahiran Yatim & Siti Syaqilah Hambali, N	452 Iorli Ali
THE PEEL PATHWAY: A LEARNING INNOVATION FOR SMARTER LEARNING AND BETTER GRADES Jennifah Nordin*, Nur Afisha Yusuf, Chai Shin Yi, Ivy Jugah & Sarehan	
THE POTENTIAL FLOW INTERACTIVE TEACHING TOOL (PFITT) Azli Abd Razak*, Schufee Amani Suhaime and Fauziah Jerai@Junaidi	462
THE USE OF CLASSPOINT FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING COMPUTER AND INFORMATION PROCESSING Nur Idawati Md Enzai*, Siti Aishah Che Kar, Norhayati Ahmad & Siti Sa	468 Ira Rais
THREADING MEMORYSCAPES: MENTAL MAPPING AND CULTURAL STORYTELLING THROUGH STRING, SPACE & PLACE Nadiyanti Mat Nayan*, Suriati Ahmad, Norasikin Hassan, Noralya Balq Guntur & Arsyad Jazli Suhazeli	472 is Syed
TIKTOK'S ROLE IN BOOSTING MOTIVATION TO LEARN ARABIC AMONG MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS Professor Ts Dr. Muhammad Sabri bin Sahrir, Nurul Ain Binti Usman, Huhammad Sharifuddin, Fatin Nasuha Binti Mohd Shamsul & Nurfitra Binti Nor Azman	Huda Binti
TRADEU: BRIDGING THEORY AND THE MARKET WITH REAL-TIME FINANCIAL LEARNING Mas Azra Zakirah Mohd Azahari, Najwa Nadhirah Mohd Nor Azman, No Amir, Nur Madihah Azuan & Rohaiza Kamis*	479 uramera
VARKonstruct: INNOVATING SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION IN CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY THROUGH ADAPTIVE E-LEARNING Siti Nur Aishah Mohd Noor*& Mohd Khairul Amri Ramly	483

STA BOOST: AN INNOVATIVE DIGITAL SOLUTION TO ENHANCE STUDENT 442 **ENGAGEMENT IN INTRODUCTION TO STATISTICS**

Mohamad Nurshahnazim Muhammad Nur Ismail, Muhammad Lutfil Hadi Abdul Halil, Geoffery Marvin Wong, Mohamad Iqmall Hakimi Mohamad Ashree & Akmal Shafiq Badarul Azam*

THE EXTENDED

ABSTRACT

CATEGORY A&B

INNOVATION IN TEACHING & LEARNING

TIKTOK'S ROLE IN BOOSTING MOTIVATION TO LEARN ARABIC AMONG MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Professor Ts Dr. Muhammad Sabri bin Sahrir, Nurul Ain Binti Usman, Huda Binti Muhammad Sharifuddin, Fatin Nasuha Binti Mohd Shamsul & Nurfitrah Shahira Binti Nor Azman

International Islamic University Malaysia*

muhdsabri@iium.edu.my*

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of using the TikTok platform as a supplementary educational tool for enhancing motivation among university students in learning Arabic as a foreign language. The research responds to the increasing integration of social media in students' daily lives, particularly TikTok's popularity among users aged 18–24, and explores how its features—short videos, interactivity, and entertainment—can be harnessed for pedagogical purposes.

Keywords: TikTok, Arabic language learning, student motivation, digital pedagogy, social media in education

INTRODUCTION

Arabic is often perceived by learners as difficult and less engaging, leading to low motivation levels. Traditional teaching methods struggle to retain students' attention in an era dominated by fast-paced digital content. Given TikTok's popularity and ability to personalize content through algorithms, it holds potential for modern language education—especially for increasing exposure to vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence structures in an enjoyable way. This study therefore aims to measure the frequency of TikTok usage among Malaysian university students, assess students' perceptions of TikTok content compared to traditional methods in learning Arabic and identify motivational factors and as well as preferred content types that enhance interest in Arabic via TikTok.



METHODS

A **quantitative research design** was used, with data collected through an online questionnaire distributed via WhatsApp and Telegram over 7 days. A total of 56 students from universities in Malaysia and abroad (UIAM, UPSI, USIM, Al-Azhar, UiTM) participated. The sample included Arabic language majors and students from other disciplines using Arabic as a medium of instruction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results show that 75% of respondents had used TikTok to learn Arabic, with the most motivating content being daily vocabulary videos (82.1%), followed by challenges and interactive scenes. This type of content is not only motivating but also entertaining. Dinia et al. (2024) similarly found that translating viral songs into Arabic emerged as the most motivating form of content for learners, as it enhanced vocabulary retention and recall. As a result, this enjoyable exposure encourages consistent engagement with the language, immediately addressing the study's objective of identifying key motivational factors. Besides, the students highlighted that TikTok's informal environment reduced anxiety and increased self-confidence. This is because for some individuals, the thought of attending class while still struggling with the language can create pressure and reinforce the perception that the language is difficult. However, frequent exposure to short videos and the opportunity to experience and construct learning anonymously through TikTok able to allow them to learn without fear of making mistakes or being judged. Kidwell et al. (2023) similarly noted that interaction with speakers of similar linguistic backgrounds increases confidence by providing a supportive atmosphere. For example, TikTok's algorithm always presents users to live streams where the Arabic speaker hosts or Native speaker and invites conversation. Therefore, viewers are drawn in and feel more comfortable engaging in the learning process. This definitely relates with social engagement features (e.g., likes, comments) that able to enhance learners' sense of belonging and motivation. When the algorithm matches users with content that aligns with their interests, and they see meaningful comments from others with similar goals, it fosters a like-minded learning community that inspires further language acquisition. Nevertheless, the platform was not perceived as a replacement for formal education but rather as a complementary learning tool. Formal education with experienced teachers remains essential for providing systematic guidance and ensuring deep understanding. As the saying goes, when building a house, the first priority is not the furniture or decorations (TikTok), but the essential materials needed to construct the foundation. Zulkifli et al. (2022) further observed that TikTok can serve as a creative assessment platform to support project-based learning in the language arts. This allows students to develop their potential creatively, exchange ideas without face-to-face interaction, and draw inspiration from both local and international peers. This is aligned with this current era, where trends spread globally such as dance challenges and how fortunate it would be if similar viral trends were used for educational purposes. Lastly, the suggestions for improvement include increasing Arabic educational content, enhancing searchability, and encouraging collaboration with educators to produce more targets to make learning more effective and sustainable.



CONCLUSION

TikTok proves to be an effective motivational supplement for learning Arabic among university students when used purposefully. Its engaging content, short video format, and social interactivity help foster sustained interest, especially in vocabulary acquisition. Future efforts should focus on integrating TikTok strategically into blended learning models and guiding students on how to use it for meaningful language learning experiences.

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