CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION AND THE USE OF TABOOS ON TIKTOK PLATFORM AMONGST ALGERIAN YOUTH

Mariem Guerniche [1]   **Lamia El-Mechta** [2]

[1] "Langues et Traduction" Laboratory, Department of English,
Univrsity Frères Mentoui,Constantine1 (Algeria),
mariem.guerniche@doc.umc.edu.dz

[2] GENIAAL Laboratory, INATAA, University Frères Mentouri, Constantine 1 (Algeria),
lamia.elmechta@umc.edu.dz

Abstract: Cultural globalization is a nascent phenomenon that endangers local cultures globally. Platforms like TikTok usher the rapid dissemination of global trends and values which can potentially undermine traditional societal norms and principles. This phenomenon is especially pertinent in Algeria, where traditional values often clash with rapidly changing global trends. This paper aims to gauge the impact of cultural globalism on the portrayal of taboos among Algerian TikTok users via an online questionnaire. An online questionnaire was administered using snowball sampling**,** gathering responses from 139 participants across over 20 Algerian wilayas. The quantitative analysis revealed the prevalence of taboos embraced by the younger generation, particularly, as a result of the massive exposure to western cultures. To this end, a set of recommendations was proposed to preserve national identity from obliteration by highlighting the urgent need for awareness campaigns and regulations to mitigate the impact of cultural globalization on local identities and moral standards. Further, broader implications were emphasized for safeguarding local cultures beyond Algeria amidst the global age.

Keywords: Algerian society; cultural globalization; taboos, TikTok platform.

How to cite the article :

Guerniche, M., & El-Mechta, L. (2024). Cultural globalization and the use of taboos on the TikTok platform among Algerian youth. *Journal of Studies in Language, Culture, and Society,* *7*(2), pp. 210-228.

---

[1] Corresponding author : Mariem Guerniche

Authors' ORCID ID: **https://orcid.org/0009-0000-9817-4700**

1. Introduction

Modernization, technological progress along with the higher rate of mobility have, recently, brought the distant spots of the world much closer. In the wave of going global, people from two opposing poles can now communicate effortlessly and establish strong relationships at all levels. Hence, globalization is said to be a game-changer in the 21st century. A debate has been raised upon the latter phenomenon. Advocates of a "global village" as Marshall McLuhan has described it (as cited in Lui et al, 2015), have listed endless of its benefits whereas its opponents have highlighted its dark side. While globalism has an impact on every single aspect of humans' life, this paper, mainly, revolves around its influence on local cultures. In this line of thought, Tomlinson (1999) pointed out that "Globalization lies at the heart of modern culture; cultural practices lie at the heart of globalization" (p.1). Since culture is an inner software (Seelye, 1997), people cannot disconnect from their native cultural system while communicating which exposes their identity and puts their worldview in sharp contrast with others'. This makes their culture in constant comparison with other cultures. Further, media plays a pivotal role in advertising for the western cultures such as the American culture, for English is the world's lingua franca, which threatens the local cultures. Additionally, it is widely agreed upon that social media platforms contribute heavily to shaping the followers' worldview and personality in case of young generations. In the Algerian context, most teenagers are addicted to these platforms which started to influence their character and, subsequently, distort their identity. Since the researcher is a secondary school EFL teacher, it has been noticed that TikTok is the most captivating social media app for teenagers. Most importantly, almost all the learners who are constantly active on TikTok are aged between 15 and 19 years old though many of them are actually under the minimum age set by TikTok corporation regulations; they provide fake personal information so as to be allowed to create an account. Therefore, this research paper aims at:

- Investigating the use of taboos amongst Algerian TikTok users.
- Examining the impact of globalization on the use of taboos by Algerian TikTok users.
- Raising awareness on the potential threats of cultural globalization on the one hand, and TikTok content from the other, on kids' and teenagers' morality as well as cultural identity.

In this regard, two main questions are raised:
1- To what extent are taboos popular within the Algerian society on TikTok?
2- Does cultural globalization have an impact on the use of taboos by Algerian TikTok users?

We hypothesize that:
1- Taboos are prevalent among Algerians on TikTok platform.
2- Cultural globalism has a huge impact on the use of taboos on TikTok in the Algerian context.

In order to answer the research questions and test its hypotheses, we opted for the use of the quantitative method through an online questionnaire.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Globalization: A Multifaceted Phenomenon

The ubiquitous nature of the concept of globalization renders it notoriously difficult to be defined. It can have distinct definitions in different fields. In this vein, Beck (2003) argued that globalization is the term "most used and abused, most defined and probably the most misunderstood, nebulous and politically spectacular over the past and future years" (p.27). The term started to gain popularity in economics in the 1980s referring to the easiness and speed of completing transactions as well as mobility thanks to the innovations and

technological advancements reached by mankind. It also signifies an interconnectedness and interdependence between people around the globe increasing their reach in terms of distance, speed, depth, and cost-efficiency (Friedman, 2002). Simply put, globalization is the omission of the borders resulting in a single small village where communication is easier and information is more diffused.

2.2 Culture: The Framework of Life

Culture, yet, is deemed to be another complex term that involves the way of life of a group of people during a particular period of time which makes them unique. In fact, culture is the personality of a social group. According to Hofstede et al. (2010) it can be understood as the shared cognitive frameworks that differentiate groups from one another. Similarly, Seelye (1997) believed that culture presents the mind's software that guides individuals' behaviour; it delineates appropriate conduct within our social groups. It is then the framework within which people are expected to behave. Miller (2020) elaborated on the concept of culture by identifying its various components, describing it as a complex framework that includes traditions, knowledge, artistic expressions, legal systems, and the diverse skills individuals acquire within their communities. This interpretation has come to be categorized within the big C of culture or high culture which includes the best of what humans have been able to achieve so far. Little c or low culture, on the other hand, refers to people's regular activities, customs, values, norms, beliefs and attitudes (Matsumoto, 1996).

2.3 Pros and Cons of Globalization

Globalization has certainly revolutionized the world's economic, political as well as social landscape. This complex phenomenon has triggered a fierce controversy. Its advocates argue that it has brought about a myriad of benefits whereas anti-globalization group believe that it has more drawbacks and threats than it seems.

As the term suggests, globalization has rendered the world a small village in which different peoples share a global culture. This is highly likely to yield much understanding of different cultures which results eventually in a richer universal culture and promotes tolerance amongst distinct cultural groups (Tomlinson, 1999). As a result, intercultural communication is much easier. Economically speaking, Evenett (1999) clarified the positive impact globalization has on consumers. According to him, people in any world spot can have access to a wider range of products and commodities. Most importantly, this has led to price reduction owing to the immense competition the global market witnesses. Moreover, globalization has boosted technological development and adoption by all nations (Skare & Soriano, 2021). In addition, it led to the diffusion and promotion of universal values which led to the emergence of notions like global citizenship (Pfister, 2000).

Anti-globalization authors seem to have a contradicting perspective. Huntington (1993) has clarified a crucial consequence in his influential work 'The Clash of Civilizations' highlighting the fact that differences would lead to conflicts. As each cultural group possesses a sophisticated, distinctive and often sacred worldview, they are likely to exhibit ferocious resistance against any odd belief or practice. Hence, clashes and conflicts are in all likelihood to be expected. Further, Hamelink (1988) rejected the view that globalization prompts cultural diversity arguing that it rather threatens the world's existing diversity through the dissemination of one leading cultural system which is in turn a real threat to local and minority cultures. However, Tomlinson (1999) disagreed with this claim asserting that globalization does not necessarily result in homogeneity since the received culture undergoes particular procedures as "interpretation, translation, mutation, adaptation and 'indigenisation'" (p. 84). Last but not least, globalization is said to be a critical factor in maximizing inequality between people at all levels (Lee, 1996); the gap between the wealthy and the poor is getting

bigger, local cultures are gradually substituted by the western cultural system which is known as cultural imperialism, and racism and discrimination rates are augmented due to stereotyping and prejudices created by mass media.

2.4 Cultural Globalization

2.4.1- Interconnections and impacts

Despite the fact that globalization has emerged in the arena of business and trade, it has spread into all the aspects of human life. As culture is a way of life, it ultimately proliferates around the globe. Not surprisingly, globalization has not only interwoven strong linkage between corporations and individuals, but also allowed distinct cultures to be in contact. Cultural globalization, also known as social globalization, is, therefore, the dissemination and fluidity of cultural beliefs, perspectives, values and social practices. Hopper (2007) confirmed that anthropologists and authors of the field have reached concord upon the role of recent inventions and high tech in the transmission of cultures which contributes in an emerging universal culture.

The result of cultures in contact eventually leads to acculturation, adaptation or assimilation which raises a crucial inquiry, which culture are local systems substituted by? Does this have an impact on peoples' identities? The answer to the first question, according to many advocates of globalization, is that the world is moving towards a global culture in which people from different groups have multiple shared aspects. This may reduce the distance between nations and is likely to enrich one's culture and widens his worldview. However, this is strongly associated with an obliteration of local identities while preserving native cultures and respecting all nations are at the essence of interculturality.

If we are to analyse reality, universal culture and global citizenship are not synonymous to the equal integration of local cultures. In fact, after the two world wars, the USA has emerged as a superpower politically and economically which led to the spread of the English language as the world's lingua franca. Undoubtedly, communication and culture are intricately interconnected. Hence, the American cultural system is being diffused through face-to-face interactions as well as through mass media be it social media or Hollywood movies industry among others. Thus, globalization is sometimes used interchangeably with Americanization which is interpreted by Giddens (2002) as an emerging concept under the pressures of globalism that signifies the act of diffusing the culture, social norms, political policies, and economic paradigms of the USA worldwide. Nowadays, a plethora of American cultural elements became a part of nations' life style such as Starbucks, MacDonald's, Nike, Apple, CNN and Netflix.

2.4.2.The impact of cultural globalization on the algerian society, culture and identity

Culture is the amalgamation of perspectives, practices and products of a given group of people. These cultural aspects are taken for granted and passed from generation to generation as an attempt to be preserved. Thus, they compose an integral part of who these people are i.e. culture marks the society's identity. By identity, a strong sense of belonging and loyalty to the cultural community one pertains to is highlighted. Wenger (1998) sketched cultural identity as the essence of who the person truly is, and thus it is one's self-perception that locates him within a social group and shapes his behaviour. By virtue, an individual strives to reflect conformity to the social norms that define the community to which he belongs in pursuit of social recognition (Corley, 2004). Since the cultural affiliation delineates the boundaries between 'self' and 'other', strong feelings of pride and willingness to preserve one's identity are displayed as soon as a confrontation with a distinctive worldview occurs which justifies people's resistance to allow universal culture in and intolerance towards potential alteration

generated by globalization. Through time, and with extensive exposure to western cultures, however, individuals, particularly teenagers, exhibit an inclination towards these cultures. Imitating westerners thus, is becoming prestigious as an attempt to locate oneself in a more highly-estimated community which is the result of an evolving inferiority complex forged by the heated proliferation of the western civilization through mass media. In this respect, Blum (2007) noted that "Much of this is purely a matter of fashion and image … the ability to parrot Western lifestyles successfully is often a matter of pride" (p.75).

In the Algerian context, the western culture in general and the American culture in particular are gaining much popularity amongst the new generation (teenagers and kids). This is manifested through their clothing style, the food they consume, the products they purchase and the music and movies they enjoy. American cultural symbols like Nike, blue-jeans, hotdog, Coca-Cola, Forever and Amazon, are now getting more and more popular among Algerians. The recent policy enacted by the Algerian government is a fruitful step towards boosting the English language in the country by implementing it in primary as well as higher education aiming to substitute French in the future. Such act will in all likelihood foster the spread of the American culture alongside the language.

The impact of cultural globalization on local customs, however, is less threatening than its influence on the group's beliefs. A major portion of a culture constitutes the underlying views, principles and religious beliefs. These set the foundation for the entire cultural system. When these beliefs are contradicted, the group's identity is said to be menaced. The Algerian society is basically a highly conservative Muslim society, but currently, it witnesses a wide array of odd beliefs that challenge the essence of the Islamic dogma. For instance, some Algerians are eager to celebrate charismas, Halloween and Valentine's Day which oppose the Islamic doctrine.

2.5. Taboos: an Integral Part of Culture

Culture is a way of life which includes every single aspect of human life. Norms are among the crucial cultural components setting the rules for human conduct. These, in turn, incorporate taboos which are the most confined set of rules. Every cultural group concur upon a list of symbols, acts, behaviours or expressions to be evaded for they connote a prohibited meaning (Wardhaugh, 2010). In Algeria, taboos often have deep roots in the Islamic religion. In Muslim societies, taboo topics are totally inappropriate to be discussed in public. The most popular taboos involve eating pork, having sex out of the bond of marriage, and gambling. It is noteworthy to point out that the previously-mentioned examples are not considered taboos in western communities which unveils the distance between cultures.

2.6. The Role of Social Media in Defusing Western Cultures

Information and communication technologies, notably the internet, have minimized the distance between people and prompted cross-cultural interactions needless physical contact of any sort. Recently, social media apps are taking the lead over other innovations in diffusing digital information throughout the globe (Matos, 2012). By and large, globalization and social media share a mutual relationship. On the one hand, globalization has ushered the use of social media worldwide. On the other, the latter has significantly contributed to the genesis of the global village. Thanks to it, intercultural communication is no more an issue abolishing the spatio-temporal barriers.

Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are widely popular. They have boosted cultural exchange which led to enriching peoples' cultural repertoires with new perspectives, beliefs and traditions. However, this can also have a negative effect on cultural

groups through the random selection of new cultural elements without grasping their underlying beliefs. It might also lead to stereotyping.

According to Data Reportal, in January 2023, 52.9 % of the Algerian population are deemed to be social media users. Though Facebook is the most popular app amongst Algerians (Ibid), TikTok is an emerging app that is captivating teenagers' and kids' interest. According to Start.io, 32.6% of TikTok users are aged between 25 and 34 years old and over 56.1% of them are under 24 years old. Influencers play a vital role in shaping and orienting society. Similarly, TikTokers can regulate and direct individuals' practices and actions. When the majority of the followers are teenagers, the impact of these influencers and their content are to be considered thoroughly.

2 Methodology

3.1 Context

This research investigates the effects of cultural globalization on the use of taboos among Algerian TikTok users. With the rise of platforms like TikTok, traditional norms are increasingly challenged by global trends, particularly among the youth. This study aims to explore how exposure to Western cultures influences the acceptance and portrayal of taboos within Algerian society, contributing to a broader understanding of cultural identity in the digital age.

3.2 Population and Sampling

This work targets Algerian TikTok users as an overall population. The snowball sampling technique was opted for in which a questionnaire was administered to a limited number of TikTok users on the platform itself who were encouraged, in turn, to forward it to other network of contacts within the platform. The decision to deploy this technique was driven by its potential to access a diverse array of TikTok users across different demographic groups within the Algerian society. Hence, the population members have equal probability of being selected, thereby enhancing the representativeness of the sample and minimizing the bias of the findings, which thus can be generalized to the entire population. While the sample size of 139 respondents may not be considered optimal for capturing the entirety of TikTok users population in Algeria, it nonetheless offers valuable insights into the attitudes and perceptions of TikTok users in this context. It is noteworthy to mention that ethical considerations were respected, informing participants that their contribution is voluntary, anonymous and confidential.

3.3 Procedures

3.3.1. Research tools and methods

This study is descriptive in nature aiming for examine the impact of cultural globalization on the use of taboos on TikTok from Algerian users' perspectives. To this end, an online questionnaire was administered online via TikTok platform reaching a diverse range of individuals from more than 20 Wilayas. It was designed in form of three main sections incorporating 18 questions. The first section captures the demographics of the sample through 3 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs). The Second describes the use of TikTok by Algerians through 5 closed-ended questions. The third, however, sketches the linkage between cultural globalization and taboo use on the platform from the participants' perspectives through 6 closed-ended questions (MCQs and a Likert scale) and 4 open-ended questions. In fact, two versions of the questionnaire were administered; since the research targets the Algerian society at large and English is less commonly used by Algerians, preparing an Arabic version

along with the English version was crucial. Data gathered was analysed quantitatively in which open-ended questions' findings were coded into common themes and patterns.

3.3.2. Pilot study

Before conducting the survey, a pilot study involved administering a preliminary version of the questionnaire to check its clarity and effectiveness detecting any potential problem. By the end of the study, some language-related adjustments have been made.

3.3.3. Validity and reliability of the questionnaire

Prior to conducting a pilot testing, the researchers sought constructive feedback from an expert in the field to ensure the questionnaire's validity and reliability. The provided insights can help verify the content's relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness which ensures both content and face validity. Likewise, her expertise assists in enhancing construct validity through refining the questionnaire to accurately measure the intended constructs. Furthermore, expert guidance is invaluable in assessing the reliability of open-ended questions, ensuring consistency and trustworthiness in data collection. Comments and remarks drawn from the counsel have been taken into consideration resulting in comprehensive, relevant, and consistent items.

To assess the internal consistency of the quantitative data, we employed a test-retest reliability approach. The questionnaire was administered identically on two occasions, with a 20-day interval between administrations. Using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 26), the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated, which yielded a value of $r = 0.86$. This result indicates strong reliability, affirming that the measurements were consistent across the two time points.

3   Results

4.1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1: *Overview on the sample demographics*

Characteristic		Number of participants	Percentage %
Gender	Male	41	29.5
	Female	98	70.5
Level of education	High school	33	23.7
	Bachelor Degree	26	18.8
	Master Degree	58	41.7
	Doctorate Degree	22	15.8
Age	Under 18 years	16	11.5
	18-25 years	64	46
	26-40 years	57	41
	Above 40 years	2	1.5

The table above reveals the distribution of the participants in terms of gender, level of education and age. It is apparent that females (70.5%) outnumber males (29.5%). As for the educational level, Master students form the greatest portion of the respondents (41.5%), then high school pupils (23.7%), then Bachelors (18.8 %), then doctoral students and PhD holders (15.8%). Further, the majority of the participants are young; almost half of the participants (46 %) belong to the age group of 18 to 25 years old whereas 41% of them fall within the age range of 25 to 40 years. Moreover, 11.5% of them are under 18 years while only 1.5% who are above 40 years old.

4.2.TikTok Use by Algerians

Table 2: *TikTok usage frequency and purpose*

Characteristic		Frequency (number of times selected)	Percentage %
TikTok use frequency	Everyday	50	36
	Several times a week	32	23
	Rarely	57	41
TikTok use purpose	Studying	41	29.5
	Pleasure	91	65.5
	Others	7	5

This table describes the frequency and purpose of TikTok usage among respondents. It indicates that 41% of them rarely use it, 36% of them use it daily whereas 23% of them use it several times a week. Moreover, it unveils that the majority of the participants (65.5%) use TikTok for pleasure, 29.5% of them use it for pleasure while only 5% of them who mentioned other uses of it. Their responses were categorized in terms of two main themes: intellectual enrichment and work.
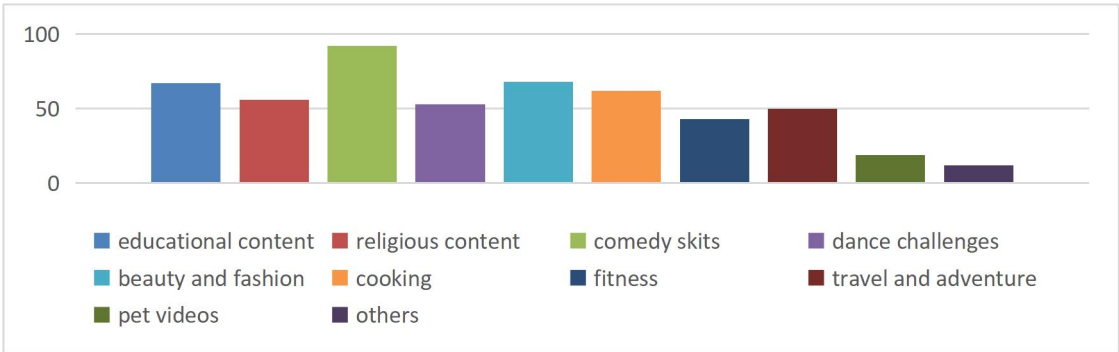

Figure 1: *Types of TikTok content encountered by the participants*

The histogram above displays the types of content frequently encountered by the participants. It demonstrates a wide range of contents available on TikTok platform. As reported by the respondents, comedy skits are the most pervasive on the platform (92 mentions), followed by beauty and fashion themes (68 mentions) and educational content (67 mentions). Furthermore, it highlights that cooking, religious content, and dance challenges are

also significant categories, although slightly less prevalent compared to the above mentioned types of content with 62, 56, and 53 mentions for each respectively. Less prominently, travel and adventure themes were mentioned 50 times, followed by fitness videos mentioned 43 times, then pet videos indicated 19 times while 12 individuals listed other options that can be categorised in terms of taboo topics such as bullying and immoral videos.

Regarding the usefulness of TikTok content, nearly half of the respondents (52.5%) indicated that they sometimes find it beneficial. A smaller group (18%) reported often finding the content useful, while 14.4% said they rarely encounter helpful material on the platform. Additionally, 11.5% of respondents never find TikTok content useful, and only 3.6% reported always finding it beneficial. As for the cleanliness and appropriateness of TikTok content, the majority (51.1%) stated that it is sometimes clean, with 25.2% indicating that it is rarely appropriate and 12.2% believing it is never appropriate. Only 11.5% said they often find the content appropriate, and none reported always finding it clean.

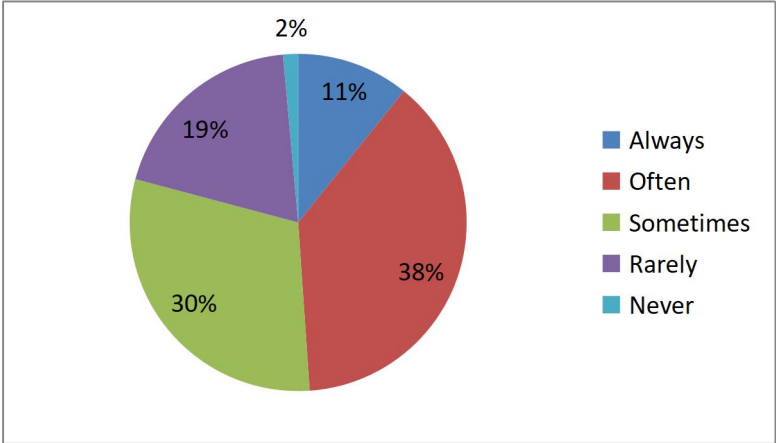*4.3.Cultural Globalization and Taboo Use*

Figure 2: *The frequency of encountering taboo topics on TikTok by the respondents*

The pie chart above demonstrates the frequency of encountering taboo topics on TikTok according to the participants. The highest frequency was for often with 53 mentions while the lowest was for never, being mentioned twice solely. However, 42 respondents said sometimes, 27 of them reported rarely while 15 of them selected always.

Table 3: *Types of taboos most prevalent on TikTok from the participants' perspectives*

	Verbal taboos	Taboo topics	Wild music	Inappropriate clothing style	Inappropriate gestures
Frequency	88	69	99	117	72

	Religious taboos	Sexual taboos
Frequency	75	117

The table above depicts five main types of taboos most prevalent on Tiktok from the participants' perspectives. It appears that inappropriate clothing style is prominent with 117 mentions, followed by wild music with 99 mentions. Closely behind are verbal taboos being mentioned 88 times, then inappropriate gestures with 72 mentions. Finally, taboo topics,

although being indicated less times, they are still widely popular on the platform being selected 69 times. As for verbal taboos, 117 of the participants indicated that verbal sexual taboos are prominent on TikTok whereas 75 of them revealed that they encounter religious taboos throughout TikTok videos.

Table 4: *Respondents' views on global trends and cultural context*

Themes	Lack of awareness	Inferiority complex	Cultural dependency	Lack of religious faith	Globalization impact
Frequency	67	43	53	40	13
Themes	A call for cultural understanding	Obliteration of the local identity	Negative/ wrong	A threat to social norms	Acceptable
Frequency	15	78	69	26	12

Exploring respondents' opinion on adopting global trends without understanding their cultural background, a diverse array of responses were coded and classified into common themes depicting major opinions, feelings, and attitudes reported by the participants. The table above displays the frequency of each theme in which 78 participants indicated the threat of adopting such trends on local identities. Moreover, 69 of them described this act as negative and wrong. Lack of awareness as well seems to be one of the major causes in which 67 individuals mentioned that ignorance and luck of understanding both the native and the foreign cultures can lead to imitating trends blindly. Closely related, cultural dependency (53 mentions) and inferiority complex (43 mentions) were also highlighted by respondents who view that many Algerians feel inferior to the westerners, and thus cherish whatsoever is western which is a form of cultural dependency or imperialism. Further, some participants (26) showed their negative attitude towards these trends considering them a threat to social norms and values. Few people (13) reported that globalization is a direct contributing factor to trends imitation on TikTok. Reflecting a sense of responsibility and awareness, 15 individuals called for understanding the cultural nuances behind trends before adopting them. However, 12 participants remained neutral accepting this act viewing it as personal freedom.

When asked about their feelings toward encountering taboos on TikTok, the majority of participants (78.4%) expressed discomfort, viewing such content as a threat to local culture. A smaller portion (21.6%) remained neutral, believing that individuals are responsible for their own behavior, while none reported feeling comfortable with the presence of taboos. Regarding the popularity of taboos on TikTok, most respondents (52) considered them to be "very popular," with a significant number also rating them as "popular" (37) or "neutral" (33). A few participants (10) found taboos to be only "somewhat popular," and just 7 reported them as "not popular."

Table 5: *Reasons behind taboos popularity on TikTok*

Themes	Lack of faith	Cultural globalization	Lack of awareness	Ignoring one's own cultural identity
Frequency	64	35	89	41
Themes	Lack of content regulation	Blind imitation of westerners	The influencers' role	Over-openness towards the western culture
Frequency	23	55	17	67

The table sketches the diverse perceptions of the respondents on the reasons behind the spread of taboos on social media particularly on TikTok. The responses were coded then classified into main themes. The data reveal that lack of awareness, over-openness towards the western culture, and lack of faith are indicated by the overwhelming majority with 89 mentions, 67 mentions and 64 mentions for each respectively. Furthermore, Blind imitation of westerners (55 responses), ignoring one's own cultural identity (41 responses), and the influence of cultural globalization (35 responses) seem to capture a noteworthy segment of the participants. Yet, very few respondents referred to the lack of content regulations on the platform (23 responses) and the role of influencers (17 responses).

Diving deeper into cultural globalization impact on the portrayal of taboos on TikTok among Algerians, revealed a significant concord among the participants on the existence of this influence and its nature. 49 individuals indicated that it has a negative impact while 32 reported it has a great impact in diffusing taboos among Algerians. Moreover, 26 of the respondents referred to cultural globalization as a cultural imperialism imposed by the westerners on local groups. Also, 13 of them asserted that the latter has played a significant role in destigmatizing and normalizing once-taboo subjects. Still, 11 participants simply responded with 'I do not know'.
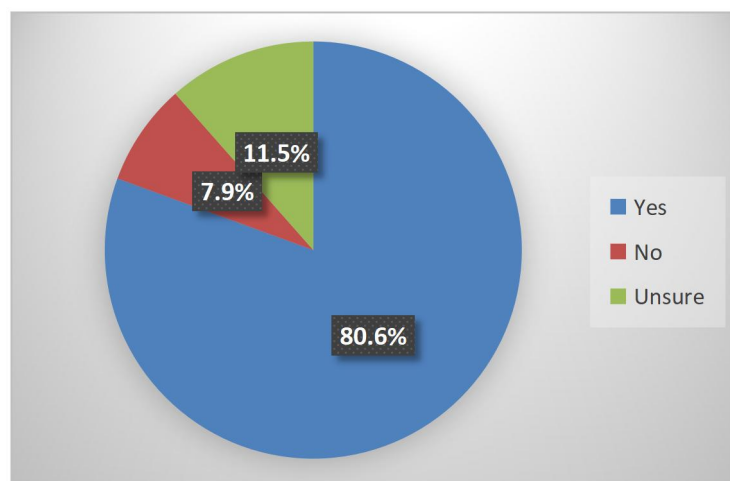
Figure 3: *Participants' views on regulating content on TikTok*

As the pie chart demonstrates, the majority of the respondents (80.6%) believe that certain contents on TikTok should be limited even if they are not deemed to be taboos in other cultures. They offered multiple justifications such as these contents threaten our culture, we are responsible of protecting our values and norms, and a significant proportion of TikTok

users are kids and teenagers who are not aware and thus might follow the foreign cultures blindly. Further, Few people (11.5%) are unsure about it while very few (7.9%) reject any kind of regulation on TikTik assuming that individuals must be free as what to follow and foreign cultures must be respected.

4   Discussion

4.1. Demographics

The demographic profile of the participants reveals several significant trends, particularly regarding gender and age. The fact that 70.5% of the respondents are female suggests that TikTok is particularly appealing to women in Algeria, which aligns with global patterns where the platform is often associated with trends in beauty, fashion, and lifestyle, topics that might resonate more with female users. This overrepresentation of women could also indicate that TikTok provides a platform for self-expression for women who may have fewer opportunities to express themselves in more conservative societies like Algeria, where social norms and traditional media can impose restrictions on female visibility and autonomy. In support of this, Kennedy (2020) argued that TikTok acts as a form of liberation for female adolescents, offering them an avenue to break free from traditional gender-based norms. He emphasized that the platform allows young women to express themselves freely, bypassing societal restrictions that typically govern gender roles.

In addition to the large proportion of female users, the fact that nearly 60% of participants are either pursuing or have completed university-level education challenges the stereotype that TikTok is primarily a platform for entertainment-driven, less educated users. Instead, it highlights how educated individuals in Algeria are actively engaging with the platform, likely utilizing it for both entertainment and educational purposes, as well as a means of cultural expression.

Further, the overview of the participants' demographic profile highlights a distinct inclination towards TikTok among the younger generation, particularly those aged between 18 and 25. More importantly, many participants are under the platform's typical age threshold, yet they own personal accounts. This underscores the popularity of TikTok and emphasizes its influence on kids and teenagers, which can raise concerns about potential addiction and the impact on their mental health and academic performance. This trend strongly aligns with previous studies in the local context, such as Retimi and Bakhouche (2022), demonstrating that over 80% of the participants are under 21 years, with a significant portion of users actually under 17. Furthermore, only two participants above 40 years engaged with TikTok, reflecting less interest from the older generation and raising questions about the long-term effects of such engagement on younger users. It appears that these findings resonate strongly with findings by Lajnef (2023) in Tunisia, where TikTok has similarly gained significant popularity among youth. Lajnef's study underscores the platform's deep influence on youth behavior, particularly in shaping social interactions as well as their personality. This highlights a broader regional trend across North Africa, particularly, threatening the Arab and Islamic social values. Globally speaking, Guo (2021) confirmed the popularity of TikTok platform amongst teens worldwide due to its appealing nature.

4.2. TikTok Use by Algerians

As relates to the data obtained from table.2, it appears that a substantial portion of the participants reported infrequent usage of TikTok which can be attributed to the older age demographics and high educational level among them due to other commitments. Similarly, a notable fraction of the respondents use it daily, highlighting the addictive nature of the platform and its appealing content. As for the purpose, it seems that Algerians prioritize

entertaining content on TikTok. Most respondents mentioned using it for leisure purposes, while only a minority asserted using it for educational or professional activities. This corroborates with the findings of Lamouri and Nahal (2022) whose study revealed that Algerian teenagers are more interested in leisure videos.

Based on the findings illustrated in figure.1, it is evident that TikTok offers a wide array of contents. However, its algorithm tends to prioritize content similar to the user's interests. A significant portion of users favor comedy skits, highlighting Algerians' view of the platform as a pastime. Close percentages also indicate interest in educational and religious content, reflecting the intellectual makeup of many participants. Additionally, cooking, beauty and fashion contents are also popular, possibly influenced by the higher proportion of female users in the sample. Moreover, dance videos are dominant as well on TikTok becoming a benchmark for the platform. These data go in accordance with Lamouri and Nahal (2022) findings noting that funny videos along with songs and dancing are the most prevalent forms of content available on TikTok. It is noteworthy to mention that few respondents added other types of content stressing the existence of inappropriate content on TikTok mentioning transness, bullying, homosexuality among other taboo topics.

According to participants' responses to questions 13 and 14, depicting the usefulness and cleanliness of TikTok content from the respondents' perspectives, differing claims reaffirm that TikTok offers diverse range of contents based on users' interests. However, the majority of responses ranged between sometimes, often and rarely useful and very few participants selected never or always. This indicates that TikTok is a mere platform very much like other social media platforms that might offer beneficial and practical content as it might be a source of inappropriate or at least useless content depending on content creators as well as users themselves. Moreover, the findings show that Algerian content creators are more interested in leisure themes. Regarding the participants' perceptions on the appropriateness of TikTok videos, a great number of responses ranged between sometimes, rarely and never clean. Very few selected often clean while none of them selected always. This proves that a notable segment of TikTok content is inappropriate, with pervasive taboos prevalent on the platform. In a similar vein, Retimi and Bekhouche (2022) found that most Algerian TikTok users do follow, create and share videos containing all sorts of deviant behaviours as bullying, dating, dancing among other culturally-odd acts.

4.3. Cultural Globalization and Taboo Use

In order to answer the first research question, the frequency of encountering taboos on TikTok was investigated. As table 3 exhibits, the most frequently mentioned response was "often," with 53 mentions, whereas "never" was mentioned only twice. In contrast, 42 respondents indicated "sometimes," 27 of them reported "rarely," and 15 selected "always. This demonstrates the popularity of taboos on the platform; even for those users who subscribe only to practical channels, encountering taboos on TikTok seems to be inevitable. Additionally, data revealed that all types of taboos are pervasive though with differing rates. Inappropriate clothing style is a prominent response; almost all the participants referred to it which is attributed to the conservative Algerian cultural background. Despite the act's popularity on TikTok, Algerians still view it as odd. Similar findings have been reported in neighboring and regional contexts. For instance, Qanbar (2011) confirmed the increasing prevalence of linguistic taboos in Yemeni society, noting how social media facilitates their dissemination. In Tunisia, Likewise, Lajnef (2023) demonstrated that TikTok not only spreads taboos but also encourages behaviors that defy cultural norms, contributing to a shift in social values. Raras and Sudarwati (2021) further emphasized TikTok's role in spreading taboo language globally, particularly through modernization and digital communication. Their study found that TikTok users frequently employ psychological and social deviation insults, sexual

references, and ethnic-racial-gender slurs. This normalization of taboos suggests a shift in social values, reflecting how digital platforms can challenge and reshape local cultural norms, especially among younger audiences. Furthermore, wild music, inappropriate gestures, taboo topics, and verbal taboos including both religious and sexual taboos scored roughly equal mentions. This can pose a real threat to local values and morals, particularly since many TikTok users are young and impressionable. These findings corroborate with Guo's study (2021) highlighting that TikTok, while serving as an educational tool, also perpetuates over-exaggerated content that misguides teenagers' values. He demonstrated the platform's influence in challenging and reshaping cultural norms, often to the detriment of local identities. The influence of Western cultures is evident, creating a cultural dependency that normalizes foreign trends, often at the expense of local identity.This is evident in adopting the western trends regardless to their cultural background. As for the latter issue, the participants reported various opinions and sentiments. Most of them are aware enough of the impact of these trends on local identities labelling it as "negative" and "wrong". They also called for raising users' awareness on both the native culture as well as the foreign culture so as to limit the blind imitation of what is western. Some of them went further analyzing the reason behind such an act noting that Arabs in general and Algerians in particular suffer from an inferiority complex stigmatizing all what is local, cherishing foreign norms and values. This goes in hand with McQuail's (2005) claim arguing that a distorted self-perception is an inevitable effect of the unbalanced flow of information through media. Nonetheless, very few respondents remain comfortable with these trends assuming personal freedom.

In a similar vein, exploring the participants' feelings when encountering taboos in TikTok videos, revealed Algerians' faithfulness to their cultural norms and values. Most of them experience a sense of vexation, feeling the threat to their cultural identity. Still few respondents maintain neutrality holding view that users must be responsible for their actions which can be viewed as lack of awareness of the slight line between individual's rights and liberty and protecting one's identity. Yet, according to the respondents, taboos are ubiquitous among Algerians. Unfortunately, many taboos are becoming more and more welcomed within the society. By essence, the Algerian society embodies the Arab and Islamic identity, however, the western culture is persistently leaking into it. This is portrayed in the odd lexis that is prominent on the platform such as "boyfriend", "ex", "crush", "sugar daddy", "gay" and the "F word". Although these are deemed to be verbal taboos in the Algerian culture, they are being normalized, encountered daily in memes and comments. It is evident that the American culture is the source of such vocabulary. Inappropriate gestures are also widespread among the youth such as sexual connotations and the middle finger gesture. This aligns with The Levin Institute's view (2013) highlighting that Americanization has generated serious concerns for local cultures and led to homogeneity in world cultures threatening thus the global cultural diversity.

As relates to the second research question, the participants listed an amalgam of reasons behind the spread of taboos on social media, notably TikTok. Among the highly mentioned causes are lack of awareness, over-openness towards the western cultures and lack of faith. Religion, in Algeria, is the primary source of norms and principles which makes strengthening people's faith a fruitful step towards restoring the cultural values. Other responses are closely related notably the blind imitation of foreigners and cultural globalization. It appears that many respondents are aware of the fierce war the third world is undergoing headed by the globe's super powers. Arms are no longer needed, yet worse a cultural imperialism is imposed. Banerjee & Linstead (2001) argued that ICTs are the weaponry deployed by powerful entities exerting their hegemony. The economic and technological dominance eventually led to the proliferation of the western lifestyle including their norms, morals, beliefs and quotidian

behaviours. In this respect, Banerjee & Linstead (2001) proceed that globalization is likely to substitute or extinguish vulnerable cultures. Moreover, some participants stressed the role of influencers in shaping cultural norms and behaviors, contributing notably to the diffusion and normalization of content that might otherwise be considered taboo in various cultural contexts. Elaborating on the impact of cultural globalization on the portrayal of taboos among Algerians, data unveiled a large consensus among the respondents on its presence depicting it as detrimental stating: "This is especially wrong, for it may diminish the value of local traditions and cultures and potentially cause cultural or social conflicts". According to them, local cultures are increasingly endangered as distinct norms, values, and beliefs infiltrate societal norms. Taboos, for instance, are gradually embraced eroding these cultures until they melt into the foreign cultural system. Finally, a substantial majority of participants acknowledged the need to set regulations on certain content on TikTok even if it is acceptable in other cultures so as to evade the obliteration of our own. Still, a minority refused limitations of any sort claiming individual freedoms. It seems that this slogan is in itself ushered by globalization as advertising for such fancy ideas paves the way for easier conquest. In light of the findings on TikTok's impact on cultural norms, especially among the youth, it is evident that the digital platform contributes to a shift in local values and traditions, including the normalization of taboos. In response to this challenge, integrating cultural content into educational curricula is crucial to fostering a deeper understanding of local identity and resilience against global influences (Seddiki, 2018). By embedding lessons that address cultural globalization and digital media's effects, educational institutions can equip students with the critical tools to navigate these trends while preserving their own cultural values.

5 Conclusion

This paper examines the influence of cultural globalization on the portrayal of taboos on TikTok within the Algerian society. The findings unveiled the platform's appeal to the younger generation being more inclined towards leisure content. Notably, the research uncovered the pervasiveness of various taboos on the platform as a result of globalization in which the western culture is being increasingly proliferated into the Algerian society, particularly via TikTok. This poses a significant challenge to the national identity, as it undermines local values and morals. Additionally, the normalization of taboos reflects a broader shift influenced by western trends. Since kids and teenagers are more addicted to this app, urgent measures are necessary to regulate content and preserve local identity.

In response to the challenges identified, practical recommendations are outlined to manage the portrayal of taboos on TikTok and uphold local cultural values in Algeria. First, the government ought to implement stringent regulations addressing cultural sensitivity so as to safeguard the Arab and Islamic identity. Moreover, religious scholars should advocate for Islamic guidelines to rehabilitate the community's ethical values and eradicate taboos. It is especially recommended to preach via the platform itself. Further, as TikTokers play a vital role in this cultural transformation, they had better select their content properly respecting the Algerian cultural framework. Users, as well, must unsubscribe channels that exhibit inappropriate content, refrain from commenting on unclean videos and use the platform effectively and responsibly. Most importantly, parents have to supervise their kids as what to follow on TikTok. Furthermore, teachers, syllabus designers and educational stakeholders should take a step sensibilizing students and working towards cultivating their intercultural communication competence so as to equip them with the skills required to navigate foreign norms and behaviours when encountering them.

On a global scale, international organizations and digital platforms like TikTok should collaborate to establish guidelines that respect and promote cultural diversity globally. Governments and regulatory bodies across nations should enact policies that safeguard local cultures from being overshadowed by global trends on platforms such as TikTok. Additionally, educational institutions worldwide should integrate modules that educate users about the preservation of cultural identities amidst cultural globalization facilitated by digital platforms like TikTok. Furthermore, cultural and heritage organizations should advocate for the development of technologies and algorithms that protect and promote diverse cultural expressions on TikTok and similar platforms. Finally, scholars and researchers in the field of cultural studies should conduct interdisciplinary studies to understand and mitigate the impact of cultural globalization on local cultures through digital media channels like TikTok.

References

Bakhouche,C., & Retimi, A. (2022). Social media sites and their role in producing deviant behavior among young people (tiktok model). *Horizons Journal of Sociology* ,12(1), 202-220

Banerjee, S. B., & Linstead, S. (2001). Globalization, multiculturalism and other fictions: colonialism for the new millennium? *Organization*, 8(4), 683–722.

Beck, U. (2003). *What is globalization? Errors of globalism – responses to globalization*. UK: Polity Press.

Blum, D. W. (2007).*National identity and globalization: Youth, state, and society in post-Soviet Eurasia*. Cambridge University Press.

Corley, K. G. 2004. Defined by our strategy or our culture? Hierarchical differences in perceptions of organizational identity and change, *Human Relations*, 57(9), 1145-1177.

Evenett, S.J., 1999. The World Trading System: The Road Ahead. *Finance & Development* 36(4), 22-25.

Friedman, L, T. (2002). *Longitudes and attitudes.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Giddens, A. (2002). *Runaway world how globalisation is reshaping our lives*. Profile Books.

Guo, J. (2021). Research on the influence of TikTok on teenagers, *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, volume 631, 1390-1393

Hamelink, Cees. 1988. *Cultural autonomy in global communications: Planning national information policy*. London: Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind (3rd ed.)*. McGraw-Hill.

Hopper, P. (2007). *Understanding cultural globalization*. Polity Press.

Huntington, S. (1993). The clash of civilizations. *Foreign Affairs*, 72(2), 22-49. https://doi.org/10.2307/20045621

Kemp, S. (2023). Digital 2023: Algeria. Retrieved March 20, 2024, from https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-algeria

Kennedy, T. (2020). The Impact of TikTok on Girls During the Pandemic: A Liberation of Girlhood or Cause for Concern? *International Coalition of Girls' Schools.* Retrieved from https://www.agsa.org.au/research/the-impact-of-tiktok-on-girls-during-the-pandemic-a-liberation-of-girlhood-or-cause-for-concern-kennedy-2020/

Lajnef, K. (2023). The effect of social media influencers' on teenagers behavior: an empirical study using cognitive map technique, *Current Psychology, 42(5), 19364–19377*

Lamouri,A.,& Nahal, S. (2022). The impact of digital media on the social values of the Algerian teenager: TikTok is a model. *International Journal of Social Communication*, 9(2), 242-257

Lee, E. (1996). Globalization and employment: Is anxiety justified?. *International Labour Review*, 135(5), 486-497.

Liu, S., Volcˇicˇ, Z., & Gallois, C. (2015). *Introducing intercultural communication : Global cultures and contexts.* SAGE.

Matos, C. (2012). Globalization and the mass media. In G. Ritzer (Ed.), *The Wiley-Blackwell's encyclopaedia of globalization*, pp-1329-1339. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/5542/

Matsumoto, D. (1996). *Culture and psychology*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

McQuail, D. (2005). *McQuail's mass communication theory*. London: Sage Publications.

Miller, V. (2020). *Understanding digital culture*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Pfister, T.(2000). Citizenship and Globalization. *Ethnopolitics*, 4(1) ,105– 113

Qanbar, N. (2011). A sociolinguistic study of the linguistic taboos in the Yemeni society. *Modern Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 3(2), 86-104.

Raras, A., & Sudarwati, E. (2021). What you are is what you say: An analysis of taboo words on TikTok, *Jurnal KATA*, 5(2), 321-332

Seddiki, M.C. (2018). The inclusion of cultural content in civilization course classes: A procedure to motivate students or frustrate them? In Journal of Studies in Language, Culture and Society, 01(01), 57-71

Seelye, H. N. (1997). *Teaching culture: Strategies for intercultural communication*. National Textbook Company.

Skare M. and Soriano, D. (2021). How globalization is changing digital technology adoption: An international perspective. *Journal of Innovation and Knowledge*, 6(4), 222-233. https://10.1016/j.jik.2021.04.001

Start.io. (2023). Tiktok Users in Algeria. Retrieved March 20, 2024, from https://www.start.io/audience/tiktok-users-in-algeria

The Levin Institute.(2013). *Culture and globalization*. Globalization101. Retrieved from https://www.globalization101.org/

Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Wardhaugh, R. (2010). *An introduction to sociolinguistics*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge University Press

.

Appendix

Questionnaire

Investigating the Impact of Cultural Globalization on the Use of Taboos on TikTok Platform: The Case of Algerian Society

Dear participant,

This questionnaire is designed to gather information for research purposes. You are kindly requested to fill it in. You have to know that your participation is voluntary, and your responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

- Please answer each question to the best of your ability.
- If you have any concerns or questions about the survey, please feel free to contact us via email: mariemguern@gmail.com

Section One: Demographic Information

1-Age:　　　　under 18 years　　　　18- 25 years　　　26-40 years　　　above 40 years

2-Gender:　　　　male　　　　female

3-Educational Level: high school　　　　Bachelor degree　　　　Master degree

　　　　　　Doctorate degree　　　others : ……………………………

Section Two: Tiktok Use by Algerians

4-How often do you use TikTok?　　Everyday　　several times a week　　rarely

5-What do you use it for?　　Studying　　pleasure　　others: …………………

6-Which content is available on the platform the most? (select all that apply)

Educational content　　religious content　　comedy skits　　Dance challenges　beauty and fashion　　cooking　　fitness　　travel and adventure　pet videos　　others (please specify): ………………………….

7-Do you find its content useful?　Always　sometimes　rarely　never

8-Do you find it clean and appropriate?　Always　sometimes　rarely　never

Section Three: Cultural Globalization and Taboo Use

9-　How often do you encounter taboo topics on TikTok videos?
　　Always　　often　　sometimes　　rarely　　never
10-　What taboos are the most pervasive on TikTok?　Verbal taboos　　taboo topics　　wild music　　inappropriate clothing style　inappropriate gestures　　others (please specify): ……………………….
11-　What kind of verbal taboos are widespread on TikTok?　Religious taboos　sexual taboos　　others (please specify): …………………………..
12-　What is your opinion on global trends being adopted without understanding their cultural background?
　　………………………………………………………………………………………
　　………………
13-　How do you feel when encountering taboos?
　　comfortable as the world is changing
　　Neutral, each one is responsible for his own behaviours
　　Uncomfortable as our culture is being threatened

14-   To what extent are taboos gaining popularity among Algerians?
   Not   popular
   Very popular

   1 ☐   2 ☐   3 ☐   4 ☐
   5 ☐

15-   In your opinion, what are the reasons behind the spread of taboos on social media and Tiktok particularly?

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………

16-   In your opinion, how has cultural globalization influenced the portrayal of taboos on TikTok among Algerians?

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………

17-   Do you think there should be any limitations on the types of content allowed on TikTok, even if it is not considered taboo in certain cultures?   Yes   No
   unsure

18-   Why or why not?

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your feedback is valuable to us