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# TIKTOK USE, INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR AND THE INFORMATION NEEDS OF PREGNANT WOMEN: EVIDENCE FROM TWO TERTIARY HOSPITALS IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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**Abstract**

This study examined the influence of TikTok and information seeking behaviour on the information needs of pregnant women attending UNIOSUN Teaching Hospital, Osogbo, and LAUTECH Teaching Hospital, Osun State, Nigeria. The study was anchored on Wilson's model of information behaviour, Self-Determination Theory and Affordance Theory. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and a structured questionnaire was administered to 218 pregnant women attending antenatal clinics, out of which 209 copies (95.87%) were valid for analysis. Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation, while the null hypothesis was tested using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that the respondents had high information needs (weighted mean = 3.24), especially on nutrition and diet. TikTok use was widespread (77.5%), and over 82% of respondents frequently came across pregnancy-related content on their For You Page unsolicited. Doctors, antenatal classes and nurses were the most consulted sources, while TikTok was the leading informal source and moderately influenced the respondents' information needs (weighted mean = 2.98). A weak but significant positive relationship was found between information seeking behaviour and information needs ($r = 0.137$, $p = 0.049$). However, 61.7% of the respondents could not distinguish credible from false content on TikTok. The study concluded that TikTok has become an important part of the information environment of pregnant women and recommended that healthcare providers and library and information professionals provide verified

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pregnancy information on TikTok and strengthen the health information literacy of pregnant women.

**Keywords:** TikTok, Information needs, Information seeking behaviour, Pregnant women, Health information, Social media, Nigeria

## Introduction

Access to timely, accurate, and relevant information is central to good health outcomes, and nowhere is this more evident than in pregnancy, a period marked by rapidly changing physiological, nutritional, and psychosocial needs. Pregnant women routinely require information on nutrition and diet, danger signs and complications, medication safety, foetal development, exercise, and emotional wellbeing, needs that, if unmet, can contribute to poor health-seeking behaviour, anxiety, and adverse maternal and child health outcomes (Adudu & Eruvwe, 2020; Ogunmodede et al., 2013). In Nigeria, where the maternal mortality ratio stands at an estimated 576 deaths per 100,000 live births, the fourth highest in the world, and where the country accounts for roughly one-tenth of global maternal deaths despite holding only about 2.4 percent of the world's population (UNICEF Nigeria, n.d.), the question of how pregnant women seek, access, and use pregnancy-related information is not merely an academic concern but a matter of considerable public health significance.

Traditionally, pregnant women in Nigeria have relied on formal healthcare channels, doctors, nurses and midwives, and antenatal health education classes, supplemented by informal sources such as family members, friends who have had children, and, more recently, the internet (Adudu & Eruvwe, 2020; Ogunmodede et al., 2013). However, the last decade has witnessed a fundamental shift in the information ecosystem, driven by the proliferation of smartphones and social media. As of late 2025,

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Nigeria had approximately 109 million internet users, representing an internet penetration rate of about 45.5 percent of the population, while TikTok's advertising reach in the country stood at roughly 47.8 million users aged 18 and above, equivalent to 44.0 percent of the local internet user base and a year-on-year increase of over 43 percent (Kemp, 2026). TikTok, a short-video social media platform driven by a highly personalised algorithmic recommendation system popularly known as the For You Page (FYP), has, within a relatively short period, become one of the most consumed digital platforms among Nigerian women of reproductive age, including pregnant women.

Unlike deliberate, query-based information seeking on search engines, TikTok's FYP curates and pushes content to users based on their viewing, scrolling, liking, and sharing behaviour, often without any active searching on the user's part (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022; Klug et al., 2021). This algorithmic, hedonic mode of content delivery has made TikTok attractive as an incidental and entertaining source of health information, including pregnancy-related content, but it has also raised serious concerns among health communication and information science scholars regarding the credibility, accuracy, and quality of the health information in circulation on the platform (Hill et al., 2023; Kirkpatrick & Lawrie, 2024; O'Sullivan et al., 2022). Emerging evidence also suggests that younger users, including women of childbearing age, increasingly treat TikTok as a search engine in its own right, a trend documented among Gen Z social media users generally (Rosenblatt, 2022).

From a library and information science (LIS) perspective, this shift is significant. Historically, the study of information needs and information seeking behaviour, long a core concern of LIS research, has focused on how individuals recognise gaps in their

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knowledge and pursue formal or informal channels to close them (Wilson, 1999). The rise of algorithmically mediated, entertainment-oriented platforms such as TikTok complicates this picture, since information exposure on such platforms is frequently unsolicited and driven by platform design rather than by the user's deliberate information seeking. Understanding how this dynamic plays out among a vulnerable population such as pregnant women, and what implications it holds for information seeking behaviour, information needs satisfaction, and information literacy, is therefore an important and timely undertaking for LIS scholarship in Nigeria. It is against this background that the present study investigates the influence of TikTok and information seeking behaviour on the information needs of pregnant women attending UNIOSUN Teaching Hospital (UTH) and LAUTECH Teaching Hospital, two major tertiary healthcare institutions in Osun State, Nigeria.

**Statement of the Problem**

Pregnancy is a period during which women require timely and accurate information on a wide range of issues, including nutrition, danger signs, medication, foetal development and emotional wellbeing. Ideally, such information should be obtained from healthcare providers during antenatal visits and complemented by other reliable sources, so that pregnant women can make informed decisions about their own health and that of their unborn babies. However, the channels through which pregnant women obtain information appear to be changing with the growing use of smartphones and social media, and TikTok in particular has become a popular platform among women of reproductive age in Nigeria.

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Unlike search engines, on which users look for information deliberately, TikTok delivers content to its users through the For You Page on the basis of their viewing and engagement patterns. This implies that pregnant women may come across pregnancy-related content without actively searching for it. Such a pattern of exposure may shape what pregnant women know, the additional information they desire and the sources they consult. Yet, the extent to which this occurs among pregnant women attending tertiary hospitals in Osun State has not been established.

It was observed that attention in the study of the information needs and information seeking behaviour of pregnant women in Nigeria has been concentrated mainly on interpersonal, print and general internet sources, while short-video platforms such as TikTok have received little attention. It is therefore not clear how TikTok use and information seeking behaviour relate to the information needs of pregnant women in the study area. This study was therefore designed to examine the influence of TikTok and information seeking behaviour on the information needs of pregnant women attending UNIOSUN Teaching Hospital and LAUTECH Teaching Hospital, Osun State, Nigeria.

**Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the information needs of pregnant women attending UNIOSUN Teaching Hospital and LAUTECH Teaching Hospital?
2. What is the frequency and pattern of TikTok use for pregnancy-related information among pregnant women attending the two hospitals?

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3. What is the information seeking behaviour of pregnant women in relation to sources used for pregnancy-related information?
4. How does the use of TikTok influence the information needs of pregnant women attending the two hospitals?
5. What are the challenges encountered by pregnant women in using TikTok to meet their pregnancy-related information needs?

## Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

$H_0$1: There is no significant relationship between information seeking behaviour and the information needs of pregnant women attending UNIOSUN Teaching Hospital and LAUTECH Teaching Hospital.

## Literature Review

### Conceptual Clarification

Information need refers to a recognised gap between what an individual knows and what he or she requires to know to make a decision, resolve a problem, or satisfy a curiosity (Wilson, 1999). For pregnant women, information needs typically span nutrition and diet, danger signs and complications, personal hygiene, exercise, medication safety, foetal development, labour and delivery preparation, and emotional and mental wellbeing (Adudu & Eruvwe, 2020; Ogunmodede et al., 2013). Information seeking behaviour, in turn, describes the purposive and, at times, incidental activities through which individuals identify, locate, evaluate, and use information to satisfy a

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recognised need (Wilson, 1999). Historically, this behaviour has been studied in relation to formal channels, such as healthcare providers and antenatal classes, and informal channels, such as family, friends, and, more recently, the internet.

TikTok is a short-video social media application built around a highly personalised recommendation algorithm that curates and delivers content to a user's For You Page (FYP) based on that user's viewing, scrolling, liking, and sharing behaviour rather than on explicit search queries (Klug et al., 2021). This distinguishes it from conventional health-information channels, including library and hospital-based resources, search engines, and even other social media platforms with a more chronological or subscription-based feed. Within the health communication literature, TikTok is increasingly recognised both as an emergent, hedonic source of health information and as a significant vector for health misinformation, given the largely unmoderated, user-generated nature of its content (Kirkpatrick & Lawrie, 2024; Song et al., 2022).

**Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored in three complementary theoretical perspectives: Wilson's model of information behaviour, Self-Determination Theory, and Affordance Theory. Wilson's (1999) model conceptualises information behaviour as arising from a recognised information need that is shaped by the individual's personal, social, and environmental context, and that is subsequently pursued through active or passive information seeking, moderated by intervening variables such as psychological, demographic, and source-related factors. This framework is well suited to explaining why pregnant women, confronted with a recognised need for pregnancy-related

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information, might turn to a readily available, low-cost, and engaging platform such as TikTok in addition to, or sometimes in place of, more formal channels.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000), as applied to health information adoption on hedonic social applications by Song et al. (2022), holds that individuals are motivated to adopt and continue using information sources that satisfy their basic psychological needs for autonomy (a sense of choice and control), competence (a sense of mastery and understanding), and relatedness (a sense of social connection). Applied to TikTok, this theory suggests that pregnant women may be drawn to the platform not solely because it satisfies an informational need, but because it simultaneously satisfies the need for entertainment, self-directed exploration, and connection with other pregnant women.

Complementing this, Affordance Theory, as explicated for communication research by Evans et al. (2017), directs attention to the specific action possibilities that a technology affords its users. In the context of this study, TikTok's hedonic affordance (entertainment and enjoyment), connective affordance (interaction with other pregnant women through comments and shared experiences), and utilitarian affordance (active searching and information retrieval) together provide a framework for understanding the varied ways in which pregnant women engage with the platform, and how that engagement, in turn, shapes their information needs and information seeking behaviour.

**Empirical Review**

A substantial body of Nigerian LIS and health literature has documented the high level of information need among pregnant women. Ogunmodede et al. (2013), studying

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pregnant women attending LAUTECH Teaching Hospital and Bowen University Teaching Hospital in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, found that pregnant women had considerable, largely unmet, information needs relating to maternity, delivery, and breastfeeding, and identified health workers, family members, and mass media as key sources of information. Similarly, Adudu and Eruvwe (2020), in a study of antenatal patients attending central hospitals in Delta and Edo States, found that pregnant women relied predominantly on healthcare providers, antenatal classes, mobile applications, and the experiences of family and friends to meet their pregnancy-related information needs. Outside Nigeria, Mansour (2023), in a qualitative study of Egyptian pregnant women, similarly found that a majority of respondents were able to identify their health information needs but relied primarily on informal networks, family, friends, and healthcare providers, rather than formal information resources such as libraries, underscoring the broadly cross-cultural pattern whereby informal and interpersonal channels dominate pregnancy-related information seeking, even where formal or digital alternatives exist.

With respect to the role of digital and social media sources specifically, Vogels-Broeke et al. (2022), in a large cross-sectional study of pregnant women in the Netherlands, found that more than 90 percent of respondents identified their midwife or obstetrician as a trustworthy source of pregnancy information, while social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram were comparatively less used and were generally perceived as among the least trustworthy sources, even though digital sources such as apps, websites, forums, and social media were nonetheless consulted by a meaningful proportion of respondents. This finding highlights that, even in a high-

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connectivity European context, formal healthcare providers retain primacy as trusted information sources, a pattern that resonates with the Nigerian evidence reviewed above.

Regarding TikTok specifically, Klug et al. (2021) demonstrated, through a mixed-method study of user assumptions about the TikTok algorithm, that users often develop folk theories about how the platform's For You Page curates content, with many users perceiving the algorithm as tracking their behaviour closely and pushing content accordingly, frequently without deliberate searching on their part. Bhandari and Bimo (2022) extended this understanding by conceptualising TikTok use as producing an "algorithmized self," wherein the platform's recommendation system plays an active role in shaping users' self-presentation, interests, and, by extension, the content, including health-related content, that they are exposed to. This algorithmic exposure pattern has also been linked to a broader trend, documented by Rosenblatt (2022), whereby a growing share of Generation Z social media users, including young women, increasingly use TikTok in place of conventional search engines such as Google to seek out information.

The growing role of TikTok as a health information source is further reflected in Song et al.'s (2022) study of health information adoption on the platform, which found that adoption was significantly predicted by the satisfaction of users' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, framed through TikTok's hedonic, utilitarian, and connective affordances. However, this growing informational role is tempered by mounting evidence of the platform's vulnerability to misinformation. O'Sullivan et al. (2022), in a content analysis of TikTok videos from a paediatric

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urological perspective, found a considerable volume of unintentionally misleading medical content.

Hill et al. (2023), in a rapid review of content quality and health misinformation on TikTok, similarly reported persistent concerns regarding the reliability of health information circulating on the platform. Kirkpatrick and Lawrie (2024), in a survey study of young women's use of TikTok as a health information source in the United States, found that while many young women turned to the platform for health information, a substantial proportion also reported encountering misinformation. In the Nigerian context, Dubawa (2025), the country's leading fact-checking organisation, has documented multiple instances of viral, false health-related claims, including unproven remedies and dietary practices, being fact-checked after circulating widely on TikTok, corroborating international concerns regarding the platform's role in the spread of health misinformation within the Nigerian information environment.

**Gap in the Literature**

While the reviewed literature establishes, on the one hand, that pregnant women in Nigeria have high and often unmet pregnancy-related information needs that are predominantly addressed through formal healthcare channels and informal interpersonal networks (Adudu & Eruvwe, 2020; Ogunmodede et al., 2013), and, on the other hand, that TikTok has emerged internationally as a significant, algorithmically driven, and occasionally unreliable source of health information (Kirkpatrick & Lawrie, 2024; Klug et al., 2021; Song et al., 2022), few empirical studies have directly examined how TikTok engagement interacts with information seeking behaviour to shape the information needs of pregnant women within a Nigerian tertiary hospital context.

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Existing Nigerian LIS studies on pregnant women's information behaviour predate the mainstream adoption of TikTok, while existing TikTok-and-health studies have largely been conducted outside Nigeria and outside the maternal health domain specifically. This study addresses this gap by empirically investigating the relationship between TikTok use, information seeking behaviour, and information needs among pregnant women attending two tertiary hospitals in Osun State, Nigeria.

**Methodology**

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, considered appropriate for systematically describing the information needs, TikTok engagement, information seeking behaviour, and perceived influence of TikTok among a defined population, and for testing the relationship between these constructs using inferential statistics. The population of the study comprised pregnant women attending antenatal clinics at UNIOSUN Teaching Hospital (UTH), Osogbo, and LAUTECH Teaching Hospital, two tertiary healthcare institutions in Osun State, Nigeria. A sample of 218 pregnant women was proportionately drawn from the two hospitals in line with their relative antenatal clinic attendance, and a structured questionnaire was administered to the sampled respondents.

The questionnaire was divided into five sections. Section A elicited respondents' demographic characteristics, including age, educational level, occupation, marital status, and healthcare centre attended. Section B (11 items) measured respondents' information needs on a four-point scale ranging from Very High Need to Very Low Need. Section C (6 items) measured TikTok engagement behaviour on a five-point scale ranging from Always to Never, alongside dichotomous items on TikTok ownership,

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frequency and duration of use, exposure to pregnancy-related content, types of content consumed, and purposes of use. Section D (9 items) measured information seeking behaviour in relation to nine formal and informal information sources, also on a five-point scale. Section E (8 items) measured the perceived influence of TikTok on respondents' information needs using a four-point agreement scale, alongside dichotomous items on challenges encountered in using TikTok for pregnancy-related information.

The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by experts in library and information science and reproductive health, and was thereafter pilot-tested to assess its reliability. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, computed from the 209 valid responses obtained during the main data collection exercise, with a construct considered reliable where the alpha coefficient was equal to or greater than 0.75 (Cronbach, 1951). As shown in Table 1, all four multi-item Likert-scaled sections of the instrument, as well as the overall instrument, returned alpha coefficients well above this threshold, confirming that the instrument possessed a high level of internal consistency.

**Table 1**

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*Reliability of the Research Instrument (Cronbach's Alpha)*

| Construct | No. of Items | Cronbach's Alpha | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|
| Information Needs (Section B) | 11 | 0.847 | Reliable |
| TikTok Engagement (Section C) | 6 | 0.921 | Reliable |
| Information Seeking Behaviour (Section D) | 9 | 0.864 | Reliable |
| Influence of TikTok (Section E) | 8 | 0.895 | Reliable |
| Overall Instrument (all Likert sections) | 34 | 0.918 | Reliable |

*Note.* Alpha coefficient ≥ 0.75 was considered acceptable/reliable for this study.

Of the 218 copies of the questionnaire administered, 209 copies (95.87%) were valid for analysis. Data collected were coded and analysed using descriptive statistics, comprising frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation, to answer the five research questions. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to test the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance, examining the relationship between respondents' composite information seeking behaviour scores and their composite information needs scores.

## Results and Discussion

### Questionnaire Administration and Return Rate

**Table 2**
*Distribution of Questionnaire Administration and Return Rate*

| Description | Number | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Copies administered | 218 | 100.0 |
| Copies returned and found valid for analysis | 209 | 95.87 |
| Copies not returned/invalid | 9 | 4.13 |

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Table 2 shows that 209 (95.87%) of the 218 copies of the questionnaire administered were valid for analysis. This response rate was considered adequate for the study.

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**Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

**Table 3:** *Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

| Demographic Characteristics | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **Age Range** | | |
| Less than 18 years | 18 | 8.6 |
| 18–25 years | 43 | 20.6 |
| 26–30 years | 82 | 39.2 |
| 31–35 years | 38 | 18.2 |
| 36–40 years | 28 | 13.4 |
| **Total** | 209 | 100.0 |
| **Highest Educational Level** | | |
| No formal education | 6 | 2.9 |
| Primary school | 6 | 2.9 |
| Secondary school | 38 | 18.2 |
| OND/NCE | 38 | 18.2 |
| HND/B.Sc | 104 | 49.8 |
| Postgraduate | 17 | 8.1 |
| **Total** | 209 | 100.1 |
| **Occupation** | | |
| Civil servant | 23 | 11.0 |
| Self-employed | 97 | 46.4 |
| Private sector employee | 41 | 19.6 |
| Unemployed/homemaker | 36 | 17.2 |
| Student | 12 | 5.7 |
| **Total** | 209 | 99.9 |
| **Marital Status** | | |
| Married | 149 | 71.3 |
| Single | 43 | 20.6 |
| Divorced/Separated | 17 | 8.1 |
| **Total** | 209 | 100.0 |
| **Tertiary Healthcare Centre Attended** | | |
| UNIOSUN Teaching Hospital | 105 | 50.2 |
| LAUTECH Teaching Hospital | 104 | 49.8 |

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| Demographic Characteristics | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **Total** | 209 | 100.0 |

*Note.* Some totals do not sum to exactly 100.0% because of rounding.

Table 3 shows that most of the respondents were aged 26–30 years (39.2%), held HND/B.Sc as their highest qualification (49.8%), were self-employed (46.4%) and were married (71.3%). The respondents were almost evenly drawn from UNIOSUN Teaching Hospital (50.2%) and LAUTECH Teaching Hospital (49.8%).

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**Information Needs of Pregnant Women**

**Research Question 1:** What are the information needs of pregnant women attending UNIOSUN Teaching Hospital and LAUTECH Teaching Hospital?

**Table 4:** *Information Needs of Pregnant Women*

| S/N | Items | VHN (4) | HN (3) | LN (2) | VLN (1) | $\bar{x}$ | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Nutrition and diet during pregnancy | 138 (66.0%) | 65 (31.1%) | 3 (1.4%) | 3 (1.4%) | 3.62 | 0.59 |
| 2 | Vitamins and supplements needed during pregnancy | 79 (37.8%) | 118 (56.5%) | 9 (4.3%) | 3 (1.4%) | 3.31 | 0.62 |
| 3 | Danger signs and complications during pregnancy | 78 (37.3%) | 113 (54.1%) | 12 (5.7%) | 6 (2.9%) | 3.26 | 0.69 |
| 4 | When to seek medical attention during pregnancy | 80 (38.3%) | 109 (52.2%) | 15 (7.2%) | 5 (2.4%) | 3.26 | 0.70 |
| 5 | Personal care and hygiene during pregnancy | 75 (35.9%) | 113 (54.1%) | 15 (7.2%) | 6 (2.9%) | 3.23 | 0.70 |
| 6 | Pain relief options during labour | 71 (34.0%) | 121 (57.9%) | 11 (5.3%) | 6 (2.9%) | 3.23 | 0.68 |
| 7 | Exercise and physical activity during pregnancy | 75 (35.9%) | 117 (56.0%) | 11 (5.3%) | 6 (2.9%) | 3.25 | 0.68 |
| 8 | Medications safe to use during pregnancy | 63 (30.1%) | 131 (62.7%) | 12 (5.7%) | 3 (1.4%) | 3.22 | 0.61 |
| 9 | Foetal growth and development | 69 (33.0%) | 117 (56.0%) | 17 (8.1%) | 6 (2.9%) | 3.19 | 0.70 |
| 10 | Emotional and mental health during pregnancy | 90 (43.1%) | 95 (45.5%) | 12 (5.7%) | 12 (5.7%) | 3.26 | 0.81 |
| 11 | Government health programmes for pregnant women | 51 (24.4%) | 85 (40.7%) | 55 (26.3%) | 18 (8.6%) | 2.81 | 0.90 |

VHN = Very High Need (4); HN = High Need (3); LN = Low Need (2); VLN = Very Low Need (1). Decision rule: 1.00–1.74 = Very Low Need; 1.75–2.49 = Low Need; 2.50–3.24 =

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High Need; 3.25–4.00 = Very High Need. Criterion mean = 2.50. Overall weighted mean = 3.24.

Table 4 shows that the respondents had high information needs (weighted mean = 3.24). The highest needs were information on nutrition and diet during pregnancy ($\bar{x}$ = 3.62), vitamins and supplements ($\bar{x}$ = 3.31), and danger signs and complications, when to seek medical attention, and emotional and mental health during pregnancy ($\bar{x}$ = 3.26 each).

This finding corroborates Ogunmodede et al. (2013), who reported considerable pregnancy, delivery, and breastfeeding-related information needs among pregnant women attending LAUTECH Teaching Hospital and Bowen University Teaching Hospital, Ogbomoso, and aligns with Adudu and Eruvwe (2020), who identified similarly high information needs among antenatal patients in Delta and Edo States. It is also consistent with Mansour (2023), who found that pregnant Egyptian women reported considerable pregnancy-related information needs, particularly regarding nutrition and general pregnancy care, reinforcing the consistency of this need across different healthcare and cultural contexts.

**Frequency and Pattern of TikTok Use**

**Research Question 2:** What is the frequency and pattern of TikTok use for pregnancy-related information among pregnant women attending the two hospitals?

**Table 5:** *TikTok Ownership*

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Has the TikTok application – Yes | 162 | 77.5 |
| Has the TikTok application – No | 44 | 21.1 |
| No response | 3 | 1.4 |

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**Table 6**
*Frequency of TikTok Use*

| Frequency of Use | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Several times daily | 120 | 57.4 |
| Once daily | 24 | 11.5 |
| Several times weekly | 40 | 19.1 |
| Once weekly | 3 | 1.4 |
| Occasionally | 14 | 6.7 |
| Never | 8 | 3.8 |

**Table 7**
*Average Time Spent on TikTok per Day*

| Time Spent per Day | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 30 minutes | 32 | 15.3 |
| 30 minutes – 1 hour | 56 | 26.8 |
| 1–2 hours | 22 | 10.5 |
| 2–3 hours | 49 | 23.4 |
| More than 3 hours | 42 | 20.1 |
| Never | 8 | 3.8 |

**Table 8**
*Frequency of Coming Across Pregnancy-Related Content on the TikTok For You Page (FYP)*

| Frequency of Exposure | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Very often | 70 | 33.5 |
| Often | 103 | 49.3 |
| Sometimes | 25 | 12.0 |
| Never | 11 | 5.3 |

Tables 5 to 8 show that 77.5% of the respondents had the TikTok application, and 57.4% used it several times daily. The largest proportion of the respondents spent between 30 minutes and 1 hour on the platform daily (26.8%), while 82.8% often or very often came across pregnancy-related content on their For You Page.

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This pattern reflects the platform's high penetration among the study population and is consistent with the broader Nigerian trend of rapid TikTok adoption (Kemp, 2026), as well as with international evidence that younger users increasingly favour TikTok over traditional search engines for information retrieval (Rosenblatt, 2022). The finding that over 82% of respondents frequently or very frequently encountered pregnancy-related content on their FYP without deliberately searching for it lends empirical support to Klug et al. (2021) and Bhandari and Bimo (2022), who explained that TikTok's FYP algorithm curates and pushes personalised content based on users' viewing, scrolling, and liking behaviour rather than requiring active searching. This algorithmic exposure pattern means that pregnant women are being exposed to pregnancy-related information-seekingcontent, credible or otherwise, largely by algorithmic design rather than by deliberate information seeking choice.

**Table 9**
*Types of Pregnancy-Related Content Consumed on TikTok*

| S/N | Items | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Exercise and workout routines for pregnant women | 179 (85.6%) | 30 (14.4%) |
| 2 | Nutrition and diet tips during pregnancy | 169 (80.9%) | 40 (19.1%) |
| 3 | Pregnancy symptoms and how to manage them | 161 (77.0%) | 48 (23.0%) |
| 4 | Product recommendations for pregnant women and babies | 140 (67.0%) | 69 (33.0%) |
| 5 | Labour and delivery experiences from other women | 123 (58.9%) | 86 (41.1%) |
| 6 | Personal vlogs from pregnant women/mothers | 109 (52.2%) | 100 (47.8%) |
| 7 | Myths and facts about pregnancy | 105 (50.2%) | 104 (49.8%) |

Table 9 shows that the most consumed pregnancy-related content on TikTok were exercise and workout routines for pregnant women (85.6%), nutrition and diet

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tips (80.9%), and pregnancy symptoms and how to manage them (77.0%). This pattern is broadly consistent with the high information needs on nutrition and physical activity reported in Table 4.

**Table 10**
*Purposes of Using TikTok for Pregnancy-Related Information*

| S/N | Items | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | To connect with other pregnant women (through comments) | 153 (73.2%) | 56 (26.8%) |
| 2 | For entertainment and relaxation during pregnancy | 145 (69.4%) | 64 (30.6%) |
| 3 | To learn from experiences of other pregnant women | 129 (61.7%) | 80 (38.3%) |
| 4 | To find tips for managing pregnancy symptoms | 126 (60.3%) | 83 (39.7%) |
| 5 | To search for specific answers to my pregnancy questions | 123 (58.9%) | 86 (41.1%) |
| 6 | To verify information received from other sources | 114 (54.5%) | 95 (45.5%) |
| 7 | To follow healthcare professionals for health tips | 94 (45.0%) | 115 (55.0%) |

Table 10 shows that the respondents used TikTok mainly to connect with other pregnant women through comments (73.2%), for entertainment and relaxation (69.4%), and to learn from the experiences of other pregnant women (61.7%). The prominence of peer connection and entertainment is consistent with the connective and hedonic affordances described by Evans et al. (2017) and the psychological needs satisfaction framework applied to TikTok by Song et al. (2022).

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**Table 11:** *Engagement with Pregnancy-Related Content on TikTok*

| S/N | Items | Always (5) | Often (4) | Sometimes (3) | Rarely (2) | Never (1) | $\bar{x}$ | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I like pregnancy-related videos | 77 (36.8%) | 89 (42.6%) | 20 (9.6%) | 3 (1.4%) | 20 (9.6%) | 3.96 | 1.18 |
| 2 | I comment on pregnancy-related videos | 33 (15.8%) | 56 (26.8%) | 76 (36.4%) | 21 (10.0%) | 23 (11.0%) | 3.26 | 1.17 |
| 3 | I share pregnancy-related videos | 38 (18.2%) | 46 (22.0%) | 75 (35.9%) | 18 (8.6%) | 32 (15.3%) | 3.19 | 1.27 |
| 4 | I save pregnancy-related videos for later reference | 58 (27.8%) | 44 (21.1%) | 78 (37.3%) | 12 (5.7%) | 17 (8.1%) | 3.55 | 1.19 |
| 5 | I follow creators who post pregnancy content | 42 (20.1%) | 49 (23.4%) | 57 (27.3%) | 44 (21.1%) | 17 (8.1%) | 3.26 | 1.23 |
| 6 | I search for pregnancy topics using TikTok search | 61 (29.2%) | 27 (12.9%) | 48 (23.0%) | 50 (23.9%) | 23 (11.0%) | 3.25 | 1.39 |

*Note.* Decision rule: 1.00–1.80 = Very Low; 1.81–2.60 = Low; 2.61–3.40 = Moderate; 3.41–4.20 = High; 4.21–5.00 = Very High. Criterion mean = 3.00. Overall weighted mean = 3.41.

Table 11 shows a high level of engagement with pregnancy-related content on TikTok (weighted mean = 3.41). Liking pregnancy-related videos ($\bar{x}$ = 3.96) and saving them for later reference ($\bar{x}$ = 3.55) were the major forms of engagement, suggesting that passive engagement was more common than active engagement such as commenting, sharing and searching.

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**Information Seeking Behaviour and Sources of Information**

**Research Question 3:** What is the information seeking behaviour of pregnant women in relation to sources used for pregnancy-related information?

**Table 12**
*Information Seeking Behaviour of Pregnant Women*

| S/N | Items | Always (5) | Often (4) | Sometimes (3) | Rarely (2) | Never (1) | $\bar{x}$ | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Doctors at the hospital | 93 (44.5%) | 92 (44.0%) | 12 (5.7%) | 3 (1.4%) | 9 (4.3%) | 4.23 | 0.95 |
| 2 | Nurses/midwives at the hospital | 62 (29.7%) | 101 (48.3%) | 40 (19.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | 6 (2.9%) | 4.02 | 0.87 |
| 3 | Antenatal health education classes | 71 (34.0%) | 126 (60.3%) | 6 (2.9%) | 0 (0.0%) | 6 (2.9%) | 4.22 | 0.76 |
| 4 | My mother/elderly female relatives | 17 (8.1%) | 87 (41.6%) | 74 (35.4%) | 22 (10.5%) | 9 (4.3%) | 3.39 | 0.93 |
| 5 | My friends who have had children | 35 (16.7%) | 48 (23.0%) | 47 (22.5%) | 70 (33.5%) | 9 (4.3%) | 3.14 | 1.18 |
| 6 | Google search engine | 26 (12.4%) | 35 (16.7%) | 41 (19.6%) | 88 (42.1%) | 19 (9.1%) | 2.81 | 1.19 |
| 7 | TikTok | 46 (22.0%) | 99 (47.4%) | 43 (20.6%) | 3 (1.4%) | 18 (8.6%) | 3.73 | 1.09 |
| 8 | Instagram | 9 (4.3%) | 36 (17.2%) | 42 (20.1%) | 80 (38.3%) | 42 (20.1%) | 2.47 | 1.12 |
| 9 | Health websites/hospital websites | 20 (9.6%) | 36 (17.2%) | 32 (15.3%) | 83 (39.7%) | 38 (18.2%) | 2.60 | 1.24 |

Decision rule: 1.00–1.80 = Very Low; 1.81–2.60 = Low; 2.61–3.40 = Moderate; 3.41–4.20 = High; 4.21–5.00 = Very High. Criterion mean = 3.00. Overall weighted mean = 3.40.

Table 12 shows that the most consulted sources of pregnancy-related information were doctors at the hospital ($\bar{x}$ = 4.23), antenatal health education classes ($\bar{x}$

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= 4.22), nurses/midwives ($\bar{x}$ = 4.02) and TikTok ($\bar{x}$ = 3.73), with TikTok being the leading informal source (weighted mean = 3.40).

This finding is consistent with Ogunmodede et al. (2013) and Adudu and Eruvwe (2020), both of whom found that healthcare providers were considered the most valuable and consulted source of pregnancy information among Nigerian women, and it aligns with Vogels-Broeke et al. (2022), whose Dutch study similarly found that formal healthcare providers, trusted by more than 90% of respondents, outweighed social media as primary sources of pregnancy information. However, the finding that TikTok ($\bar{x}$ = 3.73) ranked ahead of family members, friends, Google search, and Instagram as an information source suggests that TikTok has assumed a comparatively more prominent role among pregnant women in this Nigerian setting than social media platforms were found to occupy in Vogels-Broeke et al.'s (2022) Dutch sample, where digital and social media sources were reported to be comparatively less used and less trusted. This supports the view that, in contexts where access to quality-assured formal health information may be constrained by cost, time, or distance, platforms like TikTok are increasingly filling the gap, consistent with the broader pattern of rising TikTok adoption for information purposes documented by Rosenblatt (2022).

**Influence of TikTok on Information Needs**

**Research Question 4:** How does the use of TikTok influence the information needs of pregnant women attending the two hospitals?

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**Table 13:** *Influence of TikTok on the Information Needs of Pregnant Women*

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| S/N | Items | SA (4) | A (3) | D (2) | SD (1) | $\bar{x}$ | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Using TikTok has increased my awareness of pregnancy topics I never thought about | 110 (52.6%) | 83 (39.7%) | 6 (2.9%) | 10 (4.8%) | 3.40 | 0.77 |
| 2 | TikTok has made me want to learn more about specific pregnancy issues | 76 (36.4%) | 117 (56.0%) | 3 (1.4%) | 13 (6.2%) | 3.22 | 0.76 |
| 3 | TikTok has helped me understand what to expect during pregnancy and delivery | 45 (21.5%) | 139 (66.5%) | 6 (2.9%) | 19 (9.1%) | 3.00 | 0.78 |
| 4 | Information from TikTok has influenced decisions I make about my pregnancy | 61 (29.2%) | 107 (51.2%) | 31 (14.8%) | 10 (4.8%) | 3.05 | 0.80 |
| 5 | I trust the pregnancy information I get from TikTok | 26 (12.4%) | 98 (46.9%) | 63 (30.1%) | 22 (10.5%) | 2.61 | 0.84 |
| 6 | TikTok makes me feel more connected to other pregnant women | 47 (22.5%) | 140 (67.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 22 (10.5%) | 3.01 | 0.81 |
| 7 | Sometimes TikTok content makes me more worried about my pregnancy | 53 (25.4%) | 66 (31.6%) | 68 (32.5%) | 22 (10.5%) | 2.72 | 0.96 |
| 8 | My healthcare provider has corrected information I got from TikTok | 46 (22.0%) | 98 (46.9%) | 52 (24.9%) | 13 (6.2%) | 2.85 | 0.84 |

*Note.* SA = Strongly Agree (4); A = Agree (3); D = Disagree (2); SD (1) = Strongly Disagree; *SD* = standard deviation. Decision rule: 1.00–1.74 = Strongly Disagree; 1.75–2.49 = Disagree; 2.50–3.24 = Agree; 3.25–4.00 = Strongly Agree. Criterion mean = 2.50. Overall weighted mean = 2.98.

Table 13 shows that TikTok influenced the information needs of the respondents (weighted mean = 2.98). The respondents mainly agreed that TikTok had increased

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their awareness of pregnancy topics they had never thought about ($\bar{x}$ = 3.40), made them want to learn more about specific pregnancy issues ($\bar{x}$ = 3.22) and influenced decisions they made about their pregnancy ($\bar{x}$ = 3.05).

This finding aligns with Song et al. (2022), who found that health information adoption on hedonic social applications such as TikTok was significantly predicted by the satisfaction of users' basic psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Viewed through the lens of Self-Determination Theory and Affordance Theory adopted for this study, the high level of "liking" behaviour reflects TikTok's hedonic affordance, the fairly strong engagement recorded for connecting with other pregnant women through comments reflects its connective affordance and the satisfaction of the relatedness need, and the moderate-to-high level of active searching for pregnancy topics reflects its utilitarian affordance and the satisfaction of the autonomy and competence needs. However, the finding that respondents agreed their healthcare provider had, at some point, corrected information they obtained from TikTok further underscores concerns regarding the platform's credibility as a health information source (Kirkpatrick & Lawrie, 2024).

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**Challenges Encountered in Using TikTok**

**Research Question 5:** What are the challenges encountered by pregnant women in using TikTok to meet their pregnancy-related information needs?

**Table 14**
*Challenges Encountered by Pregnant Women in Using TikTok for Pregnancy-Related Information*

| S/N | Items | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I cannot tell which information on TikTok is true or false | 129 (61.7%) | 80 (38.3%) |
| 2 | It takes too much time to find useful information on TikTok | 125 (59.8%) | 84 (40.2%) |
| 3 | I worry that following TikTok advice might harm my baby | 109 (52.2%) | 100 (47.8%) |
| 4 | Some TikTok videos give conflicting advice | 105 (50.2%) | 104 (49.8%) |
| 5 | I have no challenges using TikTok for pregnancy information | 96 (45.9%) | 113 (54.1%) |

Table 14 shows that the major challenges encountered by the respondents were the inability to tell true from false information on TikTok (61.7%), the time it takes to find useful information (59.8%), and the worry that following TikTok advice might harm their baby (52.2%).

These findings corroborate concerns raised by O'Sullivan et al. (2022) and Hill et al. (2023) regarding the circulation of poor-quality and misleading health information on TikTok, and they align with Dubawa's (2025) documentation of viral, false health-related claims that have been fact-checked after circulating on TikTok within the Nigerian information environment. They also reflect Kirkpatrick and Lawrie (2024), whose survey similarly found that a substantial proportion of young women using TikTok for health information encountered misinformation on the platform. These

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findings suggest that misinformation, conflicting advice, and the time-consuming nature of sifting through content are the most pressing challenges confronting pregnant women who rely on TikTok for pregnancy-related information.

**Test of Hypothesis**

$H_0$1: There is no significant relationship between information seeking behaviour and the information needs of pregnant women attending UNIOSUN Teaching Hospital and LAUTECH Teaching Hospital.

**Table 15**
*Relationship Between Information Seeking Behaviour and Information Needs of Pregnant Women*

| Variables | *N* | *M* | *SD* | *df* | *r* | *p* | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Information Seeking Behaviour | 209 | 30.62 | 6.54 | 207 | 0.137 | 0.049 | Significant |
| Information Needs | 209 | 35.63 | 4.87 | | | | |

*Note.* Significant at $p < .05$.

Table 15 shows a weak but significant positive relationship between information seeking behaviour and the information needs of pregnant women ($r = 0.137$, $p = 0.049 < 0.05$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Although significant, the relationship is weak, as information seeking behaviour accounts for only about 1.9% of the variance in information needs ($r^2 = 0.019$). This result is consistent with Wilson's (1999) model of information behaviour, which posits that the link between a recognised information need and the information seeking that follows from it is not direct or automatic, but is moderated by psychological, demographic, interpersonal, and source-related variables. It therefore cautions against the assumption that simply encouraging pregnant women to seek information more

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actively, whether from formal sources, family, or platforms such as TikTok, will proportionately resolve their underlying information needs. The finding is also in line with Ogunmodede et al. (2013) and Adudu and Eruvwe (2020), who found that Nigerian pregnant women draw on several concurrent information channels rather than relying on any single source, suggesting that factors beyond information seeking behaviour, such as parity, gestational age, prior pregnancy experience, and educational attainment, warrant closer attention in future research.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Healthcare providers at UNIOSUN Teaching Hospital and LAUTECH Teaching Hospital should routinely ask pregnant women, during antenatal visits, about pregnancy-related information they have encountered on TikTok and other social media platforms, and should proactively address and correct any misinformation identified, given that a majority of respondents reported being unable to distinguish accurate from inaccurate content on the platform.
2. Health sciences and medical librarians, in collaboration with hospital management and health promotion units at both tertiary healthcare centres, should develop and disseminate verified, engaging short-video content addressing pregnant women's highest-rated information needs, particularly nutrition and diet, danger signs, and exercise during pregnancy, on platforms such as TikTok, given the platform's demonstrated reach and appeal among the study population.

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3. Library and information science professionals should extend their information literacy mandate beyond traditional library settings to include social-media-based health information literacy programmes for antenatal patients, equipping pregnant women with practical skills for evaluating the credibility, source, and currency of pregnancy-related content encountered on TikTok and similar platforms.
4. Relevant health authorities and professional bodies should partner with credible healthcare professionals and content creators to increase the presence of verified pregnancy health information on TikTok, so as to leverage the platform's algorithmic reach, evidenced by the high proportion of respondents who frequently encountered pregnancy content on their For You Page, for positive health communication rather than leaving this space open to unverified sources.
5. Fact-checking and content moderation organisations, including platform-level moderation by TikTok itself, should intensify efforts to identify and flag false or misleading pregnancy-related health content, given the extent of unsolicited algorithmic exposure to such content reported by respondents in this study.
6. Future researchers, particularly within library and information science, should investigate the moderating role of factors such as parity, gestational age, and educational level in the relationship between information seeking behaviour and information needs among pregnant women, given the weak strength of the relationship established in this study.

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## Conclusion

This study examined the influence of TikTok and information seeking behaviour on the information needs of pregnant women attending UNIOSUN Teaching Hospital and LAUTECH Teaching Hospital, Osun State, Nigeria. The findings indicate that pregnant women in the study area have consistently high information needs, particularly around nutrition, danger signs, and emotional wellbeing, and that TikTok has become a significant and largely algorithmically driven part of the information ecosystem within which these needs are pursued. While formal healthcare sources, particularly doctors, antenatal health education classes, and nurses, remain the most consulted sources of pregnancy-related information, TikTok has established itself as a more prominent source than traditional informal channels such as family, friends, and general web searches, and it exerts a genuine, if moderate, influence on what pregnant women know, want to learn, and, to some extent, decide about their pregnancies.

This influence appears to operate through the platform's hedonic, connective, and utilitarian affordances, which satisfy pregnant women's underlying needs for enjoyment, social connection, and autonomous, competent information seeking, consistent with the Self-Determination Theory and Affordance Theory perspectives adopted for this study. However, a majority of respondents encountered credibility-related challenges, most notably an inability to distinguish accurate from inaccurate content, underscoring the platform's dual role as both a valuable supplementary information resource and a potential conduit for health misinformation during pregnancy. Furthermore, although information seeking behaviour and information needs were significantly related, the weak strength of this relationship suggests that

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pregnant women's information needs are shaped by a broader constellation of factors beyond how actively they seek information. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of harnessing the reach and appeal of platforms like TikTok to deliver accurate pregnancy information, while equipping pregnant women with the information literacy skills to critically evaluate the health content they encounter, a task in which library and information professionals have an important role to play.

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