BabyTok: A TikTok Intervention to Support Caregivers' Knowledge of Early Communication Development

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Background

- Infants possess neurological systems that are fully equipped for learning
- Depend on frequent, responsive, and sensitive interactions with their caregivers to nurture early brain development (Brito et al., 2020; Romeo et al., 2018)
- Developmental science has indicated poverty as a risk to early language development
- There is a need for the elimination of early language disparities in children who face poverty and other economic instabilities
- This intervention was aimed to educate caregivers on early language learning in infants through a light-touch social media intervention.
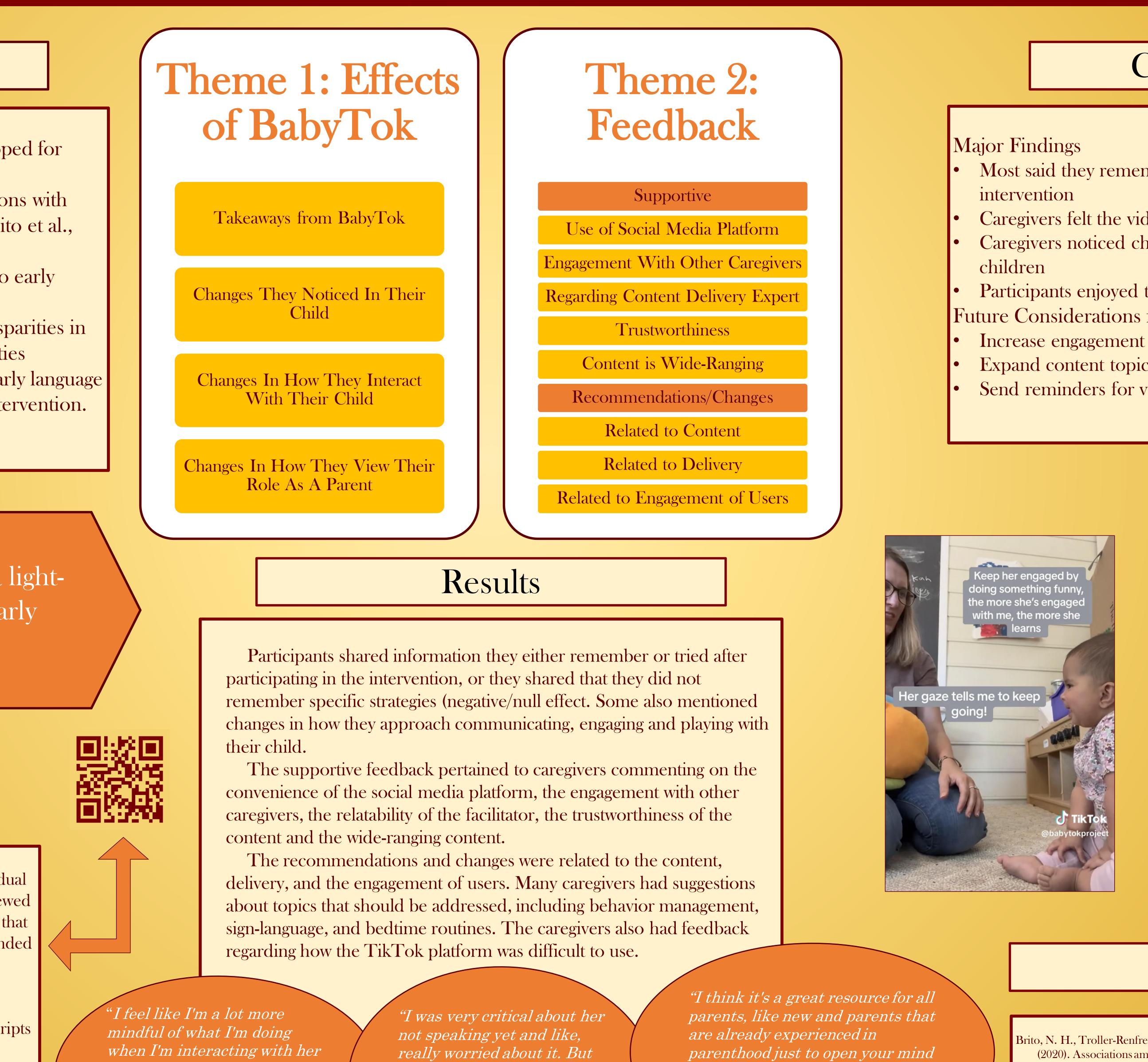
Research Question

How do caregivers of infants perceive a light-touch social media intervention on early communication skills?

Methods

The participants, caregivers of infants 0-18 months, engaged in individual interviews after the BabyTok intervention. The participants were interviewed in 10–15-minute meetings on Zoom. There were a total of 23 interviews that were transcribed and coded. The interview protocol contained 7 open ended questions about the impact and content.

We developed preliminary codes based on the interview questions, respondents' answers to questions, and themes. Quotes within the transcripts were coded by highlighting them with the color assigned to the code. Through meetings, codes that were no longer applicable were removed, codes were re-organized and re-defined, and a more accurate template was developed. The researchers cross-checked a sample of each other's coding to ensure consistency of coding and trustworthiness and credibility of data. The final coding template included codes, subcodes, definitions of subcodes, and an example of a quote for each subcode.

Theme 1: Effects of BabyTok

- Takeaways from BabyTok
- Changes They Noticed In Their Child
- Changes In How They Interact With Their Child
- Changes In How They View Their Role As A Parent

Theme 2: Feedback

- Supportive
- Use of Social Media Platform
- Engagement With Other Caregivers
- Regarding Content Delivery Expert
- Trustworthiness
- Content is Wide-Ranging
- Recommendations/Changes
- Related to Content
- Related to Delivery
- Related to Engagement of Users

Results

Participants shared information they either remember or tried after participating in the intervention, or they shared that they did not remember specific strategies (negative/null effect. Some also mentioned changes in how they approach communicating, engaging and playing with their child.

The supportive feedback pertained to caregivers commenting on the convenience of the social media platform, the engagement with other caregivers, the relatability of the facilitator, the trustworthiness of the content and the wide-ranging content.

The recommendations and changes were related to the content, delivery, and the engagement of users. Many caregivers had suggestions about topics that should be addressed, including behavior management, sign-language, and bedtime routines. The caregivers also had feedback regarding how the TikTok platform was difficult to use.

"I feel like I'm a lot more mindful of what I'm doing when I'm interacting with her on trying to do things that she might copy so that she can implement that and understand what I'm doing."

"I was very critical about her not speaking yet and like, really worried about it. But then she just like, made me feel better that like, it's okay, if they're not as far with their language as they're supposed to be."

"I think it's a great resource for all parents, like new and parents that are already experienced in parenthood just to open your mind and broaden your horizon and other ways to help implement teaching resources for your child."

Conclusion

Major Findings
- Most said they remembered and used strategies from the intervention
- Caregivers felt the videos impacted their role as a parent
- Caregivers noticed changes in their behavior and within their children
- Participants enjoyed the accessibility of the TikTok Platform

Future Considerations for BabyTok 2.0
- Increase engagement
- Expand content topics
- Send reminders for videos

References

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