

The Impact of TikTok on Generation Z's Mental Health

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ABSTRACT

TikTok is a platform that allows users to express their creativity or interests by uploading videos to the main page, often referred to as FYP (For You Page). The use of TikTok social media among Generation Z may affect their mental health. Therefore, it is important to understand how social media, and TikTok in particular, can impact the mental health of users, especially generation Z. This study examined the influence of TikTok on generation Z's mental health. This study examines the influence of TikTok on Generation Z's mental health. This research was conducted by conducting interviews with generation Z and then analyzed using a descriptive approach. The results showed that TikTok social media can have both positive and negative impacts on Generation Z's mental health. It has a positive impact when used to access content that contains motivation, positive experiences of others, increase income and content that is educational in nature. It has a negative impact when used to access dangerous or negative things, follow unhealthy trends and challenges and excessive use.

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INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of the digital era, social media has become an important element in people's daily lives. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook and Twitter not only serve as a means of communication, but also as a place to exchange information, have fun and express opinions. This increase in social media usage is due to the ease of access and speed of information dissemination, allowing people to connect with others around the world. Especially among generation Z, some social media is often used as a means to express themselves, such as creating content that represents feelings with everyday situations. sharing experiences, such as funny incidents when visiting a place. and building social networks, such as holding live streams which then interact directly with followers and other TikTok users. Although social media has many benefits, there are also challenges and risks that need to be considered, especially when it comes to mental health, especially on the TikTok platform which makes many young people mentally unhealthy. The content can be overwhelming which can lead to negative effects such as: Increased anxiety, depression, and poor sleep quality. Therefore, it is important to understand how social media, and TikTok in particular, can impact the mental health of users, especially generation Z.

Overuse of TikTok, especially among teenagers, can have a negative impact on their mental health. TikTok often features extraordinary or significant moments, such as lavish vacations, parties, or major life achievements. This can make people feel like their lives are less interesting than others, or feel as though they are missing out on something important. The feelings of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) that arise from exposure to this kind of content can increase stress, feelings of hopelessness, depression and dissatisfaction with life. The social comparisons that occur on these platforms often make individuals feel inadequate or not good enough, which in turn worsens their self-esteem and body image. In more extreme cases, this emotional distress can lead to suicidal thoughts, especially for those who feel trapped by the social and emotional demands posed by social media.

Excessive use of TikTok, especially close to bedtime, can significantly disrupt sleep quality. With an infinite stream of content, the app is designed to maintain users' attention, often keeping them awake longer than planned. Videos that evoke emotions, such as excitement or anxiety, can also keep a person awake and stimulated, reducing their sleep quality. Using TikTok before bed can cause sleep deprivation, disrupt natural sleep rhythms, and increase anxiety and stress the next day. Sleep deprivation negatively impacts mood, concentration and overall mental health, creating a cycle that is difficult to break if this habit is not managed well.

According to Business of Apps, TikTok will have 1.6 billion active users worldwide by 2022, an increase of about 32.1% from the previous year. Indonesia has 109.9 million users, making it the second most-used country in the world. According to Kompas, 42 percent of TikTok users are Generation Z, aged between 18 and 24. In 2021, they spent an average of 89 minutes every day (Haryanto et al., 2023).

Van Dijk suggests that social media can be considered as a platform that focuses on the existence of its users, which allows them to collaborate and carry out various activities. Thus, social media functions as an online tool that strengthens social relationships and connections between users. Meanwhile, according to Boyd, social media is a set of tools that allow individuals and groups to interact with each other, exchange information, communicate, and sometimes collaborate or have fun together (Siregar, 2022).

TikTok is a platform that allows its users to express their creativity or interests by uploading videos to the main page, often referred to as FYP (For You Page). When the TikTok app is first launched, a video titled "FYP" will appear on the front page of the app, referring to the FYP page. One of the most widely used apps worldwide is Tik Tok. Tik Tok gives users the ability to create short-form movies with music, filters, and other artistic tools. A Chinese company launched this app (Cutisah & Sungkono, 2023). Nugroho, Aji Vishnu suggests that TikTok application users can easily produce short videos that are able to attract the attention of many viewers thanks to the various special effects unique to the application (Salsabila, Hanggara, & Dwi, 2021). Social media like TikTok provides generation Z with many opportunities for expression, sharing creativity, and interacting with peers. However, there are growing concerns about the effects of social media on mental health despite its benefits.

From the results of research conducted by Medina Dm et al (2024) stated that a number of TikTok users often watch content late into the night, which causes them to feel dissatisfied, envious, and unhappy with their lives. This leads to stress and anxiety that they often feel when they see other social media users' posts. They sometimes feel inferior because they compare their lives with others who they perceive as better. In addition, there are also those who argue that the use of social media actually makes them feel sad and insecure, which worsens their emotional state (Mardiana & Maryana, 2024).

Merriam-Webster suggests mental health is a state in which a person is able to cope with daily life challenges and psychological conditions, utilize their cognitive and emotional abilities, and actively participate in society. Mental health includes physical, psychological, and social factors. Therefore, optimal mental health is reflected when a person feels safe, is able to achieve their potential, manage stress well, work efficiently, and contribute to society (Ainun Jariyah et al., 2024). According to Veit and Ware, mental well-being consists of two components. The first component is the absence of psychological distress, which is reflected in low levels of anxiety, depression, and loss

of self-control. The second component is psychological well-being, which is characterized by a healthy emotional state, life satisfaction, and overall positive feelings (Suryanto Aloysius & Nada Salvia, 2021). Mental health is influenced by various interrelated factors, including biological, psychological, social, economic, religious, and environmental elements. So it can be concluded that mental health is an emotional and psychological state that affects the way individuals think, feel, and act and is influenced by internal and external factors. This research examines the influence of TikTok on Generation Z's mental health by understanding the relationship between the use of TikTok and the state of Generation Z's mental health from both positive and negative aspects. It is important to understand these dynamics as social media is increasingly important in Generation Z's daily lives. It is hoped that this research will assist in developing useful intervention methods to support Generation Z's mental health in the internet age.

The use of TikTok and other social media does provide many benefits in terms of creativity, entertainment, and expanding social networks, especially for Generation Z. However, we need to be wise and responsible in using them so that the negative impact on mental health can be minimized. Avoid excessive use of social media, especially before bedtime, as it can disrupt the quality of rest and trigger feelings of anxiety and stress the next day. Don't get caught up in unhealthy social comparisons due to the content displayed on social media, such as the glamorous lives and achievements of others, as this can damage self-esteem and create a sense of dissatisfaction with oneself. Let's use social media positively, focus on self-development, and always remember that what is displayed online does not necessarily reflect the real reality. With this awareness, we can maintain our mental health, enjoy social media in a healthy way, and remain productive in our daily lives.

METHOD

The research used a type of qualitative research with a descriptive approach by conducting interviews directly with sources in the field. Bogdan and Taylor (1982) suggested that qualitative research is a method that produces descriptive data relating to individuals and their behavior. This research is conducted in a natural context or environment, with the researcher acting as the main instrument in the data collection process (Rusandi & Rusli, 2021). Qualitative research is descriptive and uses inductive analysis. Descriptive research is a research strategy that involves analyzing data. individual and group phenomena that require individuals to reflect on their own lives (Murdiyanto, n.d.). The researcher then collected data through interviews to obtain the necessary information where the researcher gathered sources to answer the researcher's questions.

Since the method used was interviews, the data obtained was qualitative. After the data is collected, the next step is to analyze it using a descriptive approach. The descriptive approach is one type of approach that aims to describe phenomena that exist today, both natural and man-made phenomena (Rusandi & Rusli, 2021). These phenomena can be in the form of forms, actions, characteristics, changes, relationships, parallels, and differences between various phenomena. This study discusses the influence of TikTok social media on the mental health of generation Z. The data collection method in this study was conducted by interviewing generation Z.

RESULTS

Social media has now become an integral part of everyday life in the digital age, especially for generation Z who grew up with technology and the internet. TikTok, a short video sharing platform that allows users to create, watch and share creative content, has become one of the most popular apps among them. While TikTok offers a wide range of entertainment and socializing opportunities, its impact on the mental health of generation Z in particular is significant. Their tendency to follow trends, habit of spending free time on TikTok, as well as the frequent feeling of FOMO (fear of missing out), all affect their psychological well-being. Therefore, it is important to explore the potential positive and negative effects of TikTok use on generation Z's mental health, as well as ways for users to mitigate these effects to maintain balance in their digital lives.

TikTok as a social media platform has a huge influence on people's lives. Its impact is not only felt in personal lives, but it also supports the development of culture, economy, and general well-

being, by providing a space for individuals to communicate, share ideas, connect with each other, and ask for and give advice. In general, social media is a far-reaching communication tool, and technological developments in this area continue. However, while TikTok provides many benefits, the platform also poses psychological problems for its users. This is especially true for teenagers, who may find it helpful to alleviate emotions or burdens they feel through self-expression on the platform. Nonetheless, many parents and educators are concerned about the negative impact of TikTok on adolescents' mental health, especially due to overuse (Nur & Widodo, 2023).

Based on the results of interviews conducted with the first interviewee, according to him, TikTok social media has a major influence on the mental health of generation Z. The TikTok algorithm that adjusts content to user interactions such as likes, comments or shares can amplify certain effects on users. TikTok's algorithm that adapts content to user interactions such as likes, comments, or shares can amplify certain effects on users. For example, if we often interact with motivational content, then similar content will appear more often on FYP (Four Your Page), providing a positive impact. However, if the content that appears tends to be negative or related to dangerous things, it can have a negative impact on mental health. TikTok is also known for its fast-growing viral content, which often challenges users to follow certain trends. This can trigger social pressure or feelings of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), which worsens mental health, as there is a tendency to emulate trends that may not be personally appropriate. In addition, content related to personal experiences or mental health issues also has a double impact, as while it can provide education and reminders about the importance of mental care, it can sometimes lead to thoughts that should not be thought about. Regarding the changes in generation Z's behavior due to excessive social media consumption, it is clear that it affects the way they think, behave, and even speak, often imitating viral trends. To maintain mental health, I suggest that generation Z be more selective in using TikTok by filtering more positive content and reducing the time spent on the app. Shifting attention to other activities that don't involve cellphones can also help create a healthier life balance.

Furthermore, in an interview conducted with the second resource person. According to him, social media, especially TikTok, has a big influence on Generation Z's mental health, both positively and negatively. Many of them feel that TikTok can represent their feelings and provide solutions to the problems they face, but often the content in it actually affects their mental health, especially when they are caught up in unhealthy trends or challenges. generation Z tends to imitate these contents so as not to be outdated, which can cause social pressure (Alfani et al., 2024). On the other hand, there is also content sharing experiences related to mental health that can have a positive impact, helping them learn from the experiences of others. However, if they are not wise in sorting out the content, the impact could be anxiety or other mental disorders. Therefore, it is important for Generation Z to be more selective in following trends and filtering the content they consume, so as not to be influenced by negativity. TikTok can also be used positively, for example, to increase income through features such as TikTok Shop, create useful content and live streaming so that the use of TikTok can have a more balanced impact on their mental health.

Based on the results of the last interview conducted with the third informant. According to him, TikTok social media is very influential on the mental health of the Z generation. This is due to their habit of often opening TikTok when they have free time, which makes them feel comfortable and lazy to do other activities. This scrolling habit can disrupt lifestyle patterns such as sleep, eating, and physical activity, and trigger feelings of FOMO (fear of missing out) due to viral challenges or trends on TikTok. In addition, many users share personal experiences, which while instructive, can also add social pressure. This overuse of social media can change Generation Z's mindset, making them more likely to follow trends without developing critical thinking or exploring their potential. Therefore, a possible strategy is to access more educative content, such as those related to education or mental health, to improve their mindset and utilize social media more positively.

According to Nasrullah Rulli (2017), social media is an online platform that allows users to interact, collaborate, share information, and build relationships virtually with others. Similarly, TikTok as a form of social media allows Generation Z to interact through likes, comments, and video sharing (Asmawati, Pramesty, & Afiah, 2022). These interactions play a role in TikTok's algorithm

that tailors content to users' preferences, which in some cases, can amplify positive or negative impacts on their mental health.

Social media is a platform that provides public communication channels through virtual interaction between users. Its use creates a new social framework that allows individuals to communicate and collaborate electronically. Everyone can use social media as a means of communication, creating statuses, commenting, sharing photos and videos as if they were in a social environment. In this case, TikTok provides a space for users to share personal experiences, including mental health issues (Prawati, 2022). While some content can be instructive and supportive, as explained by the second interviewee, it can also add social pressure if not sorted out wisely. Therefore, it is important for Generation Z to utilize social media wisely, by being more selective in choosing content, limiting usage time, and focusing on positive aspects that can help them grow personally and professionally.

TikTok is an app that provides a variety of unique and interesting special effects. Users can easily create cool short videos with this app, which have the potential to capture the attention of many viewers. The resulting short videos can be shared with other TikTok users as well as friends on social media (Malimbe, Waani, & Suwu, 2021). With an extensive music collection, the app allows users to create original, engaging, free-expression videos and more, which encourages them to channel their creativity and inspires them to become TikTokers or content creators. While TikTok offers positive potential, such as channeling creativity and building social communities, the app also has a huge impact on Generation Z's mental health. Based on interviews with several interviewees, TikTok can worsen mental health if users are exposed to negative or harmful content that is amplified by algorithms based on their interactions, such as likes and comments. Viral trends that trigger feelings of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) and social pressure can also worsen mental conditions, especially if users feel forced to follow trends that are not suitable for their conditions.

Based on the context of mental health according to El-Quusy (1996), it is defined as an optimal balance or integration of different mental functions, as well as the ability to overcome mild mental disorders that are generally experienced by everyone, in addition to the ability to feel happiness (Radiani, 2019). According to Noto Soedirdjo, the ability to withstand stressors from the environment is characteristic of individuals with good mental health (Hamid, 2017). In this case, generation Z, which is often exposed to various pressures and challenges through social media such as TikTok, faces complex mental health risks. The interviews showed that social media, especially TikTok, can disrupt Generation Z's mental balance, both positively and negatively. Although TikTok provides a space for creativity and expression, its effect on mental health especially in terms of anxiety due to social pressure and FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) requires more attention. To maintain a balanced mental health, it is important for Generation Z to be more selective in consuming content.

Members of Generation Z tend to have a fear of falling behind and are always trying to get ahead of the competition and keep up with the latest trends. However, on the other hand, they often feel anxious about whether the steps they are taking are correct or whether they are falling behind compared to others (Adityara & Rakhman, 2019). This is in line with the results of interviews with interviewees related to TikTok use, which show a strong correlation between feelings of anxiety and social pressure experienced by this generation. Generation Z, who often feel anxious about whether they are making the right moves or whether they are falling behind others, are heavily influenced by social media algorithms such as TikTok that amplify content based on user interactions, which according to the first interviewee, can create feelings of FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), where users feel pressured to keep up with viral trends in order to not feel left behind. For example, TikTok content that quickly goes viral often challenges users to participate in certain trends, which can worsen Generation Z's mental health. The tendency to mimic viral content, be it a challenge or a certain lifestyle, creates great social pressure.

Based on the interviews conducted with three interviewees, it can be concluded that TikTok, as one of the largest social media platforms today, has a huge impact on Generation Z's mental health. The influence can be positive, especially if used for educational or inspirational purposes. However, if not used wisely, TikTok can also bring negative impacts such as social pressure, sleep disorders, and excessive anxiety. Therefore, it is important for Generation Z to be more selective in consuming content, reduce time spent on the TikTok platform and strengthen critical thinking skills to deal with

the information available. Thus, TikTok can be utilized more positively and bring benefits to users' mental health.

The wise use of TikTok is essential to maintain a balance between entertainment, creativity, and mental health, especially for Generation Z. It is important for users to realize the impact of unhealthy content consumption and overuse, such as feelings of anxiety, sleep disturbances, and social pressure due to viral trends. It is recommended that generation Z utilize TikTok for things that are educational, inspirational, and productive. Limit usage time, especially at bedtime, and avoid comparing your personal life with the content displayed on social media. With a wise approach, TikTok can be a platform that provides positive benefits without compromising mental health.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research conducted on generation Z, TikTok social media has a significant influence on mental health, both in positive and negative aspects. TikTok can provide positive benefits when used wisely, such as accessing motivating content, sharing inspiring experiences, gaining knowledge through educational content, and opening opportunities to increase income through creative features such as TikTok Shop and live streaming. These positive contents can encourage self-development, enhance creativity, and provide a healthy space for expression for generation Z. However, on the other hand, uncontrolled use of TikTok also brings serious negative impacts, such as exposure to harmful content, following unhealthy trends or challenges, and feelings of anxiety due to frequent social comparisons. Excessive TikTok use, especially around bedtime, can lead to sleep disturbances, anxiety, and feelings of depression that affect productivity and overall mental well-being.

Therefore, it is important for Generation Z to use TikTok wisely and selectively by filtering useful content and limiting their usage time. Being social media wise means understanding when to stop and focus on a healthier and more productive real life. Let's utilize TikTok as a tool that supports creativity, education, and self-development without neglecting mental health which is an important foundation for a brighter future.

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