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The Effect of Tik Tok Social Media Use on Adolescent Mental Health

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the impact of TikTok social media use on the mental health of adolescents at SMAN 1 Pangandaran, West Java. TikTok, now one of the most popular social media media platforms among adolescents, offering a variety of content that has the potential to influence how adolescents interact with their social world and construct personal identities. The method used in this study was a qualitative case study approach, where data was obtained through in-depth interviews and direct observation of students at the school. The results revealed that TikTok has both positive and negative impacts on adolescent mental health. Positively, TikTok provides a platform for adolescents to express themselves, find a supportive community, and access useful information for personal development. However, more prominent negative impacts are the emergence of social anxiety, detrimental self-comparison, and pressure to gain recognition through the number of followers and interactions received on the platform. This study also shows that excessive scrolling habits have the potential to disrupt sleep quality and lead to other psychological disorders. While TikTok can be a positive platform for self-expression and learning, its negative impacts require more serious attention, particularly those related to social anxiety and self-dissatisfaction. Recommendations in this study include the importance of wise use TikTok by teenagers, the development of features that better support mental health by developers, and the need for parents and educators to provide more in-depth education on how to use social healthily media.

Keywords: positive impact, negative impact, mental health, social media

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INTRODUCTION

TikTok has become one of the most popular social media platforms among teenagers around the world. With its creative and interactive short video format, TikTok allows users to express themselves, share stories, and participate in global trends. In the last decade, the development of social media such as TikTok has drastically changing patterns of communication and social interaction among teenagers (Kinaryosih, 2023). This platform is not only a means of entertainment, but also a place to build community, seek information, and even hone skills. However, the impact on Adolescent mental health is becoming a growing concern, both from a positive and negative perspective. Negative. The global TikTok phenomenon has had significant impacts on teenagers, both in terms of self-development and psychological challenges. According to Ayub and Sulaeman (2021), social media can provide great benefits for teenagers, such as self-development, obtain new information, increase knowledge, and expand networks. This relevant to how TikTok is used by teenagers to share knowledge, showcase talents, or even build a career. However, on the other hand, the use of social media in general Intensive video games, including TikTok, have been linked to an increased risk of mental

health problems. such as social anxiety, dependency, and fear of missing out (FOMO).

One of the main problems that arises from the use of TikTok is its impact on social anxiety among adolescents. Teenagers often feel pressure to present themselves perfectly on these platforms, which can trigger feelings of not being good enough. or excessive anxiety. In addition, TikTok's highly personalized algorithm can encourage users to continuously engage in non-stop content consumption, so that increases the risk of dependency. The FOMO phenomenon is also an aspect that needs to be considered. noticed. When teenagers see their friends following trends or getting attention Due to the widespread use of TikTok, they may fear being left behind and strive to remain active on the platform , even though this can negatively impact their mental health. However , not all of TikTok's impacts are negative. The platform also offers a variety of positive benefits for adolescent mental health. One of these is the ability to building a community of support. Many teens use TikTok to share personal experiences, such as struggles with mental health disorders, bullying, or academic pressure. In this way, they can find emotional support from a community that understands and shares similar experiences. As stated by Wumbu (2021), TikTok allows teenagers to participate in social activities by unprecedented manner. This demonstrates TikTok's potential to become tools that support adolescent mental health, especially through positive social relationships.

In addition, TikTok can also be used as a means of education and empowerment. Many creators on this platform share information about mental health, providing tips for managing stress, or raising awareness of the importance of seeking professional help. In this way, TikTok can be a tool for increasing literacy. mental health among adolescents. As stated by Padilah, Abidin, and Rifai (2024), the use of TikTok has changed the way teenagers communicate and express themselves. them in the digital era. This transformation can provide great opportunities for teenagers to develop their social and emotional skills. The purpose of this study is to be digging deeper into the positive and negative impacts of TikTok on mental health teenagers. In this case, this research not only aims to identify the problems that emerging from the use of TikTok, but also to explore how this platform can utilize positively to support the psychological well-being of adolescents. With By understanding both sides of this phenomenon, it is hoped that more effective solutions can be found. to minimize the negative impacts of TikTok while maximizing its benefits.

This research also has various significant benefits. For academics, this research This can be an important reference in understanding the relationship between social media and health. adolescent mental health. For mental health practitioners, the results of this study can be used to designing more effective interventions to help adolescents facing challenges related to the use of TikTok. Meanwhile, for platform developers like TikTok, research This can provide valuable input for creating more supportive features. user mental health, such as better screen time management or content promotion which focuses on well-being.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Approach and Location

This research adopts a qualitative approach with a case study method to exploring the impact of TikTok use on adolescent mental health. This approach Qualitative research was chosen because it provides an opportunity for researchers to explore in detail in-depth individual experiences and perceptions, in line with the view that this methodology enables in-depth understanding through rich data collection. The case study focuses on the TikTok platform because it allows for a comprehensive and complex analysis of the subject. specific context in real context. The research location was SMAN 1 Pangandaran, chosen because of the high level of social media use among teenagers in the area. This research carried out for one month, covering the preparation stage to data collection, for ensure the process runs smoothly and reflects the real situation.

Determination of Informants and Data Collection

Determination of informants was carried out using purposive sampling techniques, namely the selection individuals who are considered to have the knowledge and experience most relevant to the objectives study. The main informants in this study were teenagers aged 15-18 years who were active using TikTok. The focus on this age group is based on high engagement with the platform, which allows researchers to explore their authentic experiences. Primary data collection was conducted through three methods to ensure accuracy and depth of information: Semi-Structured Interviews to obtain rich and flexible regarding informants' experiences and perceptions, Participatory Observation to understand daily use of TikTok, and Content Analysis of videos uploaded by informants to delve deeper into their social expressions and interactions on the platform. The use of in-depth interviews and this participatory observation is in line with qualitative research practices in communication science.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data that was successfully collected through interviews, observations, and content analysis then processed using Thematic Analysis. This technique is very appropriate to identify major patterns and themes in qualitative data. The analysis process involves carefully reading the data, followed by coding, and finally identifying themes relevant to the research objectives, such as social anxiety, *self-esteem,* and parasocial interactions. This analytical approach allows researchers to present findings that not only systematic but also meaningful, providing new insights into the impact the complex impact of TikTok use on adolescent mental health conditions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TikTok Usage Profile among Teenagers

Usage Time

At SMAN 1 Pangandaran, the use of TikTok among teenagers shows a variety of intensity. Most students spend between one and three hours per day on accessing this application, although some also spend more time than that, especially on weekends or during free time. This finding is consistent with previous research. which shows that social media, including TikTok, has a big impact on adolescent communication patterns (Palangan & Wulan, 2024). This intensive use reflecting how important TikTok is in their social lives. Teenagers at SMAN 1 Pangandaran generally accesses TikTok after school or at night, when they have more free time after completing academic activities. These times are an opportunity for them to interact with their peers, expand social networks, and follow various popular trends. Interaction with friends through this platform is one way for teenagers to stay connected, especially After a long day of school activities, TikTok has become a place for many to share experiences, ideas, or even just to find entertainment.

The content they consume most often varies, from light entertainment videos, challenges, to viral trends. Not infrequently, they are also involved in discussions or watch video tutorials related to hobbies or personal interests. This platform provides a variety of options that allow teens to find the type of content they according to their respective preferences. This makes TikTok more than just entertainment applications, but also as a means of informal learning that is very popular with teenager.

On the other hand, the tendency to spend longer time on TikTok can can have certain impacts, both psychologically and socially. Excessive involvement in cyberspace can sometimes lead to feelings of anxiety or even stress, especially if teens feel pressured to keep up with trends or get attention from their followers. In this context, TikTok is not only a means of entertainment, but also a place where teenagers compare themselves to other people's lives, which sometimes leading to self-dissatisfaction. As TikTok grows in popularity, it is important to understand that social media use has a significant impact on adolescent communication (Palangan & Wulan, 2024). This influence is not only seen in the way they interact with each other, but also in how they construct social identities in cyberspace.

Favorite Content Types

Teenagers at SMAN 1 Pangandaran tend to be more interested in the type of content that entertaining, such as viral dance videos, various challenges, and videos light humor. This content is their primary choice because of its easy-to-understand nature. accessible and provide instant entertainment. Teenagers enjoy the convenience of following trends existing content, as they can participate in challenges or imitate popular dances very quickly. This aligns with how TikTok packages its content. It becomes something exciting and fun, which suits the characteristics of teenagers. who are looking for fun and enjoyable social interaction. In addition, the content This entertainment has more appeal because they not only watch but can also participate in various existing

trends. For example, viral challenges allow teenagers to test their abilities, compete with peers, or even build a sense of community with others who also follow the trend. The viral dances that they often watch become a form of expression that they can easily do copy and share again, creating a sense of connectedness between TikTok users who have same interests.

However, TikTok's influence on adolescent communication patterns is not limited to entertainment only. Viral content such as challenges or dances also influences how they interact in the real world, whether with friends at school or in other activities. other social media. For example, they often discuss videos or challenges they've just seen on TikTok, trying to discuss or even replicate the dance moves they've seen. is trending. This shows that TikTok is not only an entertainment platform, but also a means to strengthen communication and social interaction in the real world, both in the form of small talk or direct collaboration in content creation. Use viral elements, such as popular movements or background sounds, to influence how teenagers express themselves. For example, many teenagers who proudly show off their ability to follow certain dance trends, or choosing a background sound that is currently being widely used by other users. This behavior, such as as shown by Mangkaraputra and Sugandi (2023), is a form of communication non-verbal communication carried out through social media, where they reveal their identity them in a form that is easily accepted by their peer group.

Scrolling Habit

The habit of scrolling through the TikTok screen has become an inseparable part of our routine. the daily lives of teenagers, especially at SMAN 1 Pangandaran. Many of them spend time hours just to watch the videos that appear on their homepage. Without realizing how much time has passed, they continue to scroll the screen to see new videos that appear sequentially. TikTok with its highly personalized algorithm, that tailors' recommendations based on individual preferences, making it easier for them to trapped in this cycle. The videos presented always match the interests or behaviors that previously shown, making them want to watch more. This long-term habit of scrolling often occurs without full awareness. from users. Teenagers, caught up in the world of TikTok filled with engaging content, don't feel like time passes so quickly. Some of them even admit that they feel it is difficult to stop watching once you are involved in the activity. This indicates that TikTok scrolling habits have the potential to cause addiction, where teenagers feel increasingly it is difficult to control the time they spend on this application. TikTok, with its diversity its interesting and continuously updated content provides a pleasant experience, but it can also be risky if not managed wisely.

The use of social media, especially TikTok, by teenagers illustrates the characteristics from the digital native generation who grew up with technology. Digital natives tend to have habits that are highly dependent on digital devices and applications, such as TikTok, for various activities, be it entertainment, social interaction, or even the search for self-identity. Supratman (2018) revealed that social media has a big influence on the way individuals, especially teenagers, construct their identities. TikTok provides

a platform for teenagers to express themselves, try out different trends, and see how other people respond to the content they create or consume. However, behind the pleasure provided by TikTok, there are concerns about how this scrolling habit may affect the social and psychological development of adolescents. With the tendency to continuously scroll without stop, they may lose the opportunity to interact directly with the world real world around them. They may be more focused on the virtual world than the social world. their true selves. Deep attachment to these apps can lead to emotional dependency, where teens feel compelled to constantly check for new content to feel connected or entertained.

Positive impact

Emotional Support Community

The habit of scrolling the TikTok screen or scrolling has become an inseparable part of our lives. separated from the daily routine of teenagers, especially at SMAN 1 Pangandaran. Many of those who spend hours just watching videos that appear on their homepage. Without realizing how much time has passed, they continue scrolling the screen to see new videos that appear sequentially. TikTok with a highly personalized algorithm, which tailors' recommendations based on preferences individuals, making it easier for them to get trapped in this cycle. The videos presented are always according to the interests or behavior they have previously demonstrated, keeping them engaged want to watch more. This habit of scrolling for a long time often This happens without the user's full awareness. Teenagers, immersed in TikTok's world of engaging content, don't notice time passing so quickly. Some even admit they find it difficult to stop watching once they're engaged. activity. This indicates that the habit of scrolling through TikTok has the potential cause addiction, where teenagers find it increasingly difficult to control the time, they spend they spend on this app. TikTok, with its diverse and engaging content, continues to updated, providing a pleasant experience but can also be risky if not arranged wisely.

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Self-Expression Platform

TikTok provides a very flexible platform for teenagers to express themselves. them creatively. Through music videos, dances, or other personal expressions, this platform giving teenagers the opportunity to show different sides of their identity.

Many teenagers feel that TikTok gives them a space to be more authentic and expressive, something they sometimes find difficult to do in everyday life. In this case, TikTok is not just entertainment, but also an important tool for teenagers. to dig and understand more deeply who they really are.

This platform allows teenagers to explore various forms of creativity that they may not have previously thought of or could not do in outside the virtual world. For example, they can make videos that describe their interests, such as art, music, or even social issues that they care about. Over time, teenagers can feel more confident in expressing themselves, both in the real world and in cyberspace. This is in line with the view of Nindito (2005) who stated that the media social provides opportunities for individuals to construct their meaning and social reality through digital interactions, which influences how they understand themselves.

Education

TikTok not only functions as an entertainment platform, but also as a tool education that is increasingly being utilized by teenagers. Many users are taking advantage of TikTok provides access to in-depth and informative content, particularly related to psychology, technology, and science. This content is not only engaging but also offers information that broadens their horizons beyond what they already know. at school. With a short video format and engaging visuals, educational materials become easier to digest and understand for teenagers who tend to have a shorter attention span. shorter.

One of the main advantages of TikTok is its ability to access a wide variety of topics in a more relaxed and unstructured way like in a classroom. For example, teenagers can find videos that explain psychological concepts or technology that is often difficult to understand in formal lessons. Educational content such as this can enrich their knowledge and provide a deeper understanding on issues relevant to everyday life. This is also in line with the view of Puspitasari et al. (2023), who stated that TikTok not only offers entertainment, but also provides a useful source of information for its users.

Negative impact

Social Anxiety

One of the negative impacts that is increasingly being felt due to the use of TikTok is increasing social anxiety among teenagers. Many teenagers feel pressured to always appear perfect in front of their audience, especially with the ever-growing trend on this platform. The pressure to follow the latest trends or participate in viral challenges can make them feel like they always have to perform better than others, which in turn

adds to the psychological burden. When teenagers feel that they cannot meet these expectations, social anxiety increases.

This social anxiety is exacerbated by the feelings of isolation that often arise during adolescence. feel like they are not getting enough attention or recognition from other users, especially peers. In a digital world like TikTok, "likes" and "comments" are often the benchmarks measure the extent to which a person is accepted in their community. If a teenager does not accept sufficient validation, they may feel marginalized or unappreciated, which worsens feelings of anxiety and lack of self-confidence. This reinforces the feeling that their self-worth depends on external recognition, a phenomenon that is very risky for development. their mental health (Al Yasin et al., 2022).

Self-Comparison

One of the significant impacts of using social media, especially TikTok, is the increasing phenomenon of self-comparison. Teenagers often compare themselves They hold themselves to the standards set by influencers or other users with higher popularity. This creates unrealistic expectations and makes them feel less valuable if they don't meet those standards. On platforms like TikTok, where physical appearance and glamorous lifestyles are often in the spotlight, teenagers can feel pressured to project a perfect self-image, which is often far from true. fact.

This self-comparison can trigger feelings of dissatisfaction with oneself, especially when teenagers feel their bodies do not conform to the beauty standards that are often promoted on social media. For example, pictures of very slim bodies, bright skin, or a perfect face can make teenagers feel anxious if they don't meet the standards. these criteria. This has the potential to damage their self-confidence and can affect negative body image. This phenomenon is exacerbated by TikTok's tendency to featuring content that prioritizes physical appearance, which reinforces norms a very narrow and non-inclusive definition of beauty.

As a result, teenagers who are exposed to these unrealistic beauty standards may begin to experience body image disturbance, which in turn impacts mental health They may feel pressured to constantly try to fit into the image of what they see on this platform, thereby lowering their self-confidence. As as discovered by Kadri and Andika (2022), self-comparison driven by media social can exacerbate anxiety and self-dissatisfaction, which ultimately leads to lower mental well-being of adolescents.

Pressure for Validation

The pressure to gain validation from social media, especially in the form of number of likes likes, comments, and followers, have become one of the factors that are at risk of influencing Teen mental health. On TikTok, teens often feel that their self-worth is measured by how much attention they receive on the platform. They tend to associate feelings of being valued with the amount of interaction they receive, such as the number of Likes and comments on their videos. If these numbers don't meet their

expectations, teens can feel disappointed and depressed. Failure to receive a positive response or even a lack of attention from other users can make them feel unappreciated or even unwanted online.

This feeling becomes more intense when expectations of a quick and positive online response are not met. In many cases, this dependence on digital recognition can creates emotional tension, which ultimately leads to mental disorders such as anxiety, depression, or stress. Feelings of dissatisfaction or disappointment due to not getting the amount likes that are expected to contribute to the decline in adolescent mental well-being. In addition, this dependence on validation from social media often reduces the abilities of teenagers to build healthy self-esteem, as they become too dependent on standards external factors to feel appreciated. As explained by Mangkaraputra and Sugandi (2023), This reliance on social validation can create unrealistic expectations, which can be detrimental to a teenager's mental health. They may feel pressured to always appear perfect or become more attractive in the eyes of other users, which ultimately has a negative impact on their well-being.

Discussion of Findings in the Context of Theory

The influence of TikTok on teenagers can be seen through two relevant theoretical perspectives, namely the Uses and Gratifications Theory and the Social Comparison Theory. According to the Uses and Gratifications Theory Gratifications, teenagers use TikTok to fulfill their various personal needs, such as entertainment, social interaction, and self-expression. TikTok, as a social media platform, provide a variety of accessible content to meet these needs. As explained by Supratman (2018), social media is used by the digital generation. natives to shape and express their identities. Teenagers use TikTok not only to seek entertainment, but also as a space for them to explore self, interacting with peers, and displaying various aspects of personality those who may be difficult to show in everyday life. For example, TikTok allows teens to create and share videos that showcase their creativity them, such as dancing, singing, or various challenges that are currently trending. This gives they can express themselves freely, even in a more formal form. light and fun. In this way, TikTok serves as a channel that allows teens to show more diverse sides of themselves. TikTok also provide space for them to interact with others, either directly or indirectly, through comments, likes, and private messages. All these interactions creating an environment where teens feel more connected to their peers them, even if virtually.

However, on the other hand, the influence of TikTok can also be analyzed through Comparative Theory. Social. This theory explains that social media, including TikTok, provides opportunities for teenagers to compare themselves with others, especially with figures who have a big influence on the platform. Teenagers at SMAN 1 Pangandaran, for example, often feel pressured to always present themselves in perfect form, follow trends, and gain approval from other users. This comparison often causing feelings of anxiety and dissatisfaction with themselves, especially when they feel they cannot meet the standards of beauty or success displayed by influencers or peers. Based on the

findings of this study, the use of TikTok in among teenagers at SMAN 1 Pangandaran can exacerbate the phenomenon of social comparison. When teenagers constantly compare their appearance, popularity, or achievements with other people on social media, they often feel pressured and start to doubt their self-worth. This is in line with the research findings of Al Yasin et al. (2022), which showed that social media use can increase feelings of depression and anxiety in adolescents. due to excessive self-comparison. Teenagers often feel that they must meet the expectations set by existing standards in cyberspace, which ultimately leading to a decline in their mental health.

TikTok has become a platform that plays a vital role in strengthening social media patterns. interpersonal communication among adolescents. As expressed by Palangan & Wulan (2024), TikTok usage influences the way teenagers communicate with peers them. Through various features provided by TikTok, such as sharing videos, providing comments, as well as participating in popular challenges or trends, teens can establish closer social relationships with their friends. For example, they often share funny videos or inspiring content with each other, which not only gives entertainment, but also strengthens the emotional bond between them. This platform allows them to stay connected even though physical distance separates them, thus creating social interaction easier and faster. However, despite these benefits, TikTok use also has the potential to negatively impact adolescents' mental health. The immense influence of social media often triggers social anxiety, where adolescents feel pressured to conform. certain standards set by their digital environment. This feeling arises especially when teenagers feel that they need to get recognition through the number of likes, comments, and followers, which can exacerbate feelings of insecurity and dissatisfaction with themselves. The pressure to always appear perfect on this platform can affect their condition. adolescent mental health, causing feelings of isolation or low self-esteem if they feel they are not meet existing expectations.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to understand how TikTok social media is used affecting the mental health of adolescents, particularly students at SMAN 1 Pangandaran. Research results show that TikTok has a dual impact on mental health. teenagers, both positive and negative. Positively, TikTok provides a space for teenagers to express themselves, find supportive communities, and access useful information. Many teenagers feel more confident sharing their experiences or hobbies through this platform. Additionally, TikTok is a source of education. which is interesting, helps teenagers learn about new topics that are relevant to life However, the use of TikTok also has negative impacts, especially related to Mental health. Many teenagers feel stressed by social anxiety that arises from comparing themselves to the seemingly perfect lives on social media. They often feel dissatisfied with themselves because they compare their appearance or achievements to influencers *or* friends on TikTok. Furthermore, the habit of *scrolling* excessive stress also affects their sleep quality and mental well-being, increasing stress levels and feelings of isolation.

With the discovery of these double impacts, this study recommends three Key strategies to support the mental health of young TikTok users. For Teens: Teenagers are advised to be wiser in using TikTok, including limiting the time of use each day, and prioritizing healthy social interactions in the real world to reduce feelings of anxiety that arise from social media. For Developers: Developers TikTok is expected to introduce more features that support the well-being of its users, such as a reminder feature to stop *scrolling* and providing more Content that supports mental health (meditation or stress management tips). For People Parents/Educators: Parents and educators play an important role in educating teenagers. about healthy use of social media. They need to invite teenagers to discuss about the influence of social media on mental health and help them understand the importance of maintaining a balance between the virtual world and the real world to reduce negative impacts such as social anxiety or feelings of lack of self-confidence.

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