



# TikTok Analysis as a Learning Media and Activism Instrument

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## Abstrak

Di era baru perkembangan media sosial ini, banyak yang beranggapan bahwa keberadaan media sosial hanya dapat menimbulkan racun dan berdampak buruk bagi perkembangan otak anak. Namun di sisi lain, banyak orang yang seringkali tidak menyadari dampak positif media sosial bagi anak-anak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis TikTok sebagai media pembelajaran dan alat aktivisme yang akan dikaji lebih lanjut dengan menggunakan teori interaksi media sosial. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif. Metode yang digunakan dalam mengumpulkan data yaitu metode deskriptif analitis. Penelitian ini dirancang dengan menggunakan fenomenologi yang memiliki karakteristik metodologis. Teknik pengumpulan data yaitu observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi digital, serta menggunakan instrumen. Teknik yang digunakan untuk menganalisis data yaitu analisis deskriptif kualitatif. Hasil penelitian yaitu TikTok adalah platform media sosial yang dapat digunakan untuk tujuan pendidikan serta sebagai alat aktivisme di kalangan milenial dan Generasi Z. Berbagai tagar TikTok yang mengarah pada gerakan pembelajaran dan advokasi adalah bukti dari gerakan tersebut. TikTok, menurut para peneliti, mungkin menjadi platform yang bermanfaat bagi populasi anak muda saat ini.

**Kata kunci:** TikTok; Media Pembelajaran, Instrumen Aktivisme, Milenial, Generasi Z

## Abstract

In this new era of social media development, many explain that the existence of social media can only be toxic and have a terrible impact on children's brain development. However, on the other hand, many people often do not realize the positive impact of social media on children. This study aims to analyze TikTok as a learning media and activism tool which will be studied further using social media interaction theory. This research is qualitative. The method used in collecting data is descriptive-analytical. This research was designed using phenomenology, which has methodological characteristics. Data collection techniques are observation, interviews, digital documentation, and using instruments. The technique used to analyze the data is descriptive qualitative analysis. The research results are that TikTok is a social media platform that can be used for educational purposes as well as activism among millennials and Generation Z. Various TikTok hashtags that lead to learning and advocacy movements are evidence of this movement. TikTok, according to the researchers, may be a valuable platform for today's youth population.

**Keywords:** TikTok; Learning Media, Instruments of Activism, Millennials, Generation Z

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The presence of the media, with all its advantages, has become a part of human life. Social media is a medium on the internet that allows users to represent themselves and interact, collaborate, share, communicate with other users, and form a virtual social network (Firamadhina & Krisnani, 2020; Han & Han, 2016; Hosen et al., 2021). Social media is a digital medium where social realities occur, and the space-time users interact (Kolhar et al., 2021; Mao, 2014; Pearce et al., 2019). The values in society and the community can also appear in the same or different forms on the internet. Social media is the building of social structures formed in networks or on the internet (Haristiani & Rifa'i, 2020; Jogezi et al., 2021). Information is essential from social media because there are activities to produce

content to interactions based on information on social media. The essential character of social media is the formation of networks between users (Arora et al., 2021; Manu et al., 2021). Its function is not just the expansion of friendship or friendship with followers on the internet. Simple forms that occur on social media can be in the form of giving comments.

In this new era of social media development, many people think that the existence of social media can only cause toxicity and adversely affect children's brain development. But on the other hand, many people are often unaware of the positives of social media for children. But in reality, there is a big drawback of one application, in particular, the TikTok application, this application does not promote toxicity, but presents various kinds of problems in the world (Kılınç, 2022; Nichita et al., 2021; O'Sullivan et al., 2012). TikTok is a social media platform based on a video platform founded in 2016 by Zhang Yiming and owned by ByteDance. This app was formerly known as Douyin, which is a very explosive term in China (Darvin, 2022; Maes & Vandebosch, 2022).

Douyin has expanded to other countries under a new name, TikTok, due to its popularity. TikTok was present in Indonesia in 2017. This video application, like in other countries, has attracted a lot of public attention (Andriyana et al., 2021; Puspitasari, 2021). It is undeniable that social media, including TikTok, has become one of the most popular means of communication and interaction in the world, growing rapidly in recent years, in addition to being increasingly diverse in both features and functions. Each social network has a special character and performs the same but unique functions. The use of social networks in education shows that students and teachers have adopted social media as part of their daily lives (Nichita et al., 2021; Puspitasari, 2021).

TikTok is a social media that provides effective learning opportunities to help the teaching and learning process. Gupta and Bashir stated that there are four main purposes for using social media applications, namely entertainment, socialization, information, and academic (Smith & Short, 2022; Yang, 2020). Tiktok is used as a learning medium based on the number of users, complete features, and diverse content (Puspitasari, 2021; Vera et al., 2022). Furthermore, from an educational point of view, in general, social media can be seen as a simple educational tool, created to share various types of media content among users, by offering various functions to facilitate communication, such as text messaging, multimedia messaging, user account creation, and access to create groups (Bernadetha, 2020; Marta & William, 2016; Saputra et al., 2021). Information sharing is simplified with just a few clicks while maintaining the speed of sharing information with users (Kolhar et al., 2021; Lai & Tai, 2021). TikTok can be used as an educational tool but in limited video duration. This application has several advantages, but also disadvantages that may dominate depending on the analytical skills of the people who will use the application, but also depending on the content they want to see.

TikTok is a video application, which is intended to make it easier for people to watch entertainment videos. Due to a large number of users, this application can be used for product promotion and/or service packages, the application is adopted for marketing. From an educational point of view, this is a limitation, and the current functionality of the application does not support the overall educational environment (Basch et al., 2022; Scherr & Wang, 2021). What is important is that by using the application, whether, for educational purposes, marketing, or in other fields, the benefits must be fully utilized, while the disadvantages must be minimized.

Apart from providing an effective learning platform, TikTok also plays an important role as a vehicle for activism. The micro-video platform TikTok has emerged as a popular platform for self-expression and social activism, especially for young people, but the use of the platform's affective capabilities to spread awareness of important issues has not been studied adequately (Hautea et al., 2020; Yana Wengel et al., 2022).

Several literature reviews show that TikTok features allow content creators to build and disseminate multi-layered, impactful messages with varying degrees of seriousness, humor, and ambiguity (Villa-Ruiz et al., 2021; Yana Wengel et al., 2022). In line with this, the problem considered in this study is analyzing TikTok as a learning medium. So that Tiktok, which is currently so popular among children and teenagers, can be a means of providing a new style in the learning process that is closer and preferred by students and not only as a medium that is considered negative but there is a positive side that can be raised and utilized. Of the popularity of this application. Thus, based on the urgency and relevance of this research, this study aims to analyze TikTok as a learning media and activism tool which will be studied further using social media interaction theory.

## **2. METHODS**

This research is qualitative. Researchers use an analytical descriptive method which is a method to get in-depth data, a data that contains meaning and can significantly affect the substance of the research (Sugiono, 2015). This study was designed using phenomenology which has specific methodological characteristics and specific ways of approaching and analyzing a social phenomenon (Bungin, 2011). This study will analyze the phenomenon of the TikTok social network in the millennial generation and generation Z which has an impact on educational facilities and activism facilities. In this study, the focus of the research is only on the analysis of TikTok as a learning media and activism instrument, using a qualitative descriptive approach and making the TikTok application the subject of research. To obtain accurate data in this study, the authors used several data collection techniques, namely observation, interviews, and digital documentation, as well as using the google form instrument as a tool. All the data obtained were then analyzed and then presented in the discussion.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

Social media is a platform for utilizing web-based mobile technology to build interactive relationships between individuals and communities, it is also a means of sharing information, discussing an issue, and even offering a wide variety of user-generated content (Kietzmann et al., 2011). The use of social media and mobile devices in higher education is a relatively new phenomenon, which is still being researched today. Research on students from the Faculty of Economics at the University of Mortar, Bosnia, and Herzegovina reported that social media has been used to share materials and exchange information and students are ready to actively use social networking sites (slide share) for educational purposes, especially e-learning and communication. Social media and mobile devices allow students to create, edit and share course content in textual, video, or audio form. This technological innovation gave birth to a new type of learning culture, namely learning based on the principles of exploration and collective interaction (Selwyn, 2012).

The use of educational social networks by teachers for teaching and learning in the classroom is sporadic or infrequent, while students not only use social media for learning but also for casual and informal purposes (Mao, 2014). Success in learning can come from various sources, both in formal education such as high school (SMA), middle school (SMP), or informal education such as family and even on social media. This has been widely discussed by educators and researchers, but the focus of this article is on social media as a medium for informal education and activism.

The use of social media in education is happening right now, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a shift in face-to-face learning in academic and non-academic education to temporarily shift to online learning through video software programs such as Zoom and Google Meet. Online tutoring in the field of non-formal education is increasingly in demand, for example, Quipper, Smart Class, Learning House, Zenius Education, and Teacher Room. Students' limitations in dealing with time between school and classroom teaching are the cause of the popularity of those tutoring services. An effective online learning platform, as in the previous example, can be a study guide because they employ teachers who are university graduates who are recognized for their superior educational background (Firamadhina & Krisnani, 2020).

In addition, social media can also be used formally and in fact, it has often been done, namely freely seeking learning resources from trusted and credible sources. This free search is used by students to meet their needs, such as completing an essay or presentation or simply to find material that has not been taught in school. If the use of social media is mandatory in the classroom, teachers should continue to monitor students to find whatever problems they have, fear, or confusion to help and better understand students' learning difficulties (Faizi et al., 2013). In formal education, social media can be an effective way to increase student engagement. Collaborative and participatory tools have been used for a long time for educational platforms such as wikis, blogs, and Google Docs and can even encourage students to become active participants or co-producers rather than passive consumers (Faizi et al., 2013). Social media can provide effective communication for students because it makes the learning process more interesting. In addition, this same feature is also able to attract students' attention to learning opportunities that may not be provided by students' academic institutions.

TikTok is one of the social media that is useful for displaying things as described above. There is a variety of content based on different scopes of interest, be it cooking, knowledge, or activist content. TikTok has been used massively since early 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March 2020 made TikTok the number one most downloaded application in 2020. TikTok video app ByteDance recorded a total of more than 2 billion downloads worldwide in the first three months of 2020 and reached 315 million downloads, both on the App Store and GooglePlay. TikTok works based on an algorithm. The algorithm is a systematic process for solving mathematical problems in limited steps. An algorithm is a set of instructions designed to perform a task. The algorithm becomes a simple process, such as multiplying two numbers, or a complex process, such as playing a compressed video file. Search engines use proprietary algorithms to return the most relevant data from their search index for a particular query (Christensen, 2013). This algorithm is used in all social media applications, but the TikTok algorithm is different because of the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technology that regulates the execution of the TikTok algorithm and its more democratic algorithm can make user content go viral (Firamadhina & Krisnani, 2020).

TikTok users can edit their videos with the templates and video effects provided on this platform. Once users are satisfied with their content, they can write the desired content title and add hashtags. Hashtags are metadata tags that begin with the hash symbol #. Hashtags are widely used in microblogging and social networking services for sharing photos such as Twitter and Instagram (Chang & Iyer, 2012). Therefore, hashtags can be used as markers to allow cross-referencing of content and sharing of the same topic for all its users. Some studies related to communication on social media platforms only focus on social media such as Twitter and or on how various audiences respond to certain events such as extreme weather events. Such a pattern may be less pronounced for a less researched platform, such as TikTok, which offers a variety of forms of a cultural experience than Twitter or YouTube. A systematic review of the literature on climate change and social media recommends that

future researchers research-related matters; (1) a more detailed study of climate change publics on social media; (2) inclusion of non-textual elements and (3) study of other social media platforms outside of Twitter. In this study, researchers will analyze this within the framework of the ability of social media as a medium of activism.

Based on a dataset that includes 6,560 unique videos containing at least one of the hashtags #forclimate published between August 2018 and November 2019. The majority of TikTok videos were published in September, October, or November 2019, after TikTok launched its #forclimate campaign and when news coverage of The global youth climate strike led by Swedish activist Greta Thunberg is culminating. Through coding, we got across several types of non-exclusive messages on TikToks using climate-related hashtags (Wang et al., 2017). This kind of message is encoded in 60 posts. Some of TikToks content includes direct statements (“I #FightTheStereotype TikToker & #ClimateChange with creative content”), rhetorical questions to provoke self-reflection (“What do you think will happen to our planet?”), or calls to action (e.g., “PLEASE SHARE! If biodiversity disappears, humanity will not be far after”). Other indications of earnestness or sincerity displayed include the use of the earth emoji in text or video-embedded captions, focusing on nature or the planet rather than people, and depicting people engaged in pro-environmental activities (e.g., tree planting, use of non-straws). plastic, participate in climate change action), or include additional climate or environmental hashtags (e.g., #SaveOurOcean, #SaveThePlanet, #SaveTheEarth) (Hautea et al., 2020).

TikTok has also played an important role in Black Lives Matter, (BLM) by popularizing it as trending on the main page with a hashtag that has been viewed more than 23 billion times. One of the most popular video content on TikTok comes from Kareem Rahma showing a protest against the BLM movement in Minneapolis, the area where police officer Derek Chauvin killed George Floyd. The video is one of the thousands of videos on the hashtag (#blacklivesmatter) on TikTok that have reached 23.8 billion views. The activism movement on TikTok produces change, namely a new era of activism in the digital world (Firamadhina & Krisnani, 2020). Like Twitter and Instagram, TikTok can also be used as a medium with hashtags to inform phenomena that are happening globally.

In addition, this activism and education movement also occurs in Indonesia. Initiated by TikTok, which organizes a free education program for domestic businesses with the hashtag (#MajuBarengTikTok) in May 2021. This program is TikTok's commitment to supporting the Gerakan Nasional Bangga Buat Indonesia (Gernas BBI) sponsored by the government of the Republic of Indonesia. The #MajuBarengTikTok program is a series of inspirational training for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and small and medium industries (IKM) throughout Indonesia supported by the government through the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs of the Republic of Indonesia. (Kemenkop UKM RI) and the Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenperin RI) as well as various related partners. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the involvement of GenZ and Millennials in digital activism and education is increasingly dominant. Home learning policies increase internet usage and create more time for social media activities. This increases the opportunities for GenZ and Millennials to be active in the community or even participate in ongoing digital activism.

## **Discussion**

TikTok can define social interactions that occur in the world of education, namely the interaction between content creators and viewers. The rise of social media stems largely from the evolution of technology to provide unique user experiences that allow users to connect in new, previously impossible ways. The user experience referred to in this study is the experience of students who easily increase their interest in learning through educational

content that is widely spread on TikTok (Basch et al., 2022; Nichita et al., 2021). Furthermore, when experience is defined as a noun, referring to content derived from direct participation, two important factors shape user experience on social media: experience derived from social interaction and user experience derived from technical features (Kilinc, 2022; Vera et al., 2022). The first dimension underlying social interactivity reflects the degree of personalization of communication among users, which is defined as caring, individualized concern that users feel. Social interaction allows a sense of personalization as users focus on topics of interest and otherwise filter out content that is not considered meaningful or relevant to their interests (Firamadhina & Krisnani, 2020; Kurniawan & Rofiah, 2020).

Furthermore, the user experience that comes from technical features is characterized by the ease of use of the TikTok application which provides various features to create microvideos according to user interests. TikTok video app ByteDance recorded a total of more than 2 billion downloads worldwide in the first three months of 2020 and reached 315 million downloads, both on the App Store and GooglePlay (Databoks., 2020). Social media is generally designed for communication. Users don't want to spend a long time just learning how to use the app. The app should be convenient, intuitive, friendly, informative, and entertaining. As a social media app, TikTok serves an important role in making it easy for users to create and share content such as individual pages and customized updates; gives clear instructions about its features; rewarding users for challenging themselves to perform tasks that enhance their creativity (Yang, 2020).

TikTok is capable of presenting information in a noteworthy full-screen format (Basch et al., 2022; Nichita et al., 2021). Compared to other short-form video apps on the play store, TikTok uses full screen to create more immersive interactions, whereas other apps use a list format. The full-screen display provides a better experience and an element of surprise and fun as users discover new content without seeing a preview of what's scrolling across their screen. Instead of having to make choices about what to watch next, users can discover new things. This experience encourages user contribution. Finally, with TikTok, users don't have to rotate the screen to browse videos, which simplifies the experience. Also, the vertical screen is considered better for recording dance/singing solos, especially in selfie mode. So in this study, the authors found that the TikTok application can be used as a new learning medium in the world of education, which can provide an interesting learning experience for students, especially during a pandemic like today. Online learning has several obstacles, one of which is the lack of student discipline (Basith et al., 2020; Hermanto et al., 2021; Lase et al., 2021).

As well as being a new platform for political activism, TikTok is also providing a vehicle for climate activism. Studies examining climate communication on more "mature" social media platforms have focused on topics such as separate protest events on Twitter and YouTube about how different constituencies frame certain events such as extreme climate change events (Hautea et al., 2020; Villa-Ruiz et al., 2021). Climate change is a worthwhile subject of social activism to explore on TikTok. In considering TikTok's role as a medium for climate activism, this article argues that a broader assessment of digital media informs how the movement can evolve through the meaningful agency in defining innovative ways to approach the proliferation of social media as a medium beyond the reach of normative assumptions about its limitations and limitations from general use (Nichita et al., 2021; Y. Wengel et al., 2022). In the United States, climate activist groups are preparing a three-day live stream to commemorate Earth Day. This was done because social restrictions made crowding impossible in most places.

According to a multi-data collection, a total of 6,560 unique videos containing at least one of the hashtags #forclimate were published between August 2018 and November 2019.

Most TikTok videos were published in September, October, or November 2019, after TikTok launched its #forclimate campaign and when the news coverage of the global youth climate strike led by Swedish activist Greta Thunberg reach its peak (Hautea et al., 2020). Youth activists such as Greta Thunberg have emerged as key global communicators on climate and the TikTok user base has been dominated by young people who seem to understand the combined impact of climate change on their generation. Social media campaigners generally ignore the contributions of young people, who represent a “unique but important class of content creators” (Basch et al., 2022; Vera et al., 2022). While there is no denying the fact that social media can turn climate activism into an organized political mechanism, the transformative nature of the media also represents the widespread ethnicity of its users. As Gladstone and Wing say 'in its current form, the potential of social media to be an effective mediator is limited.

The use of TikTok application is not only used as a medium for entertainment but can be used in the learning process. Tiktok as an interactive learning media has helped students or students understand and accept the learning delivered by the teacher/lecturer. Tiktok is a learning media that can convey representation of what has not been previously conveyed in learning. Learning media is an innovation that will continue to develop in our education world (Andriah & Amir, 2021; Cahyani & Jayanta, 2021; Fartina et al., 2019). Developing learning media would provide practicality to teachers in providing assessments (Nurrohmah et al., 2018; Yusuf & Widyaningsih, 2020). This is of course in line with the development of the TikTok application which is very liked by students. As educators, we must enter by using various media to achieve learning and the desired results. Another ability that students get is the ability to write which turns out to be better than students who are not taught by using learning media such as Facebook (Hartono, 2014; Rap & Blonder, 2017; Sirivedin et al., 2018). Meanwhile, for the TikTok application itself, students or students can be more creative in providing answers to the tasks given in the form of a short video that they make by utilizing the templates that have been prepared by the TikTok application and redesigned by students according to their respective creativity.

Tiktok basically can be a good learning media to convey what educators want to convey to their students, applications that are more frequently accessed by students will certainly give a distinct impression for them if we as educators approach them by making this application as instructional Media. Therefore, in this study the authors emphasize the use of TikTok as a learning medium, which the authors have proven themselves in the research process, namely making TikTok as a learning medium in delivering lecture material and has been shown to receive a positive response from students, this can be seen from the number of viewers and their comments on the learning videos that the author uploaded on the TikTok application.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

TikTok can be used as a learning medium by educators in providing new and interesting learning to students. Learning that is current and in direct contact with the daily activities of students can certainly help achieve the expected learning objectives. So that TikTok which is all considered negative by some people can be used as a positive tool if the purpose of its use is as a learning medium. Despite personal difficulties and worries, Millennials and Generation Z can use this social network to share information with each other encouraging this generation to learn and be proactive. educative. In addition, millennials and generation Z also use TikTok as an instrument of activism.

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