
Analysis of The Tiktok Social Media Phenomenon For Students: A Case Study of The Millennial Generation

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Abstrak

Aplikasi media sosial TikTok, terutama di kalangan mahasiswa milenial, telah mengalami lonjakan popularitas dalam beberapa tahun terakhir. Dengan jumlah unduhan yang terus meningkat, TikTok menawarkan berbagai macam konten menarik yang memikat khalayak luas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi dampak penggunaan TikTok pada mahasiswa, tidak hanya sebagai sarana hiburan, tetapi juga dalam konteks sosial, psikologis, dan budaya. Metode penelitian ini melibatkan wawancara dengan 15 mahasiswa dan meta-analisis terhadap 20 artikel yang relevan, untuk mendapatkan wawasan yang lebih dalam tentang interaksi pengguna dengan platform tersebut. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan TikTok dapat memiliki dampak ganda. Di satu sisi, platform ini berfungsi sebagai alat untuk memperkuat hubungan sosial, meningkatkan kreativitas, dan memungkinkan ekspresi diri yang positif, terutama bagi mahasiswa yang menggunakannya untuk tujuan yang konstruktif. Di sisi lain, penggunaan yang berlebihan dapat mengganggu produktivitas akademis, memicu kecemasan sosial, gangguan tidur, dan penurunan kesehatan mental. Oleh karena itu, penting bagi mahasiswa untuk mengatur waktu dan konsumsi konten di TikTok dengan bijak, untuk meminimalisir dampak negatif, sekaligus memanfaatkan potensi sosial dan kreatif yang ditawarkan oleh aplikasi ini. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan kontribusi dalam memahami pengaruh TikTok terhadap gaya hidup dan interaksi sosial mahasiswa di era digital.

Kata kunci: media sosial, tiktok, milenial

Abstract

The social media application TikTok, especially among millennial college students, has experienced a surge in popularity in recent years. With the number of downloads continuing to increase, TikTok offers a wide variety of engaging content that captivates a wide audience. This research aims to explore the impact of the use of TikTok on students, not only as a means of entertainment, but also in social, psychological, and cultural contexts. This research method involved interviews with 15 college students and meta-analysis of 20 relevant articles, to gain deeper insights into user interactions with the platform. The findings suggest that the use of TikTok can have a double impact. On the one hand, the platform serves as a tool to strengthen social relationships, increase creativity, and allow for positive self-expression, especially for college students who use it for constructive purposes. On the other hand,

overuse can harm academic productivity, trigger social anxiety, sleep disturbances, and decreased mental health. Therefore, it is important for students to manage their time and content consumption on TikTok wisely, in order to minimize negative impacts, while taking advantage of the social and creative potential offered by this application. This research is expected to contribute to understanding the influence of TikTok on students' lifestyles and social interactions in the digital era.

Keywords: social media, tiktok, millennial

Preliminary

The development of information and communication technology has had a significant impact on social interaction patterns, especially among students. One of the social media platforms that has experienced a surge in popularity is TikTok. The app allows users to create and share short videos with a variety of creative features, thus attracting the attention of the millennial generation. In recent years, TikTok has become one of the applications with the highest number of downloads and is used by various groups, especially students (Huda, 2020; Setiawan, 2018). Several previous studies have shown that the use of TikTok has a significant influence on student behavior. One of them is its influence on student learning patterns. Intense use of TikTok can distract students from academic goals and increase the tendency to spend time in entertainment (Devi, 2021). In addition, TikTok can also influence students' social behavior, by increasing social interaction between them. The content on TikTok, which tends to be lighter and more entertaining, can reduce shyness and encourage students to be more open in interacting (Madhani et al., 2021; Malimbe et al., 2021).

Not all impacts are positive. Several studies note that excessive use of TikTok can reduce student productivity and increase consumptive behavior. In this case, students spend more time watching videos than focusing on their academic activities (Far-Far, 2024; Herry Porda Nugroho Putro et al., 2023; Juliana et al., 2022; Madhani et al., 2021; Syaharuddin et al., 2019). TikTok also often displays content that is not in accordance with prevailing social values, which has the potential to affect student morality (Ramsden & Talbot, 2024). This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of TikTok use among millennial college students, focusing on its impact on social, psychological, and cultural aspects. Through a qualitative approach and interview method, it is hoped that a deeper understanding of the influence of TikTok on the lifestyle and social interaction of students in this digital era can be obtained.

Method

This study uses a combined approach of in-depth interviews and meta-analysis methods to analyze the impact of TikTok social media use among millennial college students. The focus

of this research is to understand how TikTok affects students' social, psychological, and cultural behavior, including social interaction, communication, and the formation of social identity. The main goal is to identify students' perceptions of TikTok's impact on their social and academic lives and understand the common patterns that arise from using the platform.

Data was collected through in-depth interviews with 15 college students to explore their experiences related to TikTok use, as well as meta-analysis methods that examined relevant previous studies. The interview data will be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes related to TikTok's influence, while meta-analysis will be used to combine findings from various studies to provide broader insights into its impact. The combination of these two methods is expected to provide a more in-depth and comprehensive picture of the phenomenon of TikTok use among students.

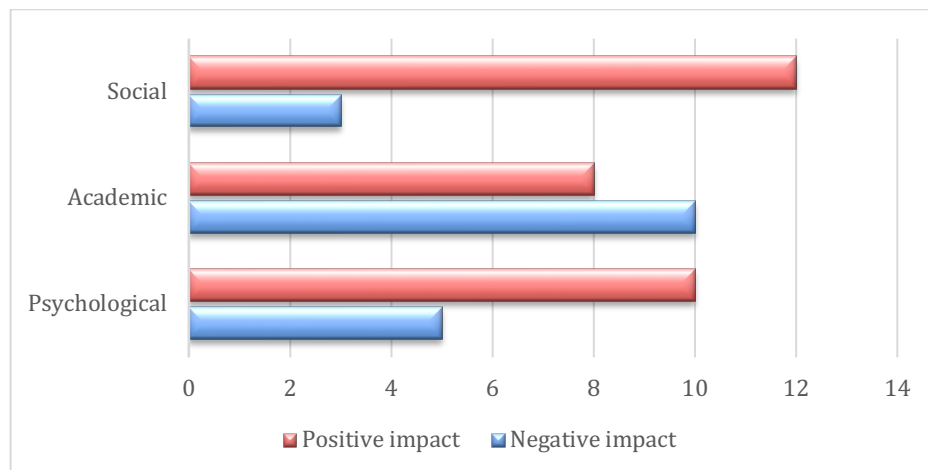
Results and Discussion

Social media, especially short video-sharing apps like TikTok, has changed the way college students interact with the world around them. TikTok, which is growing in popularity among younger generations, offers a platform for its users to share their creativity and build a community based on common interests. Previous studies have shown that TikTok has a significant impact on students, both in social and academic contexts. Research by (Felix et al., 2023) found that TikTok serves as an important tool for shaping social identities and increasing interaction among students, as well as helping them feel more connected to friends or communities that share similar interests. In addition, (Siregar & Menggala, 2025) also emphasized that TikTok can be a fun source of creativity for students who are actively creating and sharing content, allowing them to express themselves in a variety of positive ways.

However, while TikTok offers many social benefits, some studies have also shown negative impacts, especially related to mental health and academics. (RU & Misnawati, 2025) found that excessive use of TikTok can interfere with students' sleep time and concentration, which in turn can affect their academic performance. Furthermore, (Winarko, 2023) pointed out that TikTok often causes feelings of anxiety and self-satisfaction due to social comparisons that occur on the platform, especially due to the large amount of content that features ideal lifestyles and unrealistic beauty standards. (Wibowo & Ayuningtyas, 2024) also found that some students feel pressured to follow trends or get more attention through the number of "likes" and comments received, which can have a negative impact on their psychological well-being. Previous research provides an idea that while TikTok has a positive impact in terms of

social relationships and creativity, its uncontrolled use can risk disrupting other aspects of student life, especially related to mental health and academic productivity. Therefore, it is important to understand more deeply about TikTok's impact among college students by analyzing it through direct interviews with students as active users.

Figure 1. The Impact of TikTok Use on College Students



Based on the results of interviews with 15 students, it can be concluded that the use of TikTok among students has a fairly diverse impact, both from social, academic, and psychological aspects. Most respondents stated that TikTok has a positive impact on strengthening social relationships and increasing creativity. Many students feel more connected to friends and communities who share their interests, and feel more confident after sharing creative content. However, there were also a number of respondents who felt negative impacts, especially in terms of academic disruption and psychological impacts, such as anxiety due to social comparisons and pressure to conform to beauty or lifestyle standards displayed on TikTok. This positive social impact is in line with the findings of previous research, as revealed by (Fathadhika et al., 2020; Syarifuddin et al., 2024) which stated that TikTok helps students form social identities and increase interaction with friends who have similar interests. The results of the interviews also support the opinion put forward by (Nasafa, 2024), who found that social media, including TikTok, can strengthen social bonds through sharing relevant content and more intense interactions.

However, although most students felt a positive social impact, the problems of time disruption and academic productivity also appeared in the interview results. Many respondents revealed that they find it difficult to focus on their studies because they are addicted or distracted by TikTok videos that distract them. This is in line with the findings of (Aini, 2023)

which shows that excessive use of TikTok can reduce concentration and interfere with academic achievement. This is also supported by (Kholifah et al., 2022) who stated that TikTok, like other social media, has the potential to disrupt students' study time, especially when students cannot manage their time properly. From a psychological perspective, the results of the interview revealed that some students felt pressured by the social standards displayed on TikTok, such as beauty, popularity, and influencer lifestyle. This causes anxiety and social comparisons that often lower their self-esteem. These findings are in line with the results of research that identified that the use of TikTok can increase social anxiety and feelings of not being good enough, especially among teenagers and college students who are heavily influenced by the norms that exist on the platform. The results of the interviews also support the results of (Mtshali, 2023) which shows that social media contributes to feelings of depression and loneliness among students, especially if they feel unable to meet existing social expectations.

However, not all students feel the negative impact. Some respondents revealed that they feel more confident and creative after using TikTok. This is in line with the findings of (Maulidiyah, 2024) which shows that TikTok can be used as an educational and self-expression platform that increases creativity and confidence. The use of TikTok for educational purposes, such as sharing knowledge or tutorials, was also found in several interviews, which shows the potential of TikTok as a tool for non-formal learning that can facilitate creativity. Overall, the results of these interviews show a pattern consistent with previous research on TikTok's influence on students. Most existing research, such as those conducted by (Marliana et al., 2024; Tanjung & Syarqawi, 2025), notes that social media, including TikTok, has a dual impact, with social benefits and creativity on the one hand, and negative impacts on mental health and academic productivity on the other. Excessive use of TikTok can decrease sleep quality and increase anxiety, which is evident in the results of this interview.

However, some interview results also show that TikTok's positive impact, such as increased creativity and self-expression, is more pronounced on students who use the platform with more focused goals, such as sharing educational or creative content. This is in line with (Zulfa et al., 2024), which emphasizes that using TikTok for clear and constructive purposes can provide greater benefits in terms of self-development and social skills. TikTok has a dual impact on millennial college students. The use of TikTok can strengthen social relationships, increase creativity, and provide opportunities for students to express themselves. However, if not managed properly, the use of TikTok can interfere with academic productivity and decrease

students' mental health. Therefore, it is important for students to manage their time wisely using TikTok and utilize the platform for positive and constructive purposes, in order to avoid any negative impacts that may arise.

Table 1. Results of Meta-Analysis of the Influence of TikTok Use on Students

No	Author(s) (Year)	Research Title	Main Findings	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	General Conclusion
1	(Mtshali, 2023)	The impact of TikTok videos on creative designs of house plans in civil technology practical assessment tasks	TikTok enhances creativity and self-expression	Increases students' creativity	Dependence on entertainment content	TikTok is beneficial for creativity
2	(Auruly et al., n.d.)	The relationship between self-acceptance and fear of missing out (FOMO) among Generation Z students using TikTok	TikTok is associated with social anxiety and depression	-	Increases anxiety and stress	TikTok affects mental health
3	(Mtshali, 2023)	Anxiety in TikTok-using students who perform self-diagnosis	TikTok affects social behavior and lifestyle	Increases information and awareness	Reduces face-to-face interactions	TikTok changes social interaction patterns
4	((Zahra Nasiruddin & Rapa', n.d.)	The impact of social media on students' academic performance	TikTok disrupts students' concentration on learning	-	Decreases academic productivity	TikTok can disrupt academics
5	(Nasafa, 2024)	The phenomenon of product endorsement by beauty influencer Tasya Farasya through social media	TikTok helps students form identities and social relationships	Strengthens social bonds	Social pressure from content	TikTok enhances social connections
6	(Fitrialis et al., 2024)	The negative impact of social media on teenagers	Social media dependence negatively affects mental health	-	Disrupts sleep and concentration	Social media has dual impacts
7	(Fathadhika et al., 2020)	Are you a Millennial? The effect of social media use on mental health among Millennials	The influence of social media on feelings of anxiety and self-esteem	-	Increases social anxiety	TikTok impacts mental health
8	(Tram, 2022)	The impact of TikTok influencer marketing on consumer behavior: A study of influencer	TikTok influences students' views on social trends	Increases creativity and awareness	Lowers self-esteem through social standards	TikTok accelerates social trend changes

No	Author(s) (Year)	Research Title	Main Findings	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	General Conclusion
		marketing on TikTok affecting consumer behavior among Generation Z				
9	(Mtshali, 2023)	TikTok consumption and university student engagement in virtual classrooms in Egypt	TikTok strengthens social interactions among students	Improves social interactions	Reduces face-to-face interaction quality	TikTok strengthens social communities
10	(Talbot, 2024)	The Role of TikTok in Students' Health and Wellbeing	TikTok is linked to increased stress and anxiety	-	Disrupts mental and emotional health	TikTok can lower wellbeing
11	(Maltby et al., 2024)	Synthesizing perspectives: Crafting an interdisciplinary view of social media's impact on young people's mental health	TikTok usage is linked to feelings of depression and social isolation	-	Increases loneliness	TikTok contributes to social isolation
12	(Yélamos-Guerra et al., 2022)	The use of TikTok in higher education as a motivating source for students	TikTok can be used for educational purposes	Increases access to education	Diverts focus from academics	TikTok can be utilized for education
13	(von Fedak & Langlais, 2024)	TikTok Too Long? Examining Time on TikTok, Psychological Distress, and the Moderation of TikTok Motivations Among College Students	TikTok is associated with time management issues experienced by students	-	Reduces students' time management skills	TikTok affects time management
14	(Kaur, 2024)	Swipe Up and Break Up: A Grounded Theory Study Exploring the Impact of TikTok on Adolescents' Perceptions of Love and Romantic Relationships	TikTok enhances social relationships but reduces the quality of conversations	Increases social closeness	Reduces direct interactions	TikTok accelerates social interactions
15	(Pretorius et al., 2022)	Mental health professionals as influencers on TikTok and Instagram: What role do they play in mental health literacy and help-seeking?	TikTok usage by influencers affects students' mental health	-	Lowers self-esteem and increases anxiety	TikTok worsens mental health issues

No	Author(s) (Year)	Research Title	Main Findings	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	General Conclusion
16	(Auf et al., 2023)	Social media addiction and academic performance: A bibliometric analysis approach	TikTok usage increases tendencies to compare oneself to others	-	Increases feelings of inadequacy	TikTok increases social comparison
17	(Abdullahi et al., 2024)	Social media addiction and academic performance: A bibliometric analysis approach	Excessive TikTok usage can lower academic performance	-	Decreases learning quality	TikTok can disrupt academic performance
18	(Baothongchan, 2024)	The Role of TikTok in Enhancing University Students' Confidence and Self-Esteem	TikTok is used for self-expression through creative content	Increases self-confidence	Disrupts academic focus	TikTok enhances self-expression
19	(Anderson, 2020)	Getting acquainted with social networks and apps: It's time to talk about TikTok	TikTok can function as a social and academic networking platform	Expands social networks	Reduces academic concentration	TikTok can support social networking
20	(Ramsden & Talbot, 2024)	The Social Media Role of TikTok in Students' Health and Wellbeing	TikTok usage impacts increased anxiety and peer influence	-	Increases social pressure from peers	TikTok contributes to social pressure

Analysis of 20 articles, most of the studies showed negative impacts of using TikTok, such as increased social anxiety, sleep disturbances, and decreased academic quality. Excessive and uncontrolled use of TikTok mainly impacts college students, as it can distract them from academic tasks. Some studies have noted that students who use TikTok excessively feel pressure to always follow trends and attract attention from fellow users, which can lead to excessive stress, decreased concentration in studying, and reduced time that should be allocated to other self-development activities.

Sleep disorders appear as one of the most common negative consequences of using TikTok. Some studies show that many college students stay awake longer than they should, stuck in an endless scroll of TikTok videos. Long-lasting use, especially at night, can disrupt sleep patterns and decrease their sleep quality, which in turn affects academic performance and overall well-being. Poor sleep quality is closely related to increased anxiety, mood disorders, and decreased immunity, all of which negatively impact students' health and productivity.

However, on the other hand, several studies have also identified the positive impact of using TikTok, particularly in terms of creativity and self-expression. TikTok gives college students a platform to explore creative ideas through short videos that can be uploaded and shared with a wider audience. Many students feel more empowered to express themselves through various forms of content, such as art, music, dance, and personal opinions. These platforms can be a constructive channel for building confidence and discovering new interests and talents that may not be found in an academic context.

TikTok also facilitates connections between students from different backgrounds, both domestically and internationally. The use of this platform opens up opportunities to build communities based on common interests and improve communication and collaboration skills online. In some cases, these interactions even result in social or professional opportunities, such as project collaborations, career opportunities, or even lasting friendships. This shows that TikTok, if used selectively and purposefully, can be a useful tool to expand social networks and enrich students' life experiences. Overall, the results of this meta-analysis suggest that while TikTok has the potential to provide benefits in terms of creativity and social interaction, its excessive use can negatively impact students' mental health and academic achievement. Therefore, it is important for students to manage the time and way of using TikTok so that the negative impact can be minimized. Time management strategies, selection of content relevant to personal goals, and awareness of potential side effects such as sleep disturbances and social anxiety should be top concerns. With proper management, TikTok can remain a beneficial platform for college students without sacrificing important aspects of their academic life and mental health.

Conclusion

The results of interviews with 15 students and analysis of 20 articles, provide an overview of the use of TikTok among students has a double impact. TikTok can strengthen social relationships, increase creativity, and provide opportunities for positive self-expression, as seen in college students who use the platform for constructive purposes. However, overuse can interfere with academic productivity, leading to social anxiety, sleep disturbances, and decreased mental health. Therefore, it is important for college students to manage their time and content on TikTok wisely to minimize its negative impact, while still taking advantage of the social and creative benefits that the platform offers.

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