



CONTENT CREATORS AND VIEWERS PERCEPTIONS OF THE TIKTOK ALGORITHM

Rita Febri Gistalia¹, ¹ August 17, 1945 University of Surabaya, Indonesia
Adeline Rara Wiratama², ² August 17, 1945 University of Surabaya, Bandung, Indonesia
, Andri Wahyuni³, Tan ³ August 17, 1945 University of Surabaya, Bandung, Indonesia
Evan Tandiyono⁴

(*Email Corresponding author: brifebri2725@gmail.com.)

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ABSTRACT

The development of digital technology has significantly transformed information consumption patterns and social media behavior, particularly among Generation Z. One of the most influential platforms is TikTok, which utilizes algorithmic systems to deliver content through the For You Page (FYP). This algorithm indirectly shapes users habits, attention, and time management. This study aims to analyze the perceptions of content creators and viewers toward the TikTok algorithm and its impact on Generation Z time management ability. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach involving two Generation Z participants, consisting of one content creator and one viewer from Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and documentation of TikTok usage activities over one week. The data were analyzed qualitatively through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the TikTok algorithm significantly influences Generation Z time usage behavior. While the algorithm enhances user engagement, it also reduces self-control over time, leading to excessive content consumption. However, some participants have begun to develop time management strategies, such as limiting usage duration and selectively engaging with content, in order to maintain productivity. This study highlights the importance of digital literacy and user awareness in responding to social media algorithms to promote healthier and more productive technology use.

Keywords: TikTok Algorithm, Generation Z, Time Management

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology has brought about significant changes in various aspects of human life, particularly in how individuals access, process, and distribute information. The presence of social media is one concrete manifestation of this digital transformation. Among the various rapidly growing platforms, TikTok has emerged as a highly popular short-form video-based social media platform, particularly among Generation Z. TikTok main feature, the For You Page (FYP), allows users to access personalized content through an



algorithm that learns user interaction behavior, such as viewing duration, likes, comments, and content searches.

The TikTok algorithm not only functions as a recommendation system but also shapes users information consumption patterns and social media usage habits. The sheer volume of content presented continuously through the FYP pushes users into a state of information overload, where individuals receive a massive influx of information in a short period of time. This situation demands the ability to quickly and accurately sort information, while simultaneously managing social media usage to avoid disrupting daily academic, social, or productive activities.

Generation Z, as a group born and raised in the digital era, has a very close relationship with technology and social media. The high intensity of TikTok usage makes Generation Z the most vulnerable group to time management issues. On the one hand, TikTok provides entertainment, information, and opportunities for creativity. However, on the other hand, the algorithmic mechanisms designed to retain users attention have the potential to foster excessive content consumption, which can lead to decreased self-control over time.

Based on this phenomenon, research into content creators and viewers perceptions of the TikTok algorithm and its impact on Generation Z time management is highly relevant. A deeper understanding of user experiences and perspectives is expected to contribute to the development of digital literacy, the formation of healthy media habits, and increased public awareness in navigating the increasingly complex dynamics of social media technology.

2. LITERATUR REVIEW

Human Resources

Human resources (HR) are a key element in every organizational activity and social system, including the digital ecosystem. HR is understood not only as physical labor but also as individuals possessing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and the ability to think and make decisions. In the context of social media and information technology, humans play a role as active users who interact directly with algorithm-based systems.

Hasibuan (2016) states that HR is the integrated ability of an individual mental and physical abilities to achieve specific goals. Meanwhile, Drucker (2008) emphasizes the concept of knowledge workers, namely individuals who generate value through the management of information and knowledge. This concept is relevant to TikTok users, both as content creators and viewers, who not only consume information but also actively produce and evaluate digital content.



In TikTok algorithmic system, user behavior is the primary input to the system. Interactions such as viewing duration, likes, comments, shares, and follows form data that is then processed by the algorithm to determine content recommendations. Thus, the quality of human resources digital literacy significantly determines how the algorithm works and how information is interpreted by users.

Human Psychology

Human psychology studies behavior, mental processes, emotions, and how individuals interpret experiences. In the context of social media, psychology plays a crucial role in explaining how individuals respond to content, form preferences, and develop digital habits.

Constant exposure to content through TikTok algorithm can impact users psychological aspects, such as attention, motivation, satisfaction, and self-control. The algorithm mechanism for displaying content tailored to users interests creates a sense of comfort and high engagement, but on the other hand, it can trigger addictive behavior and reduce an individual ability to manage time rationally.

Generation Z

Generation Z is a demographic group born between 1997 and 2012 and growing up in an environment heavily influenced by digital technology. They are known as digital natives, possessing a high level of adaptability to technology, and making social media a part of their daily lives.

Seemiller and Grace (2016) state that Generation Z is characterized by being visually oriented, multitasking, and highly connected online. Generation Z close relationship with technology offers them significant opportunities for creative and productive development, but they also face the risk of distraction and difficulty managing their time due to their intense digital media use.

The TikTok Algorithm and Time Management

The TikTok algorithm is an artificial intelligence-based system designed to personalize content based on user behavior. Through the For You Page (FYP) feature, the algorithm automatically displays content deemed relevant based on a user interaction history.

This algorithm has the ability to retain users attention for extended periods, thus directly influencing time usage patterns. Time management is a major challenge for users, especially Generation Z,



because the algorithm encourages continuous content consumption, potentially reducing time for academic, social, and other productive activities.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

Research Type and Design

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because the study aims to deeply understand the experiences, perceptions, and subjective meanings that content creators and viewers have regarding the TikTok algorithm, particularly in relation to Generation Z time management skills. A qualitative approach allows researchers to explore social realities from the perspectives of participants and understand phenomena that cannot be measured quantitatively.

Research Subjects

The subjects in this study were active TikTok users belonging to Generation Z, namely individuals born between 1997 and 2012. The study involved two subjects: one content creator and one TikTok viewer, students at the University of August 17, 1945, Surabaya.

Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used was purposive, selecting subjects based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. Subjects were selected from among Generation Z who actively use TikTok, both as content creators and viewers. In addition to meeting age criteria, subjects were also selected based on the intensity of TikTok use and their level of engagement with content appearing on the For You Page (FYP). To strengthen the validity of the data, subjects were asked to provide evidence of TikTok use for one week in the form of activity documentation or screenshots showing their interaction patterns with the app. **Teknik**

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews and documentation. Interviews were used to explore subjects' experiences, perceptions, and perspectives regarding the TikTok algorithm and its impact on time management. Documentation served as supporting data to demonstrate TikTok usage activities during the research period.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using qualitative analysis techniques, which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This process was carried out continuously from the data collection stage until valid and comprehensive research findings were obtained.



4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General Description of Research Subjects

This study involved two Generation Z subjects: one content creator and one TikTok viewer, students at the University of August 17, 1945, Surabaya. Both subjects are active TikTok users with high usage intensity and consistent engagement with content appearing on the For You Page (FYP). TikTok usage activity over a one-week period indicated that both subjects accessed the app almost daily, whether for entertainment, information seeking, or social interaction.

Subjects Perceptions of the TikTok Algorithm

Interview results indicated that both subjects perceived the TikTok algorithm as highly capable of tailoring content to their personal interests and preferences. They noted that the content appearing on the FYP became increasingly relevant as their engagement with certain types of content increased. This perception reinforces the view that the TikTok algorithm operates adaptively and responsively to user behavior.

However, both subjects also revealed that the "invisible," or "black box," nature of the algorithm means they can only understand its workings based on personal experience. This lack of a complete understanding of the algorithm system leads users to be passive in controlling their content consumption patterns, making it easier to become trapped in prolonged TikTok use.

The Impact of Algorithms on Time Management

Research findings indicate that TikTok algorithm has a significant impact on Generation Z time management. Both subjects admitted that they often spend more time than intended when using TikTok. The endless scrolling mechanism and constantly updated content recommendations make it difficult for them to stop watching.

This impact is felt in various aspects of life, particularly in academic activities and daily routines. Subjects stated that study and rest time are often disrupted by excessive TikTok use. This suggests that TikTok algorithm has significant potential to influence users self-control over time.

Time Management Strategies by Generation Z

However, some subjects are beginning to develop an awareness of how to control their TikTok use. Some strategies they employ include limiting daily usage time, turning off app notifications, and being more selective in the content they consume. These efforts aim to maintain a balance between digital activities and academic responsibilities.



These findings suggest that digital literacy and self-awareness play a crucial role in helping Generation Z cope with the pressures of social media algorithms. With better time management skills, users can continue to utilize TikTok as a source of entertainment and information without sacrificing productivity.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion outlined above, it can be concluded that the TikTok algorithm has a significant influence on Generation Z time usage behavior. The personalized recommendation system through the For You Page (FYP) feature can significantly increase user engagement, but on the other hand, it also reduces self-control over time, thus encouraging excessive content consumption.

Perceptions of content creators and viewers indicate that while they recognize TikTok benefits as a means of entertainment, information, and creativity, the incomplete understanding of the algorithm mechanisms makes it difficult for them to control the duration of their use. This impacts academic activities, rest patterns, and daily productivity.

However, this study also found that some users are starting to manage their TikTok use more wisely by limiting duration, managing notifications, and selecting content. This suggests that improving digital literacy and self-awareness are key to developing healthy and productive social media usage patterns among Generation Z.

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Finally, the authors hope that this study can contribute to the development of digital literacy, particularly in understanding social media algorithms and promoting healthier time management practices among Generation Z.

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