

TikTok's Impact on Generation Z's Mental Health and Social Relationships

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the impact of TikTok social media use on the mental health of Generation Z in social relationships. As one of the most popular digital platforms among today's youth, TikTok significantly shapes its users' mindset, emotions, and social behaviour. This study used a qualitative approach with descriptive methods, through in-depth interviews and observations of several residents aged 17-22 years old around the Griya Martubung area who actively use TikTok. The findings indicate that TikTok has both positive and negative impacts on the mental health of Generation Z. Positive impacts include increased self-confidence, self-expression, and access to information. However, negative impacts include social anxiety, feelings of inadequacy, and dependence on social views in the form of likes and comments. Several respondents experienced decreased direct interactions in social relationships due to a greater focus on online interactions. This study emphasises the importance of digital literacy and the role of mentors from the surrounding environment to prevent TikTok use from negatively impacting the mental health and quality of Generation Z's social relationships.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology and social media has significantly changed the patterns of social interaction and the psychological life of the younger generation [1]. TikTok is among the younger generation's most prominent and favoured platforms today. With entertaining, educational, and interactive content TikTok has become an inseparable part of the daily life of Generation Z, especially those in the teenage to early adulthood age range [2]. This phenomenon also occurs in the Griya I Martubung area, Medan Labuhan District, Medan City, North Sumatra, where the use of TikTok has become an important part of the daily lives of many teenagers.

Generation Z is the age group born and raised in the digital ecosystem, making their exposure to social media very intensive [3]. On one hand, TikTok offers a space for self-expression, increased self-esteem, and access to a wide range of information. However, on the other hand, there are concerns about the negative impacts it causes, such as increased social anxiety, feelings of inadequacy or inferiority, and dependence on social validation through the number of 'likes', comments, and followers [4]. This condition has the potential to affect mental health as well as the quality of social relationships in the real world, especially when digital interactions start to replace face-to-face communication.

In this context, it is important to understand mental health as a key component in an individual's life, especially for adolescents. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual recognises their potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, works productively, and contributes to their community [5]. Good mental health allows a person to have healthy social relationships, be emotionally stable, and make rational decisions [6]. However, the development of digital technology, including the use of social media, brings new challenges to the psychological stability of adolescents.

The local context in Griya I Martubung indicates a change in social communication patterns among teenagers. Some teenagers tend to be more active in virtual interactions than in directly interacting with family, peers, or their surroundings. This raises important questions about how much TikTok influences their social and psychological dynamics. Furthermore, the presence of this platform also demonstrates dual impacts, which necessitates a deeper study to understand its influence fully.

TikTok has become one of Generation Z's most popular social media platforms, with an artificial intelligence-based algorithm designed to provide a highly personalised experience. Research by Rahma et al. shows that intensive use of TikTok can affect the mental health of teenagers, including increased feelings of anxiety, stress, and social pressure due to social comparison [7]. In addition, another study by Sabarudin also emphasises that the use of short video-based social media tends to be correlated with attention disorders and a decline in the quality of social relationships in real life [8].

However, most of these studies were conducted in Western countries with social and cultural contexts different from Indonesia. In Indonesia, particularly in urban fringe areas such as Griya I Martubung, Medan Labuhan District, Medan City, there have not been many academic studies that specifically explore the impact of TikTok on the mental health aspects and social relationships of Generation Z. This indicates a research gap in the local context that needs to be filled through community-based empirical studies.

Most of the research that has been conducted has also focused more on quantitative approaches by measuring the frequency of TikTok use and its correlation with anxiety or depression. This research offers novelty by using a qualitative approach to deeply explore the subjective narratives of TikTok-using adolescents, covering emotional experiences, social interaction patterns, and changes in self-identity that arise due to exposure to content on social media. This contextual approach is important to capture the unique local dynamics of the Griya I Martubung community, which tends to fall into the lower-middle economic category and has varied access to and literacy in digital technology. Thus, this research

contributes to expanding the literature on the impact of social media on the psychosocial well-being of adolescents in developing countries and can provide practical insights for parents, educators, and policymakers in formulating digital literacy strategies and community-based mental health interventions.

2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method to understand the phenomenon of social deviation and mental health issues among Generation Z in Griya I Martubung, Medan Labuhan District, Medan City, North Sumatra Province. As stated by [9], a qualitative descriptive method is based on post-positivist philosophy and emphasises a naturalistic approach, where the researcher acts as the primary instrument. Data collection techniques are conducted through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation to obtain rich and in-depth information according to the field context.

This research involves 10 informants, consisting of 5 Generation Z youths (aged between 16 to 24 years) and five community figures who play important roles in the social environment, such as neighbourhood heads, lecturers, and teachers. The gender composition of the informants is relatively balanced, with three males and two females among the youth and three males and two females among the community figures. The selection of these two groups aims to obtain diverse perspectives: the youth group to explore their direct experiences with using TikTok and its impact on mental health and social relationships, and the community figures to understand social dynamics from the perspective of community observers.

The selection of 10 informants was conducted through a purposive sampling technique, which is the deliberate selection of individuals who meet relevant criteria related to the focus of the research [10]. Although the number is limited, this sample size is considered adequate to reach data saturation, where the information and themes obtained start to repeat, and no significant new findings are found. This aligns with the qualitative approach prioritising data depth over the number of respondents.

The primary data was obtained through semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions that allowed informants to express their experiences and views freely. Observations were conducted directly at the research site to see social interactions and the real usage of social media. In addition, documentation in the form of screenshots of TikTok content, user comments, and audio or video recordings of the interviews was also collected to strengthen the findings [11].

The data obtained was analysed using thematic analysis methods. The coding process was carried out manually by following the six stages of thematic analysis from [12]: (1) comprehensive reading and understanding of data, (2) initial coding, (3) theme searching, (4) theme reviewing, (5) definition and naming of themes, and (6) narrative assembly of results. This process is conducted inductively, starting from the data and evolving towards forming themes and a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

To enhance the validity of the data, this research applies triangulation techniques in terms of data sources (youth informants and community figures), techniques (interviews, observations, and documentations), and time. Furthermore, the researcher also pays attention

to ethical research principles, such as obtaining consent from participants through informed consent and using pseudonyms to maintain the confidentiality of informants' identities [9]. Including a respondent profile table is recommended to enhance transparency and clarify the data context. This table can contain pseudonym, age, gender, status (teenager or public figure), and TikTok usage levels (high, medium, low). This presentation will help readers understand the background of each informant more comprehensively.

¹⁴ 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

3.1.1. The Subjective Experiences of Generation Z in Using TikTok on Mental Health Conditions

¹⁶ The results of the observations at Griya Martubung I, Medan Labuhan, show that TikTok has become an important part of Generation Z's daily life. ²⁰ The use of this app has a positive impact on increasing self-confidence and self-expression, especially when they receive positive responses from other users. However, the observation also found adverse effects, such as stress, social anxiety, sleep disturbances, and a decrease in direct social interactions, particularly among adolescents with high levels of usage.

Some teenagers appear to experience pressure to present themselves perfectly and tend to depend on self-validation through the number of likes or comments. Nevertheless, some teenagers use TikTok productively, such as learning new skills or seeking motivational content. Environmental factors, such as family and community support, significantly influence how teenagers respond to TikTok's impact on their mental health. These findings affirm that TikTok's impact on the mental health of Generation Z is complex and contextual, depending on the intensity of use, social environment, and individual psychological conditions. The observation results also align with the findings from the interviews, and the interview results of the study are presented below.

RK (17 years old, high school student, active TikTok user)

At first, I used TikTok for entertainment, but I enjoyed uploading my videos over time. If a video goes viral or gets many likes, I feel motivated. However, if the views are low, I keep thinking about it, feeling insecure. Sometimes I cannot focus on studying because I think about the content.

RK's statement indicates an increase in confidence when receiving validation, but it also generates anxiety and cognitive distraction when social expectations are not met.

S (19 years old, student, passive TikTok user)

I do not often upload, but I watch videos on TikTok, especially about self-healing or study tips. Sometimes it can make me feel calmer, but I also sometimes feel insecure when I see others whose lives seem perfect.

S's experience emphasises the ambivalence of emotions, on one hand feeling psychologically supported, but on the other hand feeling a lack of self-confidence due to social comparison.

A (18 years old, high school graduate, not yet employed)

I often stay up late because of scrolling through TikTok. It feels like I cannot stop. Sometimes I only go to bed at 2 AM. The next day I wake up late, so I get lazy to go out, it is more comfortable just watching videos by myself.

A shows symptoms of addiction and sleep pattern disruption, along with decreased direct social interaction, replaced by comfort in the virtual world.

N (17 years old, Student, TikTok content creator)

I like to create funny content, and sometimes I also share about school. It makes me more confident, especially when there are positive comments. However, I also felt down when I received negative comments, so I did not want to open TikTok for a week.

N experiences an increase in self-esteem through creativity, but is also vulnerable to negative comments, which affect their emotional condition and the desire to connect socially.

R (23 years old, Head of the Environment and also a local community leader)

Children nowadays spend much time on TikTok. I see some positive aspects; they become creative and confident. However, I also worry because some rarely socialise in person, spend more time at home, and sometimes even lose track of time.

Perspective R provides external validation to field observations that TikTok brings two sides of influence: an increase in self-expression and the potential for social isolation.

The five informants provided complementary views consistent with the results. TikTok is seen as a medium for expression, entertainment, and the search for identity, but it also poses psychological risks such as stress, anxiety, and social alienation, mainly if used excessively or without healthy environmental oversight.

Based on the observations and interviews, it can be concluded that TikTok has a dual influence on Generation Z's social life and mental health in Griya Martubung I. On one hand, this platform promotes increased self-confidence, creativity, and self-expression, especially when users receive positive feedback from audiences. TikTok is also used productively to learn new skills, for motivation, and for entertainment that can provide emotional support. However, on the other hand, excessive use presents negative impacts such as stress, social anxiety, sleep disturbances, decreased face-to-face interactions, and dependence on external validation through the number of likes and comments. The pressure to appear perfect and the phenomenon of social comparison further exacerbate psychological vulnerability, especially for teenagers with unstable mental conditions. Environmental factors, such as family and community support, play a crucial role in determining how teenagers respond to the influences of TikTok. Thus, the impact of TikTok on Generation Z is complex and contextual, potentially serving as a source of self-empowerment or triggering psychosocial issues, depending on the intensity of use and the quality of the supporting social environment.

3.1.2. Generation Z's Perception of the Positive and Negative Values of Using TikTok in Building and Maintaining Social Relationships

The observation results show that Generation Z in Griya Martubung I has diverse perceptions regarding using TikTok in the context of social relationships. Most informants view TikTok as a medium that facilitates instant social connectivity. Through the comment

feature, private messages, and collaborative video trends, teenagers feel that they can establish and maintain relationships with their peers, even expanding their friendship circles across regions.

However, on the other hand, there is also a growing awareness of the negative impacts of using TikTok, especially when the intensity of use is excessive. Some individuals experience distortions in interpersonal communication in the real world, such as a decreased interest in direct interaction, conflicts arising from differences in content or comments, and exclusivity in social circles based on popularity on TikTok. Additionally, the pressure to always appear attractive and keep up with trends also triggers social anxiety and unhealthy competition. In general, Generation Z's perception of TikTok in the social realm is ambivalent: on one hand, it is seen as strengthening digital social relationships, but on the other hand, it has the potential to weaken authentic and meaningful social connections in daily life.

The results of the observations are also in line with the findings of the interviews. Below are the interview results from 5 different informants arranged following the findings of the observation regarding Generation Z's Perception of the Positive and Negative Values of Using TikTok in Building and Maintaining Social Relationships in Griya Martubung I,

Medan Labuhan, Medan City, North Sumatra:

Source 1 (F, 17 years old, High School Student) "I feel that TikTok helps me stay connected with friends, especially those in different schools or moved to another city. We often duet or comment on each other's videos. However, sometimes it makes me lazy to meet in person because it feels like just talking through TikTok is enough."

Source 2 (M, 19 years old, Student)

"Many friends became closer because of TikTok, as we often create content together. However, conflicts also frequently arise due to videos that contain sarcasm, or negative comments that strain relationships."

Source 3 (F, 18 years old, Store Employee)

I enjoy playing TikTok because I can make many new friends outside the city, even abroad. Nevertheless, I sometimes feel insecure when I see friends with many followers, so our relationship is unequal.

Source 4 (M, 17 years old, Vocational High School Student)

TikTok is great for expanding social circles, but sometimes it makes me addicted. I tend to talk less with people at home because I focus more on creating content and replying to comments.

Resource person 5 (F, 20 years old, Student)

"I once felt that my relationship with my best friend became strained because we were too busy managing our TikTok accounts. However, on the other hand, TikTok also gave us shared memories through the funny videos we created together."

The five sources indicate an ambivalent perception, which is the recognition of TikTok's social benefits as a means of interaction and entertainment, but also an awareness of the negative impact on the quality of authentic interpersonal relationships. This finding reinforces the observational results that TikTok plays a dual role in the social dynamics of Generation Z.

Based on the observations and interviews, it can be concluded that Generation Z in Griya Martubung I has an ambivalent perception towards using TikTok in building and maintaining social relationships. On one hand, TikTok is seen as an effective means of expanding friendship networks, maintaining connections with old friends, and creating creative interactions through collaborative content. The comment features, private messages, and joint video trends facilitate quick and cross-regional social connectivity. However, on the other hand, excessive use of TikTok has negative impacts, such as a decline in interest in face-to-face interactions, conflicts arising from differences in content or comments, feelings of inferiority due to popularity differences, and increased social pressure always to appear attractive and follow trends. This condition has the potential to weaken the quality of authentic interpersonal relationships. Overall, TikTok plays a dual role in the social life of Generation Z in Griya Martubung I: it enhances social relationships in the digital world, yet it also holds the potential to erode closeness and the quality of interactions in the real world.

3.1.3. Daily Social Interactions of Generation Z Addiction Levels Towards TikTok Content, Especially Concerning Their Stress, Anxiety, And Self-Confidence.

The results of observations conducted at Griya Martubung I show that the daily social interactions of Generation Z have undergone significant changes in line with the increased intensity of TikTok usage. Teenagers tend to spend more time in the digital world, which leads to a decrease in the frequency of face-to-face communication with family and peers. This phenomenon is closely related to the level of addiction to TikTok content, where most teenagers exhibit patterns of excessive use, such as difficulty disengaging from the screen, staying up late, and feeling anxious when not opening the app.

The impact on mental health is quite real. Observations have found symptoms of stress and anxiety, especially when social expectations are not met, for example, when content does not receive the expected response. Some teenagers also experience decreased self-esteem, particularly due to social comparisons with popular figures on TikTok. However, some teenagers feel more confident after receiving positive feedback for their created content. Overall, addiction to TikTok not only affects psychological balance but also disrupts the quality of fundamental social interactions, which should be an important part of emotional development and social identity for Generation Z.

The results of the observations are also in line with the findings of the interviews. Here are the interview results from 5 different sources (using pseudonyms), which align with the observational findings regarding the Daily Social Interactions of Generation Z and the Level of Addiction to TikTok Content, particularly concerning Stress, Anxiety, and Self-Confidence, at Griya Martubung I, Medan Labuhan, Medan City, North Sumatra.

Y (17 years old, high school student)

Every time I wake up, the first app I open is TikTok. I cannot be at ease if I have not scrolled through it. Nevertheless, sometimes I become lazy to meet people, feeling more comfortable in my room. If my videos do not get many views, I tend to feel anxious, like I am not good enough.

Y shows symptoms of mild to moderate addiction, followed by anxiety and a decline in self-esteem due to unmet social expectations.

F (18 years old, high school graduate)

I used to hang out with friends often, but now I spend more time at home playing TikTok. Sometimes I want to go out, but I get too caught up in scrolling and lose track of time. I feel quickly exhausted when meeting people, wondering what to talk about.

Y experiences a decline in the quality of direct social interactions, accompanied by addiction and social fatigue.

R (19 years old, Student)

I often feel stressed because of TikTok. I feel inadequate seeing other people living well, traveling, and being successful. Nevertheless, when my videos are appreciated, I am happy. So sometimes it is up and down, depending on people's responses.

R experiences emotional fluctuations related to social comparison and digital validation, and shows symptoms of psychological stress triggered by content on TikTok.

A (16 years old, high school student)

If I do not open TikTok for a day, it feels like something is missing. However, I become quieter at home. My mom once said I have changed, now I prefer to be alone. I realise it, but it is hard to stop.

A describes a fairly strong addiction, accompanied by a decrease in family interaction, and an awareness of its impact, but is still unable to control it.

D (35 years old, High School Teacher)

My child used to be active in the mosque and liked to play with his friends. However, now he spends more time in his room with his phone. When I scold him, he says he is looking for ideas for content. Sometimes I see him stressed out when his videos do not get many views.

Perspective D reinforces the finding that direct social interaction is decreasing, and emotional pressure is emerging due to teenagers' attachment to TikTok content performance.

Based on the observations and interviews, it can be concluded that intense use of TikTok among Generation Z in Griya Martubung I has significantly changed their social interaction patterns and mental health. The tendency to spend more time in the digital world has resulted in decreased face-to-face communication, both with family and peers. This phenomenon is accompanied by signs of addiction, such as difficulty disconnecting from screens, staying up late, and experiencing anxiety when not accessing the app. The identified psychological impacts include stress, anxiety, and fluctuations in self-esteem, particularly due to social comparison with popular figures and dependence on digital validation through the number of likes, comments, or viewers. Although some teenagers experience an increase in self-esteem when receiving positive appreciation, in general, TikTok addiction negatively impacts emotional balance and disrupts the quality of real-life social interactions. This condition can potentially hinder emotional development and the formation of a healthy social identity among Generation Z.

3.2. Discussion

3.2.1. The Subjective Experiences of Generation Z in Using TikTok on Mental Health Conditions

The results of observations and interviews at Griya Martubung I show that the use of TikTok by Generation Z has ⁴ a complex dynamic, with influences that can be both constructive and destructive to their mental health and the quality of their social relationships. In line with the findings of Firamadhina & Krisnani, short video-based social media like TikTok serve as a strong means of self-expression, encouraging the formation of self-confidence, and expanding social networks across regions [13]. This is reinforced by the research of Sinaga & Mailin, which emphasises that digital interaction through this platform facilitates self-disclosure and builds emotional bonds, especially among teenagers who have limited face-to-face interaction [14]. Some teenagers use TikTok as a creative medium to share ideas, develop skills, and seek motivational content, enhancing their well-being.

However, on the other hand, Sahara's research shows ²⁵ that excessive use of social media, including TikTok, can trigger negative psychological symptoms such as anxiety, stress, sleep disturbances, and a decline in overall mental health quality [15]. The high phenomenon of social comparison on this platform, as explained by Eryc, creates significant psychological pressure because teenagers tend to measure their self-esteem based on external validation in the form of the number of likes, comments, or the popularity level of content [16]. This condition is in line with findings at Griya Martubung I, where several teenagers showed symptoms of decreased face-to-face interaction with family and peers, an increased tendency to withdraw, and emotional dependence on the performance of their digital content.

Social environmental aspects are proven to be determining factors that moderate the impact of TikTok, both positive and negative. Family support, community involvement, and levels of digital literacy are key variables that determine how teenagers interpret and manage their digital experiences. Teenagers who receive guidance and supervision tend to be able to use TikTok productively, while those who receive less support are more vulnerable to harmful psychological and social impacts.

Thus, the management of TikTok usage among Generation Z requires a balanced approach, which maximises the platform's potential as a creative medium and source of knowledge while implementing mitigation measures to reduce the risks of addiction and psychosocial disturbances. This strategy can include school and community-based digital literacy education, emotional management skills training, and strengthening real-world social interactions. This holistic approach ⁴ is expected to optimise Generation Z's creative potential without compromising their mental health and the quality of their social relationships, while also preparing them to be wise and resilient social media users in the digital age.

3.2.2. Generation Z's Perception of the Positive and Negative Values of Using TikTok in Building and Maintaining Social Relationships

The research conducted in Griya Martubung I revealed that Generation Z has an ambivalent perception towards using TikTok in building and maintaining social

relationships. The majority of respondents assessed that TikTok provides ease in creating social connectivity instantly through various interactive features, such as comment sections, private messages, duets, and collaborative video trends. These features facilitate communication and creative collaboration and expand friendship networks across regions and countries. This aligns with Hasnol's findings, which explain that TikTok, one of the fastest-growing social media platforms, has formed a digital interaction ecosystem that enables cross-geographic collaboration [17]. Adha, adding that TikTok's interactivity gives rise to the concept of a virtual community, which is an online community capable of maintaining social relationships even without face-to-face interaction [18].

Nevertheless, the high intensity of TikTok usage brings significant adverse consequences to the quality of social interactions in the real world. Several informants admitted to experiencing decreased interest in direct interactions, increased conflicts due to ironic content or negative comments, and the emergence of exclusivity in social circles based on account popularity levels. These findings align with Zhang's research, which identifies that excessive use of social media can distort interpersonal communication and reduce the depth of authentic social relationships [19].

In addition, the pressure to always appear attractive, follow popular trends, and meet audience expectations triggers feelings of anxiety, fear of missing out (FOMO), and unhealthy social comparisons. This is reinforced by a study by Dalimunthe et al., which shows that exposure to content with ideal appearance standards on TikTok can increase the risk of upward social comparison and decrease self-image satisfaction, especially among teenagers [20]. Asmara also found a positive correlation between the intensity of TikTok usage and symptoms of social anxiety and a decline in psychological well-being due to ongoing social media pressure [21].

Thus, this research emphasises that TikTok plays a dual role in the social dynamics of Generation Z. On one hand, this platform effectively strengthens digital social relationships, expands friendship networks, and fosters creativity through content collaboration. However, over time, excessive use can erode the quality of authentic interpersonal relationships, reinforce a culture of external validation, and increase the risk of psychological pressure. Therefore, comprehensive media literacy strategies for adolescents are required, including critical understanding of content, management of usage time, and a balance between online and offline interactions. This effort is important for maintaining mental health and the quality of social relationships and for shaping a resilient, adaptive, and wise generation utilising digital media in an ever-evolving technological era.

3.2.3. Daily Social Interactions of Generation Z's Addiction Level to TikTok Content, Particularly Concerning Their Stress, Anxiety, and Self-Confidence?

This research reveals a complex dynamic related to changes in social interactions of Generation Z at Griya Martubung I, increasingly influenced by the intensity of TikTok usage. As teenagers' engagement on this platform rises, their communication patterns undergo significant shifts: the frequency of face-to-face interactions decreases, emotional attachment to digital spaces strengthens, and psychological symptoms such as stress, anxiety, and fluctuations in self-esteem emerge. This phenomenon aligns with the findings

of Montag, Yang, and Elhai, which show that short-form video-based social media has a substantial impact on communication patterns and mental health of teenagers [22].

The results of the interviews show strong indications of digital addiction. Most informants described an uncontrollable urge to open TikTok, feelings of anxiety when not accessing it, and difficulties in managing time between online activities and daily obligations. This condition aligns with the findings of Phua & Lim, which link excessive social media use to problematic social media use, which can significantly reduce the quality of interpersonal relationships [23].

The psychological impact observed in this study also strengthens the relevance of the social comparison theory proposed by Tandoc, Ferrucci, and Duffy, where individuals tend to evaluate themselves by comparing their achievements or appearance with others [24]. Some informants, such as R and Y, experienced a decline in self-confidence when social expectations in the form of the number of likes, comments, or views were unmet. This is in line with the findings of Febriana & Amalia, which associate social comparison on digital media with increased symptoms of depression and anxiety among youth [25].

However, not all impacts are negative. Some teenagers experience increased self-confidence and motivation after receiving positive appreciation from the audience for the content they upload. This finding confirms the results of Bikriyah's research, which shows that positive feedback on social media can enhance self-efficacy and a sense of belonging, although the effects are often temporary and heavily dependent on the continuity of support received [26].

The shift in interaction preferences is also evident in the cases of informants A and F, who tend to isolate themselves from their immediate social environment in favour of spending time in the digital world. This echoes the findings of Arsini et al., which discovered that the intensity of social media use is directly proportional to the risk of perceived social isolation [27]. This phenomenon can hinder the development of social skills and empathy usually reinforced through face-to-face interaction.

Overall, this research emphasises that TikTok has a paradoxical nature in the social lives of Generation Z. On one hand, it offers a platform for self-expression, creativity, and opportunities to build cross-border social networks. However, on the other hand, excessive use can diminish the quality of authentic social relationships and trigger mental health issues. Therefore, an integrated strategy that involves critical digital literacy, healthy usage regulation, and active support from families, educational institutions, and adaptive public policies is needed to maximize TikTok's positive potential without sacrificing adolescents' psychological and social well-being.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it can be concluded that the use of TikTok among Generation Z in Griya Martubung I has a dual impact on their mental health and social interactions. On one hand, this platform positively boosts confidence, creativity, and social connectivity, even becoming a means of learning and motivation for some users. However, on the other hand, high intensity of use triggers adverse effects such as stress, social anxiety, sleep disturbances, a decline in face-to-face interactions, a tendency to

withdraw from the environment, and dependence on digital validation. The pressure to appear perfect and the phenomenon of social comparison further exacerbate psychological vulnerabilities, especially in adolescents with unstable mental conditions. These findings imply the importance of the roles of family, schools, and communities in guiding the use of TikTok towards a healthy and productive direction through digital literacy programs and strengthening emotional management skills. However, this study has limitations regarding the specific geographical scope, the nature of the data primarily arising from the subjective perceptions of informants, and the absence of quantitative measurements related to addiction levels or the quality of social relationships. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve a broader and more diverse sample, using mixed methods that combine qualitative and quantitative approaches, examining the differences in impact based on demographic variables such as gender and family background, and developing educational interventions that can minimize negative impacts while maximizing the positive potential of TikTok for the younger generation.

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